

Chapter 105

Philosophy of education introduction to epistemological status

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ABSTRACT

The philosophical thought is characterized by reflection, that is, the search for something by itself through speculation, examining and analysing carefully. When defined as reflection, philosophy is constituted as the knowledge of knowledge, i.e., thinking is acting over scientific thought itself, questioning it and troubling it. Pedagogics is understood as a science and its principles should be submitted to philosophical reflection, once philosophy

is not restricted to the control of what can be observed by senses, orientating itself towards the knowledge of principles which escape the perception of senses. In Philosophy of Education, philosophy is put as a form of knowledge and education, as a philosophical problem. Together, both terms represent the study of theoretical and practical foundations in our society. The essential Philosophy of Education function consists of critically following educational activity, in order to explain its principle, to clarify the function and contribution of pedagogical disciplines and to evaluate the meaning of the chosen solutions. The absence of philosophical orientation in education field may bring a bad result. It is only possible to improve and rebuild the educational system when one has a true Philosophy of Education, in which there is a deal about objectives, possibilities and conditions for education. So, Philosophy of Education is truly necessary for the success of pedagogical science.

Keywords: philosophy, education, reflection.

1 INTRODUCTION

The origin of philosophy dates back to ancient Greece, and the very word "philosophy" is of Greek origin, literally meaning love (*philos*) to wisdom (*sophia*). Philosophical thought emerged as an alternative to the mythological and religious explanations prior to it. Instead of continuing to accept the explanation of the foundation and origin of reality solely by appeal to the gods, the early Greek philosophers speculatively suggested natural or abstract explanatory principles to explain the origin of the world.

From there philosophical thought did not stop developing. As philosophers began an investigation in search of a minimal set of true generalizations, based on critical ideas, another that challenged such ideas would soon emerge, never reaching a consensual agreement on the truth of generalizations.

Thus, philosophical thought comprises an immense construction carried out over the centuries and it can be affirmed that it is impossible to imagine current human thought independently of this philosophical thought that man has built to the present.

In general, philosophical thought involves a deep reflection on issues that concern man and his existence. For Gramsci (1981 apud OLIVEIRA et al, 1985) a philosophical movement deserves this name only to the extent that in the work of elaboration of a thought superior to common sense and scientifically coherent, it never forgets to remain in contact with what is simple, and that it finds in this contact the source of the problems that must be studied and solved.

In this sense, Chauí (2002) argues that the philosophical attitude emerges from the issues of day-to-day when approached differently from that of common sense, adopting a critical perspective. The first characteristic of the philosophical attitude is negative, that is, a saying no to common sense, to preconceptions, to pre-judgments, facts and ideas of everyday experience, to which "everyone says and thinks".

The second philosophical attitude is positive, that is, it consists of a question about what things, ideas, facts, situations, behaviors, values, etc. It is also a question about why everything and man himself, and a question about how everything is so and not otherwise (CHAUÍ, 2002).

Philosophical thought is not done without reflection. Reflection means moving back on yourself or moving back to yourself by asking yourself. Thus, philosophy understands the search for something for itself through speculation and reflection. Philosophical reflection turns so much to the thought about oneself, but it is also focused on man's relations with the reality that surrounds him (CHAUÍ, 2002).

Saviani (2002) adds that reflection means examining carefully, paying attention, analyzing carefully. Philosophizing is acting on scientific knowledge itself, questioning itself about this knowledge, problematizing. To define philosophy as a reflection is to see in it a knowledge not of first degree, but second, a knowledge of knowledge a knowledge of knowledge.

While scientific knowledge is limited to what is visible, philosophy departs from the visible and moves towards the invisible, since its formal object lies beyond the world of phenomena and sensitive experience. That is, science is limited to the domain of what can be observed by the senses, while philosophy orients itself towards the knowledge of the principles that, by its very nature, escape the perception of the senses.

Due to the greatness that philosophy has as a way to stimulate the development of critical thinking and reflection about man and, consequently, of the entire educational process and the theories of education developed throughout the development of humanity, the importance of the Philosophy of Education is inferred.

2 THE CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Since antiquity, philosophy has been divided into theoretical and practical. The theoretical philosophy, according to Costa (2002), is subdivided into epistemology and metaphysics. Epistemology or theory of knowledge is concerned with the investigation of nature, origin and limits of knowledge. Metaphysics is an investigation of "being as a being", that is, of objects such as properties, substances, states of things, space and time, which constitute the broadest domain of knowledge beyond the ways in which these objects relate to each other.

