Education for and as philosophy – a didacticist approach

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Abstract

The current perspective on philosophy shows that in everyday life and thus the specific literature one no longer attaches importance to the role of philosophy regarding the issue of what is meant to be education for the society. In this context, we see that the philosophical paradigm has entirely disappeared. On the other hand, in the cases where the desire to support it is still maintained, we can note attempts to analyse and explain the themes it approaches from the perspective of social pragmatism. Maybe we should not relate such remarks only to the purely theoretical value of philosophy, which is often abstract, but rather have in view an equilibrated didacticism of what philosophy itself represents for the society. In other words, the benefit of education for philosophy becomes obvious to the extent to which, in terms of social pragmatism, there is a certain methodological value which is somewhat responsible for the quantification of what today's society calls tangible results. Therefore, in today's society, philosophical education and education for *and* as philosophy *involve an axiological reassessment in relation to the needs and requirements of the present.*

Keywords: *education* for *and* as *philosophy, philosophy didactics*, *equilibrated didacticism*, *philosophy of education.*

Introduction

The possibilities of presenting education for philosophy reflect a number of meanings and values that translate the ethical and meta-ethical values into a purely applicative approach. Being open to a new kind of education does not justify the purely didacticist approach of the relationship between pragmatism and ethics every time. Moreover, we believe that universalizing the teaching methods to the dimension of an education for philosophy reflects the ongoing transformation of the society.

However, a specific typology of the teaching activities leads to the idea of cultural consciousness coupled with the idea of philosophical consciousness.

Moreover, the functionality of a teaching methodology for the philosophical disciplines is possible to the extent to which setting a value frame involves didactic spontaneity and equilibrium. In this context, we note that such a perspective does not exclude the idea of generalization; on the contrary, it supports the idea of equilibrated didacticism.

Didactic rationality may generate different ways of approaching the scientific content. Rational reflection and emotional experiences are specific to the one who pursues philosophy. In this context, the question whether the one who pursues philosophy didactics can also relate to such features is raised.

In our opinion, the need for teaching philosophical disciplines should reflect a number of attitudes of the socio-educational actors, which can enable the materialization of the communication process. In other words, as a structural entity of the teaching-learning-assessment process, philosophy must also reflect the materialization / manifestation of a whole process of valorization. In terms of the human consciousness, this way of approaching generates a range of meanings and significances which are meant to reveal a special view of how education for philosophy materializes within the teaching process.

Philosophy and didactics

The didactic approach of philosophy (philosophy is itself its own pedagogy[1] or has a purely pedagogical character)[2] can be considered interdisciplinary. Thus, the teaching strategies are based on the need for socio-economic pragmatism in the development of the teaching activity. Moreover, besides eliminating the didactic obstacle,[3] the efficiency of such a didactic approach involves taking into consideration a whole process of pragmatic operationalization of the assumed operational objectives. However, the axiological frames that should underlie the main coordinates of strategic action represent a relevant indicator in terms of assuming a pragmatic educational reality.

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[1] Bermejo Victor Santiuste and Francisco Gomez de Velasco, *Didáctica de Ia filosofia - teoria, métodos, programas, evaluación* (Didactics of philosophy: methods, curriculum and assessment) (Madrid: Narcea, 1984), 11.

[2] João Boavida, "Por uma didáctica para a filosofia análise de algumas razões" (For an educational philosophy concerning the analysis of some reasons), *Revista Filosófica de Coimbra* 9 (1996): 91-110.

[3] Guy Brousseau, "Les obstacles épistémologiques, problèmes et ingénierie didactique" (Epistemological obstacles, problems and didactics engineering), in *Théorie des situations didactiques* (Theory of didactic situations), ed. Guy Brousseau (Grenoble La Pensée Sauvage, 1998), 115-160.

In this context, we can mention the fact that the stratification of the teaching-learning-assessment process is precisely what determines an axiological balance regarding the use of didactic means and methods. The assumed educational context simply supports the requirements of a didactic model of the philosophical dimension. However, the pragmatic criterion cannot be fully validated in the case of philosophy.

