

## INTERCULTURAL PEDAGOGY AS RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PAIDEIA MEANING

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**Abstract:** *We live in a knowledge-and-learning-based society. Human learning experiences multiply, diversify, expand to the level of the entire society and they spread throughout lifetime. Starting from the premise of a formation-information relationship, found in any educational course, information gains ground to the detriment of formation. Should pre-industrial societies hold the forming of characters as their major goal, in the industrial society, and in particular in the post-industrial society, education's formative traits are gradually marginalized, in favor of excessively and exclusively cultivating the thirst of being informed. Thus, humanity reaches a point of being informed only for the sake of information, in the absence of value or awareness of selection and use of the avalanche of data that overwhelms the contemporary man's life. Thus, we witness a loss of the true paideia meaning of education, whose components are vital for any educational process all over the world. Intercultural pedagogy has come into existence at the same time with appearance of cultural globalization, as a necessity of educating people able to live in a new world due to their human qualities. The success of such an endeavor is given by the very return to the MAN, to the cultivation of his humanity, through transmitting in him adequate attitudes toward the infinite human diversity and by facilitating solidary interactions among people and relationships based on mutual recognition and respect. The survey made through the current research intends to identify a set of attitudes manifested by students, their approach to the Others, but equally, the sources of their becoming human beings in a dynamic and polychromic world.*

**Keywords:** *paideia; intercultural pedagogy; formation vs information; cultural pedagogy*

### 1. INTRODUCTION. FROM PEDAGOGY OF CULTURE TO INTERCULTURAL PEDAGOGY

Pedagogy of culture appeared during the first quarter of the twentieth century, as a distinct branch of the pedagogical thinking, under the influence of the German philosophy of values. Its foundations had been laid by the German pedagogue Eduard Spranger, who attributed culture a fundamental role in the process of human development and its humanization. The cultural substance of human existence and its axiological universe, come back to actuality. Education is the one to achieve the alteration of objective values into subjective values, through completion of three steps: receiving cultural values, living the values through vibration of the subjective spirit in contact with superindividual values, and finally, creating new values that enrich the already existent cultural universe. Thus, through education, man is connected with spiritual values, through which he manages to create an authentic personality for himself. Spranger achieves an ideal typology of human personalities, in accordance with

the interiorized fundamental values, types that compose a genuine "scheme of understanding" of the person, having the manner of relating to the world of values for a criterion. The pedagogical requirement that results from his theory consists of differentiated treatment of students, based on the interiorized values, values that guide their conduct. Pedagogy of culture, in turn, manifests as pedagogy of diversity, by promoting and following the human being's uniqueness and individual particularities. R. Meister is another representative of pedagogy of culture, who defines education as "guiding the young generation with the help of adults, in order to explain the inherited culture", a statement that highlights the role of education in achieving the "cultural heredity" (Cucoș, 1995:35-36).

Established at the intersection of some disciplines in the area of socio-humanities, pedagogy of culture leads to an awareness of the role of education and implicitly, of culture, in the process of forming man and human communities, for achieving social progress. Intercultural education is the greatest challenge for education in the contemporary world. It implies a particular form of pedagogy, as a

theoretical-methodological foundation of this educational process – intercultural pedagogy – and the development of a psychology adequate to it – intercultural psychology. It is revealed the fact that the origins of intercultural pedagogy are in the conflicts and dilemmas generated by cultural pedagogy, which, in the contemporary pedagogy, trigger off two divergent movements, relating to the society's axiological field in the educational performance. On the one side, the American *progressivism* appears to sustain the importance and predominance of changes over permanencies, on the other side, the *perennialist pedagogy* appears to promote stability, constancy, on the background of human nature's universality, specific to the European space. This difference of approach between the two cultural spaces (American and European) is explainable through the fact that the U.S.A. represents the most heterogeneous society in the world, from the cultural standpoint, it being a society mostly made up of immigrants. The original population (American Indians) represents less than one percent of the entire country's population, which has stirred interest for this area and the appearance of the first intercultural educational enterprises, of first teaching methods adjusted to ethnic diversity, at the beginning of the twentieth century (1920). Ethnic and racial conflicts of 1943 (especially the ones in Detroit) led to pedagogists' interest in the current semantic form of the concept of intercultural education. Nevertheless, in Europe, the interest in the interculturality issue begins to manifest only in the years of 1960-1970. The waves of immigrants that came to very advanced countries in the post-war years made Louis Meylan proclaim the virtues of intercultural education in Europe, in the years of 1950. Only in 1981, is the phrase "intercultural education" officially used, within Project no. 7 of the Council of Europe, with regard to the education for the immigrants' children. Then, it was taken over and developed by the London's Institute of Education, within the 1982 and 1984 conferences (Păun, 2002:187). This gap of almost half a century in promoting intercultural education has, at its base, the diverse spiritual geography and socio-cultural evolution of the two continents. However, both orientations (progressivist and perennialist) are exclusivist and unilateral, since they absolutize either permanence or change.