According to theoretical philosophical thought, philosophy can be conceptualized as the theoretical study of reality or as the search for wisdom by itself, which results in an explanation of the world lacking

in mythology, or that, even if coinciding with mythology, uses a rational-especulative method (MORA, 2001).

With regard to practical philosophy, it is the one that deals with human activity and the products that result from this activity, involving the areas of social and political philosophy, philosophy of action, the central domain of ethics (which investigates moral action), the philosophy of culture (which broadly investigates the changes effected by human society), philosophy of art or aesthetics, etc. (COSTA, 2002). It is also in practical philosophy that the discipline of philosophy of Education is included.

According to Mora (2001), in the practical field philosophy can be conceived as the most appropriate norm for action, as an art of life based on principles of reason. Thus, the philosophy of education seeks to base the principles of education that guide educational practice, through reflections on these practices.

In the discipline of Philosophy of Education, philosophy is placed as a form of knowledge and education as a philosophical problem. The two terms together represent the study of the foundations of educational theories and practices in society.

In this sense, Saviani (2000) argues that the Philosophy of Education will be nothing more than a Reflection (radical, rigorous and jointly) on the problems that the educational reality presents. However, when there was that expression, it hardly occurs to the spirit to the above idea.

Thus, there was talk in Philosophy of Education of the "New School", Philosophy of Education of the "Traditional School", Philosophy of Education of the "Brazilian Government" etc.; and it is known that this is not the reflection of the educators of the "New School", the educators of the "Traditional School", etc., about educational problems.

The term philosophy, in the above cases, concerns a orientation, the principles and norms that govern those entities. This orientation may or may not be a consequence of reflection. In the first case, the name that falls to him is ideology (educational theory), in the second, philosophy of life, says Saviani (2000). However, the Philosophy of Education cannot be reduced either to one or the other.

The educational activity, like other human activities, is part of a dialectical process that allows moving from action (founded on the philosophy of life) to action (founded on ideology) by mediating reflection.

Thus, for the educator, the Philosophy of Education constitutes this necessary mediation. Therefore, its function is not to determine, *a priori*, principles and objectives for education. Likewise, it will also not be reduced to a general theory of education while ordering its results.

The essential function of the philosophy of Education is to critically monitor the educational activity in order to explain its foundations, clarify the function and contribution of the various pedagogical disciplines and evaluate the meaning of the chosen solutions. In other words, it is the maintenance of a constant reflective exercise about the educational process.

For Saviani (2000), educational theory is not possible without the radical, rigorous and joint reflection that will make it possible to move from common sense to being philosophical of praxis. It is only

from then on that it will be possible to insert education into the totality of historical praxis, in which it will assume its true human meaning by developing its social function.

3 NEED FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

It has been that philosophical knowledge, when compared to scientific knowledge, is a deep and more general knowledge. Although each science is autonomous within its field of research, all of them, to a certain extent, and to some extent, are subordinate clearly to philosophy, which has the competence to, in defense of its principles, judge the conclusions of science and guide scientific activity.

However, according to Bello (1969) this does not mean that the sciences depend on philosophy in their intrinsic development, but only on their principles that philosophy is responsible for explaining and justifying. It is this relationship that is established between Philosophy and Pedagogy: it is up to the philosophy of education to justify and explain the principles on which the development of pedagogical theories is based.

However, due to its very nature of normative science, of moral science, it can be affirmed that the dependence of pedagogy on philosophy is stricter than that which occurs between philosophy and purely speculative or natural sciences.

While speculative sciences are intended to investigate how things are, limiting themselves to knowing, without trying in any way to modify the object of knowledge, normative sciences seek not only to know reality, but also to know the ideal and means of achieving this ideal, says Bello (1969).

Speculative sciences investigate objects, facts, natural events and normative sciences, such as pedagogy, have as object the human being and all its complexity, proposing to act on it so that it becomes someone prepared for the dignified and peaceful construction of man is the object of pedagogy and education corresponds to a set or system of acts, through which it seeks to elevate man of his real nature, to his ideal nature. em sociedade. A

It is important to emphasize that educational philosophy is also speculative, analytical and prescriptive. It is speculative when it seeks to establish theories of the nature of man, society and the world, through educational research and behavioral sciences. It is analytical when it examines the rationality of educational ideas, their coherence in relation to other ideas and the processes by which inaccurate thinking distorts them. It is prescriptive when it specifies the purposes to which education must obey, and the general means it should use to achieve it.