The situation that we are bringing into question refers to abstract thinking. Education for philosophy also involves organizing the competencies towards a certain system of values that correspond to such an approach. For example, the explanatory didactic discourse which is centered on the student[4] requires the involvement of the socio-educational actors in the proper development of the teaching activities. This situation can generate a number of effects which can be explained in relation to the concept of pedagogical/didactic innovation. Therefore, the issue of education for philosophy is a social aspect that highlights a series of didactic / scientific models.

In the context of certain social, political or economic changes, the dimension of the philosophical discipline has also undergone a number of metamorphoses itself in terms of introducing it as a discipline in the (inter)national educational systems. In most cases, the interdisciplinary valences it involves at social level are highlighted. In this context, the study of the discipline of philosophy must regard particularly the development of those competencies that refer to the idea of rigor, systemicity, scientific openness, methodology, etc.

Seen in particular, education for philosophy is a special kind of education, in the sense that it involves re-associating certain epistemic correspondences, through which the learning contents can be explained. From the methodological point of view, analyzing some specific forms of teaching strategies involves defining the context where the teaching activity itself takes place. Moreover, the current educational society shows certain social/economic/political connections. Thus, we can place the idea of education for philosophy amongst the disciplinary fields.

It refers to adopting the teaching strategies assumed in relation to the economic market requirements. Perhaps not coincidentally, we can note the emergence and development of certain disciplines such as philosophical economics or economic philosophy/epistemology or philosophical psychology, etc. We can also note that the normative and methodological reality indicates the

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[4] Elena Calistru, "Limbajul nonverbal în procesul didactic" (Nonverbal language in the didactic process), in *Symposion* (The Romanian Academy, Iaşi Branch, „Gh. Zane" Institute for Economic and Social Research Iaşi) 2 (16) 2010, 471-475.

possibility of an efficient instructive approach in the educational activity. Therefore, a didactic methodology covering the field of philosophical disciplines proves to be more than welcome in the educational practice.

The existence of educational (didactic / pedagogical) models in the knowledge society illustrates a relevant image whose defining aspects are given precisely by the elements related to the innovation of the teaching process. In other words, philosophy didactics involve methodological differences and the translation of some experiences of the human thought at didactic level. The dimension of educational pragmatism related to philosophy didactics can be validated according tp the way the involvement of the educational actors in the teaching activity materializes.

Improving the didactic activity and implicitly the social norms requires an explanatory dimension of the learning contents. Therefore, a discipline such as philosophy didactics is more than necessary, because such an explanatory dimension highlights a number of (in)formative/forming meanings regarding the assumption of an educational paradigm. This perspective requires new conceptual and theoretical approaches in terms of understanding and explaining the need for philosophy didactics.

However, (beyond a series of epistemological / ontogenetic / psychogenetic obstacles)[5] the didacticist approach of philosophy reflects a number of phrases that can be subjected to a judicious analysis. Among them we can mention: *the philosophy as education, education as philosophy, philosophy through education, education through philosophy, etc.* Therefore, we can see that their existence within the conceptual-theoretical field generates different meanings and significances that are susceptible of any absolutist interpretations. Thus, we believe that it might be much more efficient to analyze the applicability of the phrases that define the actual disciplinary dimension in relation to which they occur.

Philosophical pragmatism and didactic pragmatism

Layering the significances as ways of representing the socio-educational aspect reveals the unique understanding of the conceptual dimension of the

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[5] Guy Brousseau, "Les obstacles épistémologiques et les problèmes en mathématiques" (Epistemological obstacles and issues in mathematics) (Texte d'une conférence exposée lors de la XXVIIIe rencontre organisée en 1976 par la CIEAEM), Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgique, 1976), 101-117; and in Guy Brousseau, "Les obstacles épistémologiques et les problèmes en mathématiques," *Recherches en Didactique des Mathématiques* (Researches to Didactics of Mathematics) 4 (2) (Université Bordeaux I, 1983), 165-198.

scientific contents. Thus, a scientific analysis of the discursive forms shows us that the specific understanding of didactic communication is possible only to the extent to which the aim of the teaching-educational activity expresses a number of subjective and objective opinions which essentially relate to the idea of pedagogical practice. Furthermore, supporting and promoting quality within the didactic activity should also be based on the psychological context assumed by the socio-educational actors.