During the same period of time (the sixties), intercultural psychology derives from social psychology, and it focuses on comparative studies of intergroups, which, yet, annihilates itself gradually, through their degeneration into a total cultural relativism. Therefore, the center of interest of studies moves toward individuals/groups in contact with one

another and coming from diverse cultures, which most often suggests relationships of incompatibility. This new orientation gives birth, in the years of '80s, to "ethnic psychology" (Berry: 1985). The very concept of intercultural education correlates with an older concept, of Anglo-Saxon-multi-ethnic-education that gained grounds in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, etc. after the year of 1960. Intercultural practices were, for a long time, limited to minorities' problems, ignoring the macrostructural issue of transnational "cultural borrowings" (Nedelcu, *apud* Păun, 2002:187). Progressively, the perspective of approaches becomes broader and intercultural education does not longer addresses migrant students, like the German "auslander pedagogik" did in the past. Intercultural pedagogy becomes a "pedagogy that aims all students, to enhance solidary interaction while respecting cultural diversity" (Dassen, 1999:42). It will develop under the pressure of crisis generated by the failure of schooling migrant children and of the inter-human relationship difficulties, between migrants and the host population.

## 2. POST-MODERN PEDAGOGY – FAILURE OF PEDAGOGY OF CULTURE AND DEATH OF PEDAGOGY

The matter of post-modern world becomes a source of new imperatives in the world of culture and education. The waves of migrants that the Western Europe witnesses make this side of Europe become more and more heterogeneous, from ethnic and cultural perspectives, causing an increase of interest in interculturality. The migrationist phenomenon is intrinsic to the contemporary world; it cannot be stopped and it leads to the formation of multicultural societies that are more and more vulnerable from the axiological standpoint.

What characterizes the current social and cultural landscape is the avalanche of random and irrational changes that result in genuine Brownian movements. The avalanche of changes causes radical alterations in the cultural and spiritual physiognomy of the epoch and assiduous quests for finding a new identity (Ilișoi, 2005:45).

This phenomenon starts during modernity and becomes radical beginning with the former half of the twentieth century. Modernity's project of human emancipation, which originates in the illuminist thinking, failed. "Cultural shock" (Toffler, 1973), cultural change that we now witness, have been caused by the erosion of bases and values, by the axiological vacuum created, by

the accelerated pace of changes. Toffler defines his coined phrase as “an effect that immersion into a foreign culture has on unprepared visitor”, which explains, to a great extent, its disorientation and frustration feelings (Toffler, 1973:10). The dissolution of the value framework proposed by the classical humanism, through ‘truth’, ‘good’ and ‘beautiful’, left behind an empty space, which was later on invaded by material assets and the appearance of man enslaved by them. Despite the generalization of communication during the information era and of globalizing projects, we discover our own powerlessness in perceiving the world and humanity as a unitary whole. At the same time, society’s functioning under the authority of economic principles (principle of productivity, efficiency etc.), promotion of material values to the detriment of spiritual ones, exacerbation of competitive environment gradually led to betrayal of ancient Greek inheritance, of its pedagogical matrix, of the model endowed with a profound anthropocentric character. If the core of education is considered art, the era of character formation nowadays, formation of personality or spirit become obsolete. Michael R. Allen rhetorically wondered, by means of his book’s title – “The Death of Pedagogy?”, once he had discovered the transformation of education as pedagogy, into education as management (Stan, 2004:25). Within this managerial scenario, the relationship trainer – trainee is altered, it becoming a contractual relationship, whereas education becomes merely a process of information, skills or competences transmission. The American philosopher, John Dewey warns out, on this inadequacy:

When the acquiring of information and of technical intellectual skill do not influence the formation of a social disposition, ordinary vital experience fails to gain in meaning, while schooling, in so far, creates only "sharps" in learning -- that is, egoistic specialists (Dewey, 1972:9-10).