In suma, the Philosophy of Education examines the logic of the concepts developed and their inadequacy to the facts they intend to explain. Above all, Kneller assures (1981) she seeks to clarify the multiple different meanings that have been linked to such worn-out educational expressions, such as growth, experience, needs and knowledge.

Bello (1969) argues that neither the real nature of the human being nor his ideal nature can be properly conceptualized without the aid of philosophy. These concepts are beyond the domain of science

and therefore science alone cannot establish theories or guide education, which needs to have knowledge, first of all, of what the human being is, what its nature and the scale of values it necessarily encompasses.

Thus, Rusk (1929, apud BELLO, 1969), defines the relationship between philosophy and the science of education, stating that philosophy formulates what it conceives as the purpose of life and pedagogy offers suggestions for the realization of this end. From all this it is inferred that it is essential to study the problems and theories of education, not only from the point of view of science, but, above all, from the philosophical point of view.

The Philosophy of Education seeks to understand education in its integrity, interpreting it through general concepts that guide the choice of educational objectives and guidelines. Just as general philosophy seeks to coordinate the discoveries and conclusions of the different sciences, the Philosophy of Education interprets them as they relate to education. For Kneller (1981) scientific theories do not have direct educational implications, and they cannot be applied to educational practice without first being examined by philosophical practice.

However, the Educational Philosophy depends on the general philosophy, because it cannot criticize the current educational policy or even suggest new educational guidelines without taking into account general philosophical problems such as the nature of man himself, since it is the man who is being educated and the nature of society, because education comprises a social process.

In order for pedagogy to achieve the real fulfillment of its task of educating man, the philosophy that cares about the deepest problems, such as the nature of intellectual life, moral values, the ideal of life and other issues that constitute the Philosophy of Education, must be integrated into it.

Moreover, philosophy aims to prevent the result of the efforts of the expert collectivity from being a progressive sum of fragmentary discoveries, of which no one cares. The questions of teaching methodology, for example, which seem entirely devoid of any connection with philosophy, are, on the contrary, argues Bello (1969) subject to philosophical criticism, as are all scientific propositions.

Didactics is directly related to the philosophy of Education, because like any other aspect of pedagogy, it is characterized by a close bond with philosophical thought. The fundamental problems of didactics, such as the functions of learning, the plan of studies, the method, are, in a way, philosophical problems, since they refer to values, estimates and ideals, which is situated beyond the reach of speculative sciences.

Therefore, if there is any incompatibility between any methodological proposition and the Philosophy of Education, it is up to the methodology to carry out its investigations, re-examining the inferences that collide with philosophical truth. Thus, the deficiencies of methods in education cannot be judged only in the light of the methodology, but also, based on philosophical assumptions. The same procedure occurs with the other subjects related to pedagogical science, which constitute the object of the Philosophy of Education.

However, Bello (1969) argues that the Philosophy of Education has a stricter formal object, since it studies certain problems that, under none of its aspects can be framed in the sector of another branch of knowledge, such as the problems that constitute pedagogical axiology, which deals with the issues of values in education, ends and educational ideals.

Pedagogical sciences contribute, in some way, to solving the problem of the ideals of education. For, since philosophical knowledge departs from visible to invisible, from reality sensitive to reality that is beyond the senses, from phenomena to its first causes, it cannot fail to receive subsidies from all sciences that study concrete and sensitive facts and their closest causes.

The theory and practice of education presuppose ideas about human nature and the nature of reality that have a philosophical character. And just as formal philosophy seeks to interpret and understand reality as a whole, explaining it in a more generic and systematic way, educational philosophy also seeks the understanding of education and its integrity, interpreting it through general concepts that lead to the choice of educational objectives and guidelines. One cannot criticize a particular educational policy, as well as suggest new guidelines, without taking into account general philosophical problems.

According to Redden and Rian (1973), several attempts were made to establish the theory and practice of education on foundations other than those of philosophy, denying or ignoring the necessary relationship between the two. In fact, some theorists architected their own concepts and principles of education, while purposely excluding the contributions of philosophy.

