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Report on the Third International Scientific Symposium “Tradition and Modernity in Education”, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, 24 May 2021

On 24 May 2021, the Third International Scientific Symposium “Tradition and Modernity in Education” was held at the Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska in Lublin. It was organised by the Department of Didactics, headed by UMCS Professor habilitated doctor Teresa Parczewska.

The symposium chairperson, Professor Parczewska, was supported in the organisation of this important event for the scientific community by UMCS Professor habilitated doctor Urszula Oszwa (symposium secretary), Doctor Małgorzata Chojak (symposium secretary), UMCS Professor habilitated doctor Beata Bednarczuk, Doctor Krystyna Kusiak and Doctor Ewa Sosnowska-Bielicz.

This year’s symposium, consisting of three parts, each of which enabled participants to engage in discussions, was organised in an online format and provided an opportunity for an international discourse on the essence and significance of tradition in education, as well as on the relationship between traditional educational culture and

contemporary trends in education, including the theoretical and practical contexts. The symposium created a space for scientific reflection and critical discussions on education, which is affected by the transformations taking place in postmodern culture. The debate of the participating theoreticians and practitioners of education was also an attempt to find the planes of negotiation between tradition and modernity, the search for their developmental coexistence and arguments for their justified and beneficial co-presence in pedagogy and educational systems.

Opening the Symposium, Prof. Parczewska stressed the importance of the meeting, as numerous doubts and questions concerning the place of tradition in contemporary educational systems have emerged. Thus, it becomes important to try to resolve them, because if there is no tradition, we may remain in an identity vacuum, which is the result of a lack of affiliation to stable values, symbols and authorities. Tradition and modernity must, therefore, be skillfully combined, because while being in the present and teaching about it, we must remember about the past of the present, modern strategies of didactic and educational work.

During the Symposium, scholars from Poland, Italy, Portugal, Israel and Australia took up this important educational discussion. The first two parts of the meeting made it possible to see the importance of the past and cultural changes reflected in contemporary education, while the third part entitled "Research and Reflections", based on the results of scientific research conducted in Israel and Australia, indicated the importance of critical reflection on the use of the foundations of neuroscience in education and drew the attention of symposium participants to the importance of the subjectivity of children/students in the creation of educational space.

It is worth pointing out at this point the important aspects of the deliberations undertaken by the representatives of international scientific circles, because the speeches of the speakers were an important attempt to clarify certain solutions of theoretical, research and practical nature, concerning the meaning of tradition and modernness in education, indicating at the same time the need to seek new areas of research. Such an approach undoubtedly constitutes a valuable contribution to the development of pedagogy.

In the first part of the Symposium, Professor habilitated doctor Barbara Smolińska-Theiss and Professor habilitated doctor Wiesław Theiss (The Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, Poland) in their speech "The Past and the Future – between Neil Postman's Position and the Ideas of Zygmunt Bauman" paid attention to the educational value of working with memory. The pedagogues' reflections on the Postman's and Bauman's concepts of the past, present and future, although different in essence, allow us to see that the past and the future are the field, the source, the content of pedagogical thinking and action. In education, which is a space of diverse pedagogical practices, postulates emphasising the importance of dialogue between the past and the present will always be relevant, because it leads to new experiences, notions and imaginings. Referring to the past and the future is, therefore, an important subject of discussion in the aspect of social and cultural changes taking place in the present.

In turn, Professor habilitated doctor Dorota Misiejuk (University of Białystok, Poland) in her appearance "Tradition in the Conditions of Postmodernity" stressed that in postmodernity, it becomes necessary to teach respect for tradition and culture. Tradition is a guide to the content of the culture of moral order, it is a kind of grammar of culture. An indispensable factor for the duration of culture is its transmission from generation to generation – without it, there would be no continuity of behaviour enabling the construction of cultural identity of individuals.

This part of the session ended with a speech entitled "The Validity of Traditional References in Contemporary Pedagogy" by Doctor Maria Gabriella Pediconi (University of Urbino, Italy) drawing attention to contemporary pedagogy as an area of many completely unknown challenges. In many emerging planes of pedagogical activity, resulting from changes in civilization and consciousness, we find the validity of traditional references.

The second part of the Symposium began with an interesting speech of UMCS Professor habilitated doctor Piotr Celiński (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland). In his speech "Close, Closer, in Us: About the Development of (Bio) Media and Attempts to Manage Them", he pointed out that apart from the interdisciplinary and practical and theoretical focus on the analysis of digital databases and the construction of new post-textual interfaces, the digital turn is also reaching for the discourse on biology, genetics and human nature. The discourse of transhumanism complements the discourse related to biomediations and their biomedias. The speaker stressed that biomedias is a concept whose semantics points, in effect, to the possibility of cybernetic manipulation of the DNA code and the construction of a cybernetic world on the basis of matrices and models that reveal research into the nature of DNA and the mechanisms of natural life. They create an informational re-contextualisation of biological appearances and processes that is not only medically relevant, but also inscribed in cultural, social, political and scientific discourses and practices. As Professor Piotr Celiński pointed out, this has significant consequences for the understanding of genetics, which, developing parallel to the digital project, has much in common with it, and is often even identified with it. In the conclusion of his speech, the speaker stressed the importance of an integral, holistic view of the world. Defining the future must, therefore, be based on the roots of the past, otherwise it will become, as has happened many times before, an empty phrase.