In theory, it is necessary for a focus shift on the formative dimension of the contemporary education, without neglecting the information dimension. In practice, in the field of education, it was proven that information and formation are intimately connected and interdependent. Information forms or shapes, which implies a selection of information with maximum formative potential. It is complementary with formation in the field of information, it is vital under the circumstances of the current information explosion, whose finality consists of acquiring cognitive autonomy and forming axiological awareness, by formulation of some selective value

criteria, analysis and application of information. Beyond the theoretical approaches, the pedagogical reality marginalizes or even ignores the formative role of education, whose resources are to be found in the very power of culture and values. “School has to keep assuring, free of cost, the teaching of some disciplines in connection with the simple personal perfection” (Bruckner, 2002:121), this being the very antidote to an excessive Pragmatization of knowledge. Revitalization of axiological education, of education through values and in favor of values, presupposes the identification of a secure value system:

education needs to focus on a congruent axiological system, relatively imperturbable, attached to some constant and fundamental values, which are able to avoid the contemporary world’s destruction and vulnerability (Cucos, 1995:15).

These requirements imposed on the contemporary education, are also found in the educational ideal of ancient Greek culture, expressed through the general term of *paideia*. We equally find it in the Spartan model of education, centered on physical exercises and acquisition of military virtues, as well as in the Athenian educational model that promotes the harmonious development of individuals through gymnastics and music.

Greek discovery of Man is not the discovery of subjective Self, but the awareness of the universal laws of human nature. The Greeks’ spiritual principle is not individualism, but ‘humanism’ (...); it designates Man’s education to reach his perfect shape, his authentic human nature (Jaeger, 1998:13).

Through the pedagogical humanism, the Greeks place education in the center of the world, and they attribute it the mission of developing the human subject in its integrality. ‘Kalokagathia’ embodies the educational ideal of the ancient Greece and promotes the value triad: beautiful body, kind soul and truth-thirsty spirit. It is suggestive that the term ‘paideia’ is translated into Latin by Varro and Cicero as ‘humanitas’. In this context, the aim of the educational effort consists of the achievement of the human ideal, which implies a special meaning of culture, perceived as “the status of a fully developed spirit, for which all virtuositities have been implemented, an individual that has truly become Man” (Marrou, 1997:162). Apart from personal perfection, classical education contributes to creating the culture community: “communicating in a common ideal, in a common conception on man’s essential finality and of his means to achieve it” (Marrou, 1997:163). The

failure of pedagogy of culture is tightly connected with the abandonment of this meaning of education. The phrase “pedagogy of culture” achieves the connection between pedagogy, culture and education, connection that covers the semantic richness of each of the terms and reflects

the most wonderful meeting occurring in the universe: the meeting between man and nature, between the man who produces culture and the culture that makes the man (Sacaliș-Calata, 2005:6).

Developing reflection on man and on human becoming, pedagogy of culture becomes a source of wisdom. What the world today misses is this very wisdom, to which knowledge is a necessary condition, yet not a sufficient one. “Sophrosyne” (< Greek) represents, for the ancient Greeks, the state that one can achieve while reflecting on man, on his place in the world and on his becoming and his perfection. It consists of “self-control” and “temperance”. Its etymological meaning is of “health of the thought” and it is mentioned by Plato, together with “harmonia” (< Greek), whose Pythagorean semantics is left behind, to underline the harmony between the parts of the soul.

Likewise, one of modernity’s errors consists of identifying learning with education. If learning is centered on cultivating logical and technological intelligence, while being neutral from the axiological standpoint, education operates at the level of human consciousness and it leads to the formation of the axiological intelligence. Ancient Greeks made clear distinction between “phronesis” – the practical intelligence -, and “episteme” – the scientific knowledge. An increased focus on learning to the detriment of education gradually leads to the risk of

appearance of a foolish scientist who, despite his education and intelligence, will destabilize the entire planet due to the fact that his knowledge lacks the capacity of judging the good from the evil” (...). It is not the logical or technological intelligence that separate humans and cultures, but the axiological intelligence. This is the territory where angels and devils fight for the human soul (...), whereas the mind and the logical intelligence are, more or less, universal and the same with all human beings and cultures, the soul and the axiological intelligence continue to be particular and subjective (Sacaliș-Calata, 2005:18-19).