One of these interpretations that intended to break the connection between philosophy and education is purely scientific interpretation. The exponents of this interpretation held that, when education depends only on philosophy, it moves away from the realm of objective sciences and therefore becomes speculative, rationalist and not practical. They establish that the natural sciences deal with measurable amounts, possessing objectivity and uniformity.

As a result of their accuracy, accuracy and validity, such sciences are considered to be truly scientific. This interpretation held that education should also be like the natural sciences, and can be measured in a careful, quantitative and, as far as possible, qualitatively; education should be a science that could be applied uniformly and considered impersonally.

This point of view originated in naturalism that established natural science as being the only science, and its methods as the only scientific methods. Thus, education, if it were to be truly considered as science, should provide this scientific method.

However, education has many specificities and cannot be considered in a uniform manner. Philosophy supports the existence of realities that are situated outside and beyond material things, such as free will, intellect operations, in addition to considering the means to investigate this reality and its activities, means that are not included in the methods of natural science.

In addition to the objective method and experimental technique widely applied to the natural sciences, other methods are necessary for a study of free will, character, personality and human intellect to

be carried out. The science that proposes to study the most convenient way to educate the human being cannot be included entirely in the exclusive category of the natural sciences.

On the contrary, it always needs to cover, in its end, the nature of the human being, and must seek to cultivate the values. For Hôvre (apud REDDEN And RIAN, 1973) a system of education built without the critical participation of philosophy and that does not take into account the values of human life, constitutes a system from which both man and life are, for all purposes and purposes, eliminated. It is a system of education that really needs to be educated by the child and, therefore, is not true for life and cannot therefore be scientific.

However, this does not mean that attempts by the scientific movement in education were totally worthless, since certain techniques, standardized tests, statistical measures, among other investigations, of great validity, based on objective and scientific processes were elaborated. These techniques began to be recognized as valuable assistants in the educational work of the school. The results of its application should, however, be evaluated and interpreted in we have basic principles that find their source only in true philosophy.

A second interpretation performed by educators who fail to recognize the link between philosophy and education is pragmatic interpretation. His point of view is that the basic principles of education should be formulated as consequences of the most successful practices, originated from experimentation. This interpretation argued that the basic principles of education could only be known and established after the best methods and practices have been experienced, measured and evaluated (REDDEN And RIAN, 1973).

Thus, this perspective ended up focusing only on the material and practical aspect of education, in contradiction with the point of view that highlighted the essentially ethical ideals of education that should determine the most appropriate content and methods to achieve these ideals, but only on the basis of a true philosophy can one obtain true ideals.

It is known the importance of good methods, coherent educational practices, the proper selection and organization of the curriculum, efficient administrative process and, also, the use of modern teaching material. There is no doubt that teaching material and properly applied methods serve to assist the teacher's efficiency in achieving the objectives.

However, it should be recognized that aids and methods have secondary importance: they are subordinate to the teacher, whose influence, personality and capacity contribute essentially to the success or failure of educational methods, process and techniques.

It is mainly through the guidance and direction of the teacher that students acquire permanent values, habits and skills, attitudes and appreciations. Redden and Rian (1973) add that only the teacher who is guided by true critical and reflective philosophy can properly assist students in acquiring values, skills and attitudes, forming a personality prepared for social interaction.

In addition, an education system can be scientifically adequate and very efficient, and its basic principles can be valid while through its application reach the desired end. However, for Redden and Rian

(1973), the whole tendency of the system may be fundamentally incoherent, because it derives from a false philosophy.

Although the same fundamental sources of knowledge are accessible to all, the resulting educational principles, when based on false premises or presumptions, will not conform to each other and may even be in complete contradiction. Thus, it is evident the need for careful examination and validation of the principles to determine whether they are in accordance with true human nature and the purpose of education. These principles must always be sought in true philosophical practice, which is based on reflective thinking.

4 TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Understanding teaching as being capable of transforming society further solidifies the importance of the Philosophy of Education. Education is fundamental in the constitution of a nation that is characterized by the way of being and acting. The human being endowed with qualities is a being that is in constant search, overcoming new challenges, seeking through its capabilities, expand and perfect the world.