In other words, the observational dimension of the didactic aim reflects a different way of approaching *education for and as philosophy*. Such methodological correspondences show that the possibilities for the educational act to occur refer to certain social models translated into a praxiological reality. Therefore, setting a theoretical and practical framework within a teaching-educational approach simply expresses the fact that any didactic activity must aim at achieving performance.

This way, e*ducation for and as philosophy* can entail a didactic approach which should focus, in our opinion, on the one hand, on the idea of performance, and on the other hand, on the idea of competitiveness of the didactic process. In this context, we are considering the concept of "didactic transposition" (explained by Michel Develay[6] through two complementary processes – *didacticization* and *axiologization*, which are synchronically analyzed, together with the aim, by Michel Minder),[7] which is responsible for the way a number of issues that allow the exploitation of knowledge by redeveloping the learning contents are understood and put into practice.

Thus, we can identify a number of approaches which are specific to the didactic methodology (the heuristic approach, discovery learning, collective discussion, group work), which facilitate the materialization of the objectives set by the educational decision makers.[8] Moreover, the existence of a didactic methodology in the teaching-learning-assessment process supports the theoretical-actional approach, which enables the achievement of maximum efficiency in terms of knowledge acquisition.[9] When we talk about philosophy didactics, we must relate to the ways of efficiently coordinating the pedagogical practice based on an

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[6] Michel Develay, *De l'apprentissage à l'enseignement* (Learning to teaching), (Paris, ESF, 1992).

[7] Michel Minder, *Didactique fonctionnelle: objectifs, stratégies, evaluation* (Functional Didactics: objectives, strategies, evaluation), (Paris / Bruxelles: Département De Boeck Université, 1999), 31-34.

[8] Ion Albulescu and Mirela Albulescu, *Didactica disciplinelor socio-umane* (Didactics of social and humanistic disciplines) (Cluj-Napoca: Napoca Star, 1999), 72-71.

[9] Ioan Cerghit, *Metode de învățământ* (Teaching methods) (Iaşi: Polirom, 2006), 17.

entire conceptual and methodological system.[10] Moreover, when the philosophical dimension is approached in this way, the presuppositions of the pedagogical practice are legitimate and even criticized by didactics (in our case, philosophy didactics.)[11] Therefore, the didactic approach that is specific to the field of philosophy must be outlined by taking into account the epistemological / methodological status of the concerned discipline.

Moreover, the effect of operationalizing certain objectives indicates a number of multiple interpretations regarding the didactic approach of the learning contents. Talking about philosophy didactics also involves taking into account the social functions that performance generally depends on. Thus, the prospective nature of philosophy didactics involves analyzing the eligibility criteria based on which the teaching-educational activity can be validated.

Thus, we believe that the reassessment of the teaching-learning-assessment activity of philosophy is required. This analysis requires a whole process of reorganization of the didactic activity, a process which enables the validation of the strategies assumed by the educational actors. Thus, the theoretical and practical share of the axiological approaches found in the didactic activity, within the philosophy classes, indicates a degree of complexity which arises precisely from the attempt of laying the bases of an applied philosophy. However, such applicability is also found in the dimension of ethics in general.

In our view, an analysis of education for and as philosophy also requires an approach in terms of the levels of reality / organization. We particularly have in mind a new kind of view based on which in the "possible worlds" a new didacticist paradigm can be legitimized. In these circumstances, we can admit that an effective didactic communication between the educational actors is only possible to the extent to which the meanings of the social reality show the pragmatic dimension of the assumed objectives / strategies. At the same time, we believe that, in this context, one must also take into consideration the integrative dimension, together with understanding the meanings through social relations.

The idea of philosophy didactics (and the interrogations regarding whether such a dimension is possible)[12] is an educational issue which highlights the ways

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[10] Aurel Cazacu, *Didactica filosofiei (Philosophy didactics)* (Bucharest: The Publishing House of ,,România de Mâine" Foundation, 2006).
[11] Gheorghe Clitan, *Didactica filosofiei. Ghid practic. Structuri argumentative în predarea-învăţarea sistematică a filosofiei în liceu* (Philosophy didactics. Practical Guide. Argumentative structures in systematic teaching and learning high school philosophy) (Timişoara: Eurobit, 2003), 9.
[12] Miguel Ángel Gómez Mendoza, *Introducción a la didáctica de la filosofía* (Introduction to didactics of philosophy), (Editorial Papiro, 2003), 17-20.

