

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Stanisław JANECZEK, *Edukacja oświeceniowa a szkoła tradycyjna. Z dziejów kultury intelektualnej i filozoficznej* [Enlightenment Education and Traditional Education. From the History of Intellectual and Philosophical Culture], Lublin 2008, Ed. KUL, 340 pp.; English Summary, pp. 313-317.

The Place of Philosophy in the Pre-Enlightenment and in the Enlightenment Education

Prof. Stanisław Janeczek, the dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Catholic University of John Paul II in Lublin (Poland), has recently undertaken the long and difficult work of researching both enlightenment education and pre-enlightenment education, i.e. the traditional education in Europe, in order to find and to state the mutual relations between them. Numerous earlier publications have prepared the author for the present book, among them the following: *Oświecenie chrześcijańskie* [The Christian Enlightenment] (Lublin 1994) and especially the monumental work: *Logika czy epistemologia? Historyczno-filozoficzne uwarunkowania nowożytnej koncepcji logiki* [Logic or Epistemology? The Historical and Philosophical Conditions Responsible for the Modern Conception of Logic] (Lublin 2003).

The author primarily analyzes similarities and differences between traditional and enlightenment education. He limits himself mainly to the changes and reforms that could have affected the function of the school institution in Poland, i.e., to those changes that were made in France, in the German states, and in the Habsburg monarchy. It seems that such a procedure is justified: the above-mentioned countries are representative in the field of enlightenment education also for others, so that we can see in their presentation a more general insight into the enlightenment educational system in Europe.

The object of this study is the history of education, but it is analysed by means of the methods of intellectual and philosophical history. In particular, the author tries to answer the following questions: what intellectual and ideological currents and trends stimulated and determined the specific character of different visions and systems of education?

In this context, a model of philosophy is particularly significant. Philosophy played an important role in the rationalisation of worldviews and as a specific form of science in those times. Initially, philosophy was identified with an ordered and systematised vision of reality. With the rise of a restricted conception of science in modern times, it became a group of specialist disciplines that concentrated on their proper themes.

The detailed analyses made by prof. Janeczek permit one to conclude that – contrary to views expressed by some prominent representatives of the Enlightenment – their attitude was not seldom convergent with tradition. This is particularly true in linguistic, philosophical, and religious instruction.

The aim in the traditional school was not only to teach language rules, but to provide a better insight into reality by means of, and in the spirit of, Latin and to obtain a command (often excellent) of this language. It was also owing to the enlightenment school that Latin remained the language of the elite. Even the nineteenth-century humanistic school brought this tradition far into the twentieth century.

Frequent opinions that the „language school” did not have any contact with „reality” (*realia*) do not seem correct. The specific character of the contents characteristic of this general education were adjusted to the needs of students who came from the cultural elite. The purpose was to teach the *realia*, and the post-renaissance school sought to carry out formative and comprehensive ends, for they were of primary importance in the Enlightenment as well.

One can observe in that period an increase in the importance of the bourgeoisie and of the role of the state. The latter encompassed broader and broader areas of human activity, therefore job instruction became more important with its emphasis on mathematics and the natural sciences, especially in their applications to economic questions. Now in the traditional school *eruditio* was carried out indirectly in language instruction and directly – although on a much smaller scale – through the teaching of philosophy.

We have to note that the period of the traditional school saw a cult of „book knowledge”. It seems strange from the contemporary perspective, dominated by a culture oriented to progress in the natural and technological sciences, almost enchanted with the cult of novelty and originality. The cult of book knowledge then was connected – until the Enlightenment – with the so-called „culture of authority”, or with a belief that the truth had already been discovered, often in ancient times. This explains the importance which was accorded to the teaching of philosophy. During the Enlightenment period its exposition was replaced successively by several, independent disciplines, also from the area of the natural sciences.

Despite these modifications, most often manifested in secondary schools, philosophy remained a permanent element of introductory university education. But within the frameworks of this education there was a more practical approach (e.g. more emphasis was laid on independent thinking). The teaching of philosophy was enriched by the natural sciences, replacing in part metaphysics and philosophy of nature. In practical philosophy references to the problems of state life (the social, legal, and economic sciences) are frequent.

Philosophy does not cease to play the function of the rational foundation for a worldview which is determined also by religious education and formation. At the same time, the specific character of religiousness changes. In the Enlightenment it was connected more with the practice of social life. Even the religious institution joined in the function of the state. Religion does not cease to be the indispensable foundation of moral order which is necessary in all dimensions of the life of the

state. At the same time, the religious model of education received support from the goals and motivations formulated at the rational and natural level. These motivations often had a utilitarian character (so-called moral teaching), a fact that accounts for the importance which was attributed, even among the youngest pupils, to the propagation of legal culture. This moral and legal dimension was often exposed and stressed, but – with the exception of the French Revolution – it never replaced the religious perspective. This accounts not only for the importance that was attributed to the teaching of religion and religious practices, but also for the role of religious institutions both in the post-renaissance religious school – Catholic and Protestant alike, with their different methods of teaching and formation – and in the reformed school of the Enlightenment period. The schools were often run and formed by priests who were teachers, and also functioned in principle by means of ecclesiastical funds.

The level of state management, proper to Enlightenment education, was far below the contemporary interference of the state with regard to the educational system, where education is seen as an obligation, and where private education, extended already in the period of the Enlightenment, is got rid of. The traditional and Enlightenment schools diverge from contemporary education with respect to the school's tasks which focus on educational goals and, consequently, the contents of teaching are subordinate to them.

The programmes deriving from Enlightenment ideals eagerly resorted to lofty humanistic ideals when they sought to formulate the needs necessary for the development of citizens, independent of their class. In all the countries, however, this approach was dominated by utilitarian goals, i.e., they adjusted education to the needs of particular classes as defined by the growing interference of the state. Indeed, one can see a considerable progress in elementary education with regard to the contents of teaching, enriched by useful elements in practical life. The elementary schools prepared pupils for agriculture, crafts, and trade; at a higher level, they were prepared for administration and the army.

We notice also a considerable increase in the number of pupils at schools. At the end of the Enlightenment schools were made obligatory, although only at the legal level.

In conclusion, although the traditional, i.e. pre-enlightenment education was different from enlightenment education, they were not as different as they are usually presented to be. In any case, it is an exaggeration when by evaluating these two systems of education they are opposed to each other, for each of them had its successes and serious drawbacks. Therefore we have to do not with a revolution, but with an evolutionary development. We can say that the traditional philosophy – in the first, i.e. in the pre-enlightenment period – was more homogenous, coherent and speculative, whereas the enlightenment philosophy had richer contents, was more differentiated and more practical.

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