А. В. Волков, С. В. Волкова

Номо educandus в зеркале философской антропологии

Внимание авторов сосредоточено на проблеме анализа феномена образования сквозь призму специфики человеческого бытия. Данная проблема вызвана тем, что традиционно философский анализ взаимосвязи человеческого бытия и образования выстраивался, главным образом, вокруг осмысления человека как субъекта сознания.

Руководствуясь идеями феноменологического и герменевтического подходов, авторы экплицируют возможности и границы концепции человека-субъекта и приходят к следующим результатам.

Значимость данной модели заключается том, что она позволяет выделить смысловое измерение человеческого сознания, в котором нуждаются сегодня образование и его субъекты. Авторы демонстрируют, что смысл является неким рефлексивным, функциональным органом, воспроизводящим субстанцию личности человека-учащегося. В то же время ограниченность идеи человека-субъекта, состоит в том, что за ее пределами остается такой важный источник конституирования смыслов, как тело. В этой связи авторы обосновывают важное значение для понимания педагогической деятельности модели человека как воплощенного присутствия (embodiment), т.е. человека в единстве его ментального и телесного измерений.

В заключении, задумываясь над перспективами развития философии и методологии образования в условиях нарастающего распространения дистанционных форм обучения, авторы приходят к выводу о том, что как философия, так и педагогика нуждаются сегодня в формировании антропологии образования – междисциплинарного направления, в котором субъект образования раскрывался бы в единстве трех его ипостасей: сознания, тела и языка, взятых в качестве источников порождения смыслов.

Ключевые слова: человек, образование, антропология образования, воплощенное присутствие, смысл, сознание, тело, язык

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Homo educandus through the prism of educational anthropology

An important area which has not received adequate attention within philosophy and educational theory is a close relationship of the human way of being and education.

In the light of this the purpose of the article is Janus-faced, looking both inward at reconstructing a mental image of a man that is central for scholars' worldview and outward at designing a philosophical model that would be keeping with the current challenges of education.

Drawing attention at the widespread of electronic technologies in our life it is argued that the idea of a man as embodiment has significant educational consequences. The most important one is the possibility to reveal the meaning-making dimension of consciousness which the modern education urgently needs today. The claim that perception and cognition of the world does not take place from the standpoint of "pure" mind detached from the body, but rather on the basis of embodiment is considered to be a convincing one. In this regard, one of the primary missions of education is to reveal and activate the consciousness-body system as a source of man's meaning-making activity. Furthermore the issue states that the pedagogical vision of the human being as someone who doesn't have but search for meaning would succeed only if the human being is viewed as an integral whole rather than as separate parts.

In conclusion it is stated that both philosophy and theory of education need to develop a multidisciplinary study of education – anthropology of education. The research field related to inquiry on the subject of education in the integrity of his three dimensions – mind, body and language.

Keywords: human being, education, educational anthropology, embodiment, meaning, mind, body, language

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Statement of the problem

Taking a close interest in the intensive development of modern civilisation, one can confidently call education one of the crucial objects of studies. In fact, the 20th century saw the heightened impact of education and science on modern society and culture. Various human activities – from daily to professional routines – are based on learning and transmitting knowledge gained through educational tools and channels. At the same time, a different thing attracts our attention. There is a tendency to understand education in a one-sided way: as a movement up to upgrading the technical and cognitive skills that are essential for mastering and adapting new technologies, with emphasis on more professional, technical and specialized knowledge and skills. Besides, modern students face a real risk of being swamped with information most of which is considered rather to be a waste of time than something immediately meaningful for their minds. And as a consequence, the situation has convinced many scholars of the second half of the 20th century to speak anew for humanization of education [1] and developing a “hermeneutic pedagogy” [4]. We think that such initiatives are not likely to be implemented successfully without serious reflection on the specifics of the human way of being. Indeed, M. Heidegger, one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century, explains that understanding of phenomenon is based on a certain interpretation of existence and, above all, the existence of that being that is compelled to ask questions about itself, about the nature of the situation itself, and about who we should be and become in it. We are talking about a human being. In this regard, we are convinced that thinking on the crisis in modern education should be accompanied by philosophical reflection. Therefore, this article aims to reconstruct the image of a man that still remains central for the educational researchers’ worldview. We will also try to answer the question: which model of philosophy of education corresponds to this image and addresses modern challenges in education.

Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study lays at the intersection of philosophy and pedagogy, as well as a number of related research fields: cognitive psychology and psychology of personality. It also develops a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to explain various facets of human being and culture as an area for searching and understanding meanings.

Results and discussion

1. Educational potential of the concept of the transcendental subject

Philosophical reflection on education makes one think of such an explanation of human being which underlies the educational ethos but has frequently dropped out of educators’ scrutiny. While “For pedagogical work, a critical relationship towards images we make of children and teenagers is essential. The same also applies to a critical view of the ideas and images created in the discourses on pedagogy” [22, p. 190]. “Inevitably these shifts in understanding affect what education can be” [20, p. 253].

Since the modern project of education along with pedagogic studies have originated in the Modern Era, it will be reasonable to consider the idea of a man, which formed an integral part of the philosophy of the Modern Era. That is, in our view, an idea of a man as a transcendental subject. Let's take a look now at this model.

R. Descartes was the philosopher who played a key role in the development of idea of a transcendental subject. It is known that the starting point of R. Descartes's meditations on the most reliable foundation for the whole body of knowledge was doubt, that led him to the conclusion that such a foundation is a thinking thing: *Ego cogito ergo sum*. As shown by historical and philosophical studies, contemporaries had not immediately understood the essence of the Cartesian solution that is evidenced, for example, by Descartes's dispute with P. Gassendi [19, p. 170-171; 15, p. 73]. Gassendi, in particular, believed that it is possible to conclude the existence of *Ego* not only from the act of thinking (*cogito*), but also from any other act. Why can we not to say, for example: "I move, therefore I am", or "I look, therefore I am"? As for Descartes, he rightly observed that there are situations in which a person only seems to move or see something, whereas in reality, nothing happens, because the person is asleep. Thus, it cannot be assumed that statements of the type "I move, therefore I am", or "I look, therefore I am" have the same degree of certainty as the thesis "I think, therefore I am". However, Cartesius believes that he could still agree with Gassendi, but only if the expression "I look", "I move" is not understood as sight or walking, but as an awareness of these acts. So, even while in a state of sleep, one may believe that they are going somewhere or looking at something, and therefore it is possible to conclude the existence of a thinking mind [3, p. 276]. Thus, as it is clear from the dispute, it is crucially important for Descartes that I am not just a thing that thinks, but a thinking thing. As Heidegger says, the *cogito* is always a *cogito me cogitare* [6, p. 121]. In this regard, the essential core of Cartesian concept of transcendental subject is *cogito* – but not as an abstract logical activity, but as a reflection, that is a self-conscious thought, desire, action.

There is a good reason for us to turn to the idea of a transcendental subject. The principal significance of the concept of the transcendental subject is that it allows us to emphasize the reflexive and meaning-making dimension relevant for conscious activity. Insufficient attention to the study of this dimension is emphasized in many studies. For example, in 1947 the Russian psychologist A. N. Leontiev wrote that "... it is not enough that a child has learned a meaning of this subject, indifferently theoretical or practical, but it is necessary that he accordingly reacted to the study, it is necessary to teach him the appropriate attitude. Only under this condition will the knowledge he acquires become living knowledge for him (*italics – ours A.V, S.V.*), become genuine "organs of his individuality" and, in turn, determine his attitude to the world" [9, p. 299]. As can be seen from this statement, the achievement of authentic or, in the words of Leontiev, "living knowledge" is possible only if person establishes a connection of this knowledge with himself – his experience, personal feelings. This means that in order to learn something a student must go through the search for meaning of this knowledge. Otherwise knowledge should be born again in the mind of a student only then it will become part of him and a guide to a meaningful action. A contemporary scholar V. A. Slastenin says, that crisis in education is determined by the fact that student acts as an object of influence, training and disappears as a subject of personal development, a reflective creature [18, p. 124-126].