Doctor Ana Paula Alves (Fernando Pessoa University in Porto, Portugal) also spoke about the links between the past, present and future in education. In her presentation "Education: Commitment Between the Past, Present and Future", she highlighted the complex nature of education immersed in the past, present and future. The struggle between the past, present and future seems to be significant for the philosophy of pedagogy, its directions and forms. Doctor Alves also noted that in the integration of the past, present and future, the teacher plays an important role, because as a participant in the creation of new paradigms, he/she becomes a mediator between the past,

present and future. In this way, the teacher may not only be innovative itself, but also make education innovative.

The inclusion of past pedagogical cultural content in the current pedagogical awareness and the reference to specific traditions as a factor of self-definition of a group of teachers was indicated in her speech “Tradition – Blockade or Stimulator of Development in Early Education” by UWM Professor habilitated doctor Marzenna Nowicka (University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland). The speaker referred to the tradition of teaching children to read, and analysed textbooks used in early childhood education. She also pointed out that alternative educational projects appearing in some Polish schools, which have for years occupied an important place in pedagogy (e.g. concepts of Maria Montessori, Celestine Freinet or Helen Parkhurst), and made it possible to search for the perception of learning to read and write as a new language of the child, unfortunately do not change the teachers’ approach to this skill, because it is connected primarily with how adults think about children and what competences they assign to them. Without recognising the specificity of the child’s psychological structure and developmental dynamics, change in this area seems impossible.

As a kind of summary of the second part of the plenary session can be treated a speech of Professor habilitated doctor Małgorzata Kabat (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland), “Modernity in the Lens of Education”, who focused in her presentation on traditional and contemporary models of teacher’s functioning, while pointing to the essence of ongoing changes and new challenges facing educators.

In the third part of the Symposium entitled “Research and Reflections”, Doctor Ela Luria and Doctor Maya Shalom (Levinsky College of Education in Tel Aviv, Israel / Beit Berl College, Kfar Saba, Israel), presented two speeches. In the first one, “Cognitive Neuroscience Perspectives on Motivation and Learning: Revisiting Self-Determination Theory”, the speakers highlighted the importance of self-determination-based motivation (SDT) in learning. They presented an approach, rooted in recent findings from the neuroscience of memory, suggesting that structuring learning and assessment to reduce failure and increase repeated opportunities for success, such as in gamification, can lead to effective learning involving broad perspectives and wide associations.

In the second presentation, Doctor Shalom and Doctor Luria, citing the results of Polish-Israeli research, referred to neuromyths in education. Their presentation “Neuromyths in Education: The Poland – Israel Case” made it possible to see that although standards exist in neurology, psychology and pedagogy, there are no agreed common standards for neuroeducation. Thus, there is a lack of formal bridging between these fields. This contributes largely to the fact that neuroeducation concepts, commonly referred to in the popular press as brain-based learning, have been inconsistently applied in educational practice for many years.

Presentation by Evangeline Smaree Manassakis (MPhil, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia), “A Sociomaterial Approach to Organising an Australian Kindergarten Space: Voices from the Children”, who based her research on the observations of

young children and the way they describe their role in organising materials in the kindergarten classroom space, showed not very optimistic aspect of contemporary education – children are able to play many roles in organising materials in the educational spaces they engage in, although the level of participation and roles available to children, according to the speaker's research, are still limited by adults.

In his presentation "Modernity in Education: Podcast and Videocast", Doctor Krzysztof Zajdel (University of Zielona Góra, Poland) also spoke about the need for children and young people to be active and mobilise their motivation in learning, pointing to the possibilities of new technology tools. As Doctor Zajdel emphasised, in modern education, the verbal message alone, without other types of enrichment, is the least effective, especially in the work of teachers, including teachers of the youngest grades. Podcasting and videocasting are important alternative tools in the hands of a teacher, however, many teachers do not take up such challenges, although the world of constantly evolving technology should mobilise teachers to search for optimal solutions for students in the learning process.

The binder of all speakers participating in the Symposium was the presentation by Albert Szulczyński (Catholic University of Lublin, Poland) – "Persons of the Teacher and the Student as a Value Saved" – because the past, present and future of education should be based on helping students realise their own, but proper hierarchy of values, leading to integral development, to the fullness of humanity. In the process of education to values, thinking in terms of universal values may ensure that tradition and modernity do not stand in opposition, because they will allow each other to bestow all that is valuable and important to the individual and society.

Summing up the Third International Symposium "Tradition and Modernity in Education", Professor Parczewska stressed the importance of this meeting, which enabled all participants to reflect on and discuss the conditions and quality of the past, current and projected image of education. The problem of changes or modifications to the currently functioning methods and forms of work with a child/student, but also a reflective look at the past, should continue to be the subject of in-depth research and analysis of many scientific circles in Poland and abroad.