of implementing didactic strategies in the relationship between philosophical pragmatism and didactic pragmatism. In these circumstances, we find justifiable the assumption that philosophy didactics (whose naturalness[13] generates new forms of organization that enable the shaping of specific educational strategies) and hence *education **for** and **as** philosophy* requires a real potential regarding the teaching-learning-assessment process. Therefore, accepting that education is a particular form of human practice[14] only confirms the fact that there can be established a methodological connection between *philosophy didactics* and *philosophy of education*.[15] In other words, based on a systematic analysis of philosophy and the history of philosophy implicitly, some authors have pointed out that there is a strong connection between philosophy and didactics,[16] regardless of the learning cycles (primary, secondary, etc.[17]) Moreover, the correlation that has been acknowledged and scientifically explained between the dialogical-pragmatic method and the epistemological and pedagogical criteria[18] makes us accept the fact that *philosophy also means didactics* or that philosophy can also be seen as didactic research[19], keeping the extensional conceptual/theoretical dimensions.

The priority attached to didactics philosophy becomes paradigmatic to the extent to which educational pragmatism, respectively philosophical pragmatism, illustrates a model that can be scientifically legitimated. Moreover, the architecture of such a model indicates an educational context that meets the social needs and requirements. The scientific interpretations resulting from assuming such a model at educational level only show the need for the rehabilitation and re-evaluation of the idea of pragmatic philosophy and philosophy didactics. In other words, from

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[13] Amado Ezequiel Osorio Valencia, *Filosofía, filosofía de la educación y didáctica de la filosofía* (Philosophy, philosophy of education and didactics of philosophy), (Universidad de Caldas, ASEUC, 2006), 315.

[14] Salazar Bondy Augusto, *Didáctica de la filosofía* (Didactics of philosophy) (Facultad de Letras y Cinecias Humanas, Lima, UNMSM, 1995), 15.

[15] João Boavida, "De una didáctica de la filosofía a una filosofía de la educación" (From Didactics of Philosophy to philosophy of education), *Revista Española de pedagogia* (Spanish Review of Pedagogy) LXIV, 234 (2006): 205-226.

[16] Ekkehard Martens, *Dialogisch-pragmatische Philosophiedidaktik* (Dialogue and pragmatic philosophy didactics) (Hannover: Schroedel, 1979).

[17] Luis Maria Cifuentes, *Didactica de la filosofia: formacion del profesorado educacion secundaria* (Didactics of philosophy: teacher training of second level) (Grao, 2010).

[18] Sebastia Trias Mercant, "Tendencias actuales de la didactica de la filosofia" (Current trends in didactics of philosophy), *Quaderns de Pensament*, 6 (Universitat de les Illes Balears, 1986), 141-150.

[19] Michel Tozzi, "Vers una didactique de la philosophie" (To the Didactics of philosophy), *Cahiers pédagogiques* (Pedagogique Notebook) 270 (1989), 18-19.

our point of view, *education for and as philosophy* requires a series of axiological coordinates corresponding to the society where its existence is felt.

Conclusions

The expression of educational pragmatism results precisely from the theoretical and applicative connections that are specific to didactics, philosophy and the areas to which they relate. In other words, in this context, coordinating and implementing the didactic strategies at educational level reflects precisely the particularity of such pragmatism. Therefore, approaching the dimension of philosophy didactics from a scientific perspective involves a number of aspects related to the idea of improvement and social development.

Therefore, we can note the dynamics specific to a didacticist approach of the disciplinary fields. Furthermore, attaching a series of socio-educational responsibilities to the aims involves a whole process of scientific reassessment of the teaching and learning contents. One such effort of scientific reassessment also involves assuming certain didactic strategies that are supposed to support the teaching-learning-assessment process. In this context, we are also taking into consideration what the specific literature calls competitive strategies.

The analysis of the issue of e*ducation for and as philosophy* highlights different ways of approaching an educational reality which is meant to support the didacticist paradigm of the teaching-learning-assessment process. This approach reflects a number of issues based on which the socio-educational criteria can be validated in the field of scientific knowledge. The assumed objectives of such an approach also involve the achievement of the methodological correspondences that are specific to the educational process.

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