Another urgent and rather sudden meaning of the concept of transcendental subject for modern philosophy of educational is the relationship of this concept with the temporality, or more precisely the human temporality.

The Cartesian model of transcendental subjectivity has been consistently refined in fundamental works of I. Kant, E. Husserl. For all the modifications there is one thing that has remained constant, namely: intimate relationship between time and being, between temporality and human existence. In our opinion, this circumstance is of great importance not only for philosophers, but also for educators who, due to the humanitarian specifics of their science, operate with a certain concept of a person. So, E. Husserl established the unity of a transcendental subject as a temporal unity of “pieces of perception” [7]. The philosopher argued that perception is a temporally organized process, i. e. the process whereby one impression is replaced by the next one, then by the next one, etc. At the same time, the perception could become the perception of something as a unity, only if the impression that has left the so called “now-point” wouldn’t disappear without a trace, but is retained in our consciousness. This idea is particularly relevant to the phenomenon of learning. Indeed, education as a process where knowledge circulating requires just such a subject that has an ability to retain impressions, otherwise knowledge just crumbles. Heidegger radicalized Husserlian understanding of temporality. He gave it an existential meaning. On the one hand, in order to perceive something as a whole, a student needs to retain and synthesize his impressions continuously, or, as Husserl says, in the mode of “living-present”, on the other hand, retention is extremely difficult therefore the next flash of the “living-present” might not happen. In this sense, Heidegger suggests thinking the time of human existence from “being-towards-death”. Aside from the understanding of death as a physical end, it seems that the temporality of human existence is, from one side, a waste by a man of himself, and on the other hand, an effort to reassemble himself. In the sphere of education, this existential temporality of human existence is revealed to a student as a question: Would I be able to expand all my efforts on learning, acquiring knowledge, or will I remain just a possible, not a real knowledge holder?

The existential meaning of this question in the light of the increasingly widespread use of electronic technologies in education is of particular relevance [13]. Since a student is compelled dedicating oneself wholeheartedly to learning, what would happen to such a student if he refuses to put in the efforts and instead prefers, for example, to settle for the information drawn from the Internet? According to V. V. Savchuk, such information is not marked by the effects of the long and sometimes painful process that accompanies the knowledge, beliefs and faith generation [17, p. 95]. Information is a sterilized knowledge, not a hard-won truth. In view of the above, it is fair to argue that modern students find themselves in a position of scattered, disseminated subjects. The challenge lies, however, in demonstrating that student’s chosen strategy of transmitting the information is a strategy of simulation that which simulates what is actually missing, “which makes the learner forget a fundamental question of education: Who am I/How am I in the world?” [10, p. 236]. And the missing is turned out to be student’s being, that, as Heidegger wrote, is “always mine”, that is “ourselves”.

From all of the foregoing it would not be an exaggeration to say that the idea of transcendental subject that has his origins in the philosophy of modern era still remains relevant for contemporary education. We would like, however, to draw our attention to another side of this idea developed through M. Heidegger’s and M. Merleau-Ponty’s existential-phenomenological philosophy.

2. Embodiment and Education

As Heidegger puts it, Descartes and the following transcendental philosophy represented by I. Kant and E. Husserl have given a man the status of a transcendental subject, but left

unclear the question of the way of being of this transcendental subject. In “Being and Time” Heidegger noticed: “... Descartes, who is credited with providing the point of departure for modern philosophical inquiry by his discovery of the “cogito sum” investigates the “cogitare” of the “ego”, at least within certain limits. But the sum he leaves completely undiscussed, even though it is just as primordial as the cogito” [5, p. 45-46]. At the same time it seems there is only one way to clarify the question of the mode of being of transcendental subject – by making the transcendental subject the object of reflection. However, this is what turns out to be the main difficulty: the fact is that at the time of conducting the act of reflection, the gap between the subjective and the objective poles of the reflection acts is not seen by reflection, can not be grasped by reflection at the moment of its performance. Any attempt to make this gap the object of the next new level of reflection leads to the fact that the subjective pole of this new act of reflection is, again, an “active agent” not an object posited, so that there is no end to this elusion. At each next level of reflection we are faced with another slip of Ego we seek, the Ego we seek to “see”, the very one figure in the diverse forms of activity of consciousness. In order to describe this paradoxical situation A. G. Chernyakov chooses a good term, as we see it: a “Babylonian tower” of reflection, which, as the author notes, “is extremely difficult to construct ... even in theory, and quite impossible to experience it in actual self-consciousness” [2, p. 178].