On a long term, the consequence of this approach consists of an internal, dehumanizing involution, to which an increase of discrepancy between external evolution and the internal one is added. “Learning without educating” is the

tendency that will lead to the appearance of the destructive neo-barbarism. The same distinction has been supported by Mircea Malița (2001) when, approaching the twentieth century’s geo-modernity, he uses the phrase “ten thousand cultures, only one civilization”. If the benefits of civilization may become visible coherently, at the entire planet’s level, cultures exist only through their uniqueness and their particular spiritual physiognomy. This truth opens a possible way of reconstructing humanity and the human, by promoting universal communication and understanding beyond cultures’ diversity. The Romanian scholar, Vasile Pârvan, while analyzing the cultural phenomenon, claims that the release of culture’s formative energies represents a process that will never be obsolete. In his opinion, education through culture has the role of assuring life’s spiritualization following the motto of the <eternal human validity>” (Humă, 1987:175).

### **3. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PAIDEIA MEANING OF EDUCATION – THE PREMISE OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION**

If pedagogy is both a science of education and of culture, the abandonment of the paideic meaning of education is nurtured by the evolutionary meaning of culture: “The tragedy of modern culture consists of keeping away the content of culture from the scope of culture – cultivation of personality” (Simmel, 1998:210). Exacerbation of learning to the detriment of education, and of information against formation, are as many ways of distancing from the paideic act. The premises of authentic education are built of a general human feature – the man as a cultural and educable being. As an initiation within the value system, education implies a system of authentic values, geberally human. This is the path for forming characters, as a relational-valuable dimension of the human personality, of the formation of attitudes that are connected to personal values and beliefs. Within the topic of interculturality, the place and role of attitudes gain an overwhelming significance. Cultural diversity generates diversity of human behaviors. In this context, the “Copernican revolution“(Cucoș, 2000:120), which education is called to achieve, consists of promoting the relationship with the Other, accepting Alterity/Otherness, manifesting solidarity, establishing a relationship with Diversity and Change and, not the least, establishing the relationship with the Self. All of these represent, in fact, a system of attitudes that

form in the proximity of the value Man. By Man, culture may become a connector. The Man is the common factor, although cultures Manifest heterogeneous forms. Culture is the one that may facilitate consensus and understanding among people, at planetary scale, on condition of its tying to the universality of the value Man. The real spiritual geography imposes this approach. On the large and mobile scale of postmodernity's values, the Man as a supreme value, needs to prove himself a model in education. Authentic human interactions involve the existence of a value continuum, of some stability and of some firm axiological landmarks.

Formation of attitudes represents a complex and long-lasting process that, apart from understanding and interiorization of values, implies an affective learning. The conative component of attitude is built on the cognitive one, energetically supported by the affective one. Intercultural education thus becomes more than an attitudinal assembly, it will be a state of spirit, based on love and respect for humans.

#### 4. CASE STUDY. ATTITUDINAL CONFIGURATIONS AMONG STUDENTS

The study aimed at achieving a radiography of the attitudinal system of the student population. At this point, a pre-survey was made to validate the relevance of the instruments used and to establish operational variables. The sample under analysis consisted of 51 subjects (22 of whom were first-year students, and 29 were third-year students). The selection of the years of study was not random; on the contrary, it aimed to identify the contribution of academic education on formation of the students' character, value system and personal beliefs. The investigation method applied was a standardized test for the assessment of attitudes (Carter, 2015:69). The test was translated into English and adjusted to the Romanian population by Mihai-Dan Pavelescu. It is made up of 25 closed items. For each of the statements formulated, respondents were given a 1 to 5 scale, where 5 stood for "I agree/ it characterizes me the best", whereas 1 stood for "I do not agree/ It characterizes me the least". Assessment of results was made, during the first stage, based on general scores obtained by each of the respondents. Then, during the second stage, there were selected the relevant items for the identification of attitudinal expression in relation with the reference values of their personal conception of the world and life (values: Man, solidarity, trust, awareness of the current status of the human society etc.).

