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REVIEW

Jitka Lorenzová, Contexts of education in the post-modern situation. Charles University in Prague, Philosophical Faculty, the editing line Humanitas, Prague 2016.

The author of the publication doc.PhDr. Jitka Lorenzová, Ph.D., has belonged for a couple of years to the group of significant experts in the field of social pedagogy in the Czech Republic. Her experience in this partial pedagogical discipline - pedagogical and also scientific - is reflected in the quality of the mentioned publication. The individual chapters of the publication logically continue, form a compatible unit, present the scientific respectability, and are written in a cultivated way. The chapters, in the context of the observed issues, reflect the latest findings of the fields of pedagogy, philosophy, sociology and also psychology, in its wide spectrum. The individual chapters are presented with a view to the new theoretic solutions and also to the current demands of the pedagogical questions about education in the Czech Republic and abroad.

The extent of the publication's individual themes is admirable. Ms. J. Lorenzová has proved the ability of analysis of the education process in the relevant contexts. She repeatedly, in particular with the support of the philosophical, sociological and pedagogical mainstreams of thoughts, presents a fundamental question - how the contemporary "knowledge society" will cope with the fact that the role of education in the traditional conception is once and for all a thing of the past and that the "post-modern situation", in its multiplicity of the often contradictory proposals and possibilities, shows that seeking for "better solutions" in the field of education is more or less helpless.

The author precisely analyses the substance of the post-modernism and its impact on the pedagogy and education. The pluralistic directions, that seek the ways out from the contemporary global crises of education in the universal context of the post-modernism, are oriented critically, reflexively, humanistic or in a futurological way. As the author stressed, the comprehension of education as a permanent opportunity for the development of abilities and procedures improving its linking, and opening of chances for the revitalization of the common world and the responsibility for it, is common for these directions. In the publication, the following representative concepts and themes

are presented and analyzed: post-modern situation, morale values, responsibility, elite of the spirit, interdisciplinary issues, empathy, teamwork, alternative issues, proactive human being and other things.

Describing or even analyzing the sphere of education in the second decade of the 21st century in the international context is an extraordinarily demanding task and its precondition is an outstanding orientation in a number of related branches, based on a long-term interest in the given issues. The priority of this work is the effort of the author to objectify the view on the individual themes with the use of multi-valued sources. At the same time, however, she does not avoid to employ her own and also critical view, what is actually valid for the whole text. It is therefore very difficult to emphasize the individual parts of the work, as the text in respect of the contents is relatively balanced. The author consistently pays attention to the preservation of proportionality between the universality and concreteness in all segments of the work.

She concerns herself, among other things, also with the partial theme questions, that at present are not sufficiently solved. What proportion should be between the education in national feeling and education in Europeanism, or cosmopolitanism? Will we educate successful, independent, authentic citizens or servants of the impersonal institutions? What proportion should be between the education of individualities and socialization? Will we educate revolutionists or citizens ready to pursue reforms in the society that will not be characterized by the revolutionary turbulences? What will the share of special training be in forming of the personality and what share should be assigned to the humanization disciplines, that cultivate the personality? What should be the proportion of the classic and modern education like?

Despite the scope of the fundamental questions, the chapters devoted to the issues of the authority in the process of education and in the pedagogy deserve a special appreciation. The post-modern stage has really significantly influenced the conception of the authority in the pedagogical contexts in the 70th – 80th of the 20th century. The post-modernists point out the thesis that it is necessary to connect the issues concerning the children and youth with the epochal changes of modern days and their concrete displays. These changes influence the living position of the youth generally and their attitude to school, as well. It refuses general ideas and conceptions (for example the idea of the truth, good, progress and the general goals), as its unifying compactness suppresses differentiation. The post-modernism sets against this the singularity of events, discontinuity, turning points, and uncertainty as a permanent relationship. It relativizes the modern rationality, its demands of the general validity and universality. It points out the contradictory consequences of the science and also technique, and on the crisis phenomena that brings the post-industrial society. Post-modern thinking leads to the life orientation here and now and to the scepticism towards every authority.

The author stresses the fact that post-modernism also points out the problems of the human-being. She states that the human being, in the contemporary society, loses its autonomy and the strength to interpret, it moves itself to the world, where the signs and symbols replace the reality (for example the media and the virtual environment). She

emphasizes the orientation on emotional moments, on the communication here and now, and on the irrational experiences. The post-modern position requires reduction of every compulsion and unification. It wants to free the individual so as it could make a choice in the plurality of life forms and in the quantities of information. Ms. J. Lorenzová points out, that the mentioned considerations reflect the effort to seek answers to the question: To what extent should school actually interfere into the development of a young man?

The collision of both contradictory conceptions of education, that has lasted for centuries i.e. authoritative and anti-authoritative education, shows that the question of a suitable form of education is raised again and again and that it has also great importance in connection with the democratic endeavours nowadays. Many consequences of the authoritative and anti-authoritative conduction interfere also nowadays into the family, its neighbourhood, into the life of clubs, state institutions, political parties and the social organizations up to the relationships at the workplace. The critical outcome of the author's considerations that concern the new approaches to the child and the childhood with a view to the conception of a "competent super-child", "which is deprived of the childhood and overloaded with demands which it oftentimes cannot fulfil, deprived of the spontaneity, controlled and spurred to compete as the necessary preparation for the performance-related but in all other aspects unclear future" (p. 140) suit my pedagogical-psychological view.

The analysis of education in relationship to the globalization further deserves special attention. The author here, besides other things, polemicizes with the contemporary trend of the successfulness of education "at all costs", and with the trend to quantify and subsequently compare the results, as "into the results of schools cover a whole number of unquantifiable but at the same time fundamental factors (p. 168).

A valuable and knowledgeable insight into the contemporary academic environment is brought by the chapter called University, science and the academicians in the knowledge society. (Especially the sub-chapters Publish or perish: these concern the unintended consequences of the audit culture and the Pedagogical dimension of the excellency). A critical attention, beside other things, is devoted here to the proportion – respectively disproportion – between the science and teaching: "To be a good teacher is not in any way substantial either from the view point of approach to the academic functions or from the view point of admission to the academic community" (p.208).

The ethical point of view, as a necessary and not negligible condition of any kind of education concept and at the same time also warning before neglecting of this variable, pervades explicitly or implicitly through the whole text - to its benefit. The work of Ms. J. Lorenzová very logically results in chapters devoted to the ethical dimension of the teaching profession (she for example offers here relevant arguments for formulation of the teacher's ethical codex. The author has already published a number of professional studies on these themes in the Czech Republic and abroad.

The publication Contexts in the post-modern situation by Ms. Jitka Lorenzová has been worked out on a high professional level and therefore can fulfil the highest criteria.

It has the distinction of an expressively analyzing and comparative character. An important benefit of the high quality processing of the text is also the review of experience and information from abroad. It is an important and fundamentally enriching act in the frame of the Czech pedagogical production. The publication in total can be characterized as extraordinarily successful, original, very interesting and contributing for the pedagogical theory, for the sphere of research and for the school practice as well.