As we can see, in reflection we face a constant self-splitting of the sought “Ego” and continuously renewed attempts to establish the identity of the separated fragments. Yet the subject of the identifying activity always eludes, remaining “behind consciousness’ back”. Here it would be reasonable to ask what forces consciousness again and again to pose itself as an object, and not to leave the attempts to know thyself? Is this conversion a natural, self-evident act? Following M. Heidegger, we believe that self-representation or the conversion of consciousness to itself is possible for consciousness due to the fact that human being directed towards itself and carrying in itself the primordial phenomenon of non-indifference, is internally structured such that it does not have, but is searching for the meaning of its existence. It is important that the lack of meaning and the search for it is responded not only by the thinking of a man, but also by his feeling, will, body, i.e. all his being. The representatives of the Russian philosophy also raised that issue in their works, while examining the question of the meaning of life [21, p. 33].

The same idea was pointed out by M. Merleau-Ponty. Like Heidegger he proceeded from the fact that the existence (sum) in the sense of “throwing into the world” inevitably precedes cogito, so that the genetic source of existence itself is “behind” the consciousness, forming a pre-reflexive root of its existence. The mode of human being in this existentialist interpretation is thought in the context of a return to those structures of being-in-the-world, which coincide with a certain “primordial presence”, namely the body. In fact, the whole philosophy of the French philosopher is devoted to the disclosure of one main thesis: the human body is the signature core that projects values outwards, giving them a place that allows them to exist as things under our hands and in front of our eyes. Thus, as soon as not consciousness itself, but the system of “consciousness-body” acts as the basis that brings together the creative forces of a man, then the appeal of pedagogical science to the understanding of human being as the “embodied presence” (embodiment) becomes today an urgent need.

This factor is of particular relevance to such a phenomenon as education. For a long time, primarily due to J. Piaget, it was believed that the involvement of the student’s body in the educational process is only a step on the way to the final result of learning, which

is the development of intellectual and thinking activity. Today, however, it is convincingly demonstrated complementary, rather than subordinate role of the body and its dynamics in the educational process [16]. Abstract notions and intellectual processes are meaningful only because they activate the body forms (schemes) of experience from which they originate and with which they compose the entire whole [8].

Indeed the item concerning embodiment is of special importance in the light of rapid expansion of electronic technologies in education. Considering that nowadays Internet connects people around the world, it becomes easier to participate in conversation or discussion, including learning one. And you can do so from the comfort of your own home just by turning on computer, or sitting in a cafeteria with a laptop. So, what exactly is this online communication? What is the phenomenological specificity of educational, intersubjective relations in the Internet space? Apparently what is noticeable is that electronic communication involves the assimilation of a quite specific spatial experience by its participants. It is not only that the participants of electronic communication do not share one common space-time, because they can read messages and respond to it anytime and anywhere. In fact, any student, wherever he is, and whenever he comes to an online forum, is as if in the position of a split subject: on the one hand, he is located in front of the computer, in a certain place, and on the other hand, he is outside this place of communication and messaging. From a phenomenological standpoint, the conditions for such duality lie, evidently, in the typical for human Being ability to transcend – to exceed and break any present boundaries, or limits. But the crucial finding is that, in a usual classroom environment communicators are shown to each other physically, while in the context of virtual communication they seem to be disembodied; their presence is indicated by the corresponding icon of the interface. To fully appreciate the significance of this difference, it would be appropriate to look at M. Merleau-Ponty's considerations on the phenomenon of speech. According to the French phenomenologist, speech is a manifestation of fundamental activity through which a person directs himself to the world. "The intention to speak can reside only in an open experience. It makes its appearance like the boiling point of a liquid, when, in the density of being, volumes of empty space are built up and move outwards" [12, p. 255]. For Merleau-Ponty, the situation when a person can speak only if he prepared a phrase or only if every potential inquiry, improvisation is kept to a minimum is pathological. Curiously the virtual communication reproduces the features of pathological speech. In fact, in physical space of the classroom, bodily manifestation of a student makes him maintain a mode of openness, readiness for a possible question, even when he is silent. As for the virtual space, the physical invisibility of the student in it provides him with a certain isolation, distance, and thus reduces the need to be always open to any appeals, questions, requests. After all the participant of the online seminar can always explain his silence in response to a question by a technical failure, or the fact that he had to leave, and could not stay on the grid.