The intervals of general scores obtained by each of the subjects, holding interpretative values were: (1) Total score 90-125 reflected an open and positive attitude to life, both professional and personal, perceived as such by people around; (2) Total score 65-89 – although, in general it reflected a correct attitude, it can be improved. It was recommended that, from time to time, a self-analysis should be made, to examine not only the attitude toward duties but also toward the other people in our society and everywhere else; (3) Total score under 65 – being at the inferior limit of the score, it may reflect attitude problems (negative attitudes), especially in relation to items that scored 3 points or less than that. In these fields, attitude needed to be examined and modified. Self-knowledge based on inner dialogue and on interactions with the others is an essential condition for the conversion of negative attitudes into positive ones.

Starting from these intervals, following the data analysis, it was found out that 84.31% of the respondents were placed on the upper part of the scale, based on the general score obtained, and 15.69% were placed at the middle of the scale. The absence of negative attitudes suggested the fact that the respondents were part of a segment of population educated at military institutions, where competence of citizen and the civic spirit were indispensable characteristics of the future professional combatants. The distribution of subjects on the two intervals of scores, in accordance with the year of study, was balanced, which gave credit to both high-school education and to higher education. None of the subjects of the test was placed at the inferior limit of the score.

The first statement of the test was significant for the topic under discussion: "I am proud of my nationality". The average score obtained, in this case, was 4.51, on a scale of 1 to 5, which proved the existence of an accentuated feeling of belonging to the Romanian socio-cultural space. The cultural identity built through education is the expression of national character, through primary personality. Another relevant item was item 4, that proposed the following statement: "Primarily, people are all good". The average scored given to this item spread on the interval 2.93 to 3.50. This score suggested the presence of a certain level of distrust, suspicion with regard to appreciating the human being, whose effect would reflect on the quality of interpersonal relationships. The inability of associating good to the quality of humans, discolored a negative perspective on life, which education was called to ameliorate. Item 4 correlated positively with item 10, which proposed the statement: "There are very few people whom I know I could not trust". The average score

obtained in this case was 2.55, thus confirming the previous score. Nevertheless, the situation became balanced through the openness manifested by the respondents toward the Others. For item 16: “I try to understand the Other’s point of view”, the average score was significantly higher – 4.30.

Items 18 and 20 proposed statements that scrutinized the attitude to Others, the subjects’ availability to know the Others and offer them joy. Both items scored between 3.30 and 3.50. Apart from the temperamental structure (introvert/extrovert), these scores were the effect of the socio-cultural environment where these young people were formed. Their preoccupation for personal development and the gaining of a social and professional status to provide them satisfactions represented natural manifestations of the human nature. What young people were concerned about was the excessive self-concern, to the detriment of others, a natural consequence of a world that promoted individualism and egotism. Their attitude to the world was of interest, as it was expressed by means of the information explosion and of violence escalation, defining characteristics of the contemporary epoch. In both cases, young people manifested a balance attitude, without extremist tendencies.

The sample under investigation was placed on the segment of 18-21 years of age, which explained the expectation attitude, lacking active or direct involvement in the the current world’s problems. The theoretical approaches of various subject-matters, the abundance of information, represented but one stage in their formation for life, the young people being aware that this step was necessary but not sufficient. Information about life and humans could not guarantee a better world. The subject-matter that the students found purely formative could be grouped into two categories: on the one side, there were the socio-humanities, which, due to their content, were able to transmit information with a highly formative impact, on the other side, there were subject-matters belonging to various disciplinary areas, due to the human model offered by the professor associated to them.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The reactivation of the ancient model, promotion of socio-humanities (marginalized in the technocrat society), a serious selection and preparation of those called to perform education acts could offer new chances to education. These could be the ways for unlocking the connection channels with the Others, for annihilating the dangerous indifference and, not the

least, for the moral and spiritual recovery of humanity. Revitalization of the ancient Hellenic time, by demolition of old landmarks and beliefs and the installation of a deep disappointment, leads us to culture. Culture represents the only firm and authentic value which can help us save the “most precious gift offered to mortals” by gods (Marrou, 1997:164). Then, as well as now, under the circumstances of cultural globalization, there was launched the phrase “citizen of the universe” (nowadays, “citizen of the planet”). The formula developed by the Stoic thinking, proposed as an antidote against the harshness of times, revendicates its actuality.

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