But that's not all. In the present context the focus should first be on the specifics of the human attitude to the world. Suppose a certain interface icon indicates that a user is online, and the lines that appear on the screen indicate that they are participating in a conversation. The point, however, is that the phenomenological specificity of the attitude of consciousness to the subject is not at all identical simply to the recognition of this object in the sense of placing it in a certain group or class: user, student, teacher, parent, etc. As noted by V. I. Molchanov, phenomenological identification is similar to

“recognition in the crowd of a person close to us, whose name means for us his personality. We do not belong such a person to any class of people; such a person appears before us as he is, in “his incarnate Self” [14, p. 340]. It is known what a great role for Self, for personal identity of a human plays his facial expressions, gestures, gait, voice timbre, etc. Of course, all these bodily manifestations are the area of implicit signs, meanings, for the recognition of which it is necessary to have a certain “body sense”. Concerning pedagogical relations, M. van Manen called this sense a “tact” – an interpretive intelligence, a practical moral intuitiveness, a sensitivity and openness toward the child’s subjectivity, and an improvisational resoluteness in dealing with children. As van Manen points, it is the tact as attentiveness and sensitivity to details and unique situations that should guide a teacher in his attitude to the student [11, p. 1]. It is clear that within the virtual communication, when the communicating parties are invisible for each other, the possibilities for raising tact and understanding are significantly limited. Moreover, it will be appropriate to note that from a phenomenological perspective, the body that is given us in direct perceptual experience as a set of actual and possible actions is the starting point for grasping the nature of intersubjective relations. And because the specifics of electronic technologies is such that both students and teacher restrict the range of their bodily activity, the intersubjective relations become more and more alienated; they often miss mimetic element, i.e. a situation when student learns by imitating gestures, postures, manners of speaking or writing of the teacher.

Conclusion

So, we were determined to show that both the philosophy of education and pedagogical science need today a coherent concept of a man’s being. In our view, such concept can become a reality only through developing the anthropology of education, a philosophical field of study where a subject of education is disclosed in unity of its dimensions – mind and body. Moreover, if one takes the idea of existential interpretation of human being seriously, i.e. proceeds from the fact that being is given to a man as a problem, a task (Who am I and why do I exist?), then we must recognize that the world is open to a man not because of some automatic-natural process, for example, the affection of consciousness by objects, but only if it affects a person, i.e. it is significant for him in his being. For pedagogical science it means to learn to see the students’ being in hermeneutic perspective, i.e. to be able to organize the educational process as a process of extraction, generation and interpretation of meanings by students. At the same time, we must bear in mind that the meanings the students discover in the learning process will depend not only on their spiritual potential. Actually, to internalize some concepts and ideas means essentially to develop bodily dispositions. So the fact that students have internalized such values as curiosity, perseverance and tolerance for ambiguity will appear authentic only if students find themselves able to incorporate certain patterns of behavior. These patterns need to be imprinted into the musculature, nerves and organs of the individual. Thus, the pedagogical conception of a man as a being who does not have, but searches for meaning in educational process, will only succeed if human being is understood not in disunity, but in the integrity of his dimensions – mind, body and language.

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