From this perspective, oliveira (2004) argues, it can be seen that the realization of individuals depends exclusively on human behavior. The individual needs to transform to increase his degree of humanization and become himself. This also follows the importance of the Philosophy of Education, since the person can through education seek changes to exercise his task as a transforming subject in society.

Since the human being is constituted as a subject and not as an object, it can only develop as such as it is introduced into its stupendure conditions through critical reflection. The more it is led to reflect on its situation, on its space-time rooting, the more it will become aware of its commitment to reality, of which, being subject, it should not be a mere spectator, but must increasingly intervene as a transforming subject.

Therefore, the human being, when acquiring awareness of his subject reality, begins to feel the need to relate to the world and to the other, seeking, through its dimensions, to give an answer that justifies such greatness. This transformative education is only possible by the reflective exercise provided by the Philosophy of Education on educational theories.

Human existence, the object of philosophy, and education are complementary conditions. The human being does not live without education in the same way that education does not exist without man. According to Dom Oliveira (2004), the fact of seeking the new, of proposing changes, of perfecting the environment in which he lives among many other activities, transforms the human being into the subject of the educational process.

Thus, it is evident that education is a very important and necessary task. Education as an instrument of transformation leads the human being to a practical and objective reflection, enabling awareness for liberation.

Knowledge is born and develops as individuals think and reflect on the experiences lived in all routine practices, especially in community practices, which are evidenced in basic work, as well as in the search for an educational policy that contemplates the national reality of class division. The Philosophy of

Education, is above all reflection and helps in this process of seeking an educational policy, focused on the needs emerging from the reality of the country, obtaining a transformative education.

Oliveira (2004) assures that educational issues should be dealt with with the subjects of education themselves. From this, the need to transform society, starting, not from the final consequence, but from the causal assumption. While the state provides police officers to combat violence and maintain "social order", several individuals are no longer guided and made aware of the lack of financial conditions.

To raise awareness of a human being means to provide it with conditions and to value it in the face of a society of interpersonal relationships. Arendt (apud FERRARI, 2004) adds that adults have a responsibility to train children for the world, which means, among other things, acquiring the notion of collective. It is a process that only takes place, in each student, with the intervention of thought, for the creation of an ethics before the group. Thus, the student must be introduced to the world and encouraged to change it.

The individual needs to realize that his presence is fundamental to build a more coherent, fraternal and supportive world. However, this is not achieved through force, but rather this is only possible through the rescue of the basic institutions that permeate human action.

Thus, it is necessary to rescue the school institution so that it can insert a liberating and transforming education, where it has, beginning the changes that respond to the needs of humanity, that favor and promote life. Man is not only an spectator, but is in constant search. The Philosophy of Education is responsible for reflecting on how to operate the rescue of the school institution, enabling the choice of educational theories more appropriate to the reality of the country.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the previous considerations, it can be insgiven that the Philosophy of Education is indispensable, because it constitutes a discipline that orders all pedagogical knowledge. However, this fact is often not recognized by pedagogues for whom pedagogy is a purely experimental science, which is independent of any philosophical foundation.

This mentality stems from the naturalistic prejudice that inspires it. According to Bello (1969) naturalphilosophy tried to reduce all science to experimental sciences, condemning as unscientific all the cogitations that could not be proven by the experimentation of laboratories. To become scientific, according to this concept of science pedagogy eventually reduced its philosophical foundations.

However, the attempt to make pedagogy a purely experimental science, theoretically mischaracterized, resulted in a widespread crisis that to this day extends over the field of education. Thus, it is verified that philosophical foundations are essential for the construction of educational science.

The development of educational theories without the questioning provided by philosophy leads to a movement incapable of producing accurate and durable results, for the simple reason of not knowing the results to which one intends to arrive, since it lacks the direction and philosophical orientation. When there

is no philosophy of formation, an ideal and a conception of culture cannot truly be carried out an educational science.

Eucken (apud BELLO, 1969) also adds that it is in the field of education and teaching that the absence of philosophical guidance carries the most regrettable consequences. It is only possible to improve and reform the educational system when you have a true Philosophy of Education, in which there is an agreement about the purpose, possibilities and conditions of education.

Philosophy has the function of explaining and justifying the principles on which the sciences are based. Since pedagogy is a normative science, it is somewhat subordinated to philosophy and, therefore, the problems of education need to be addressed from the perspective of philosophy. Thus, for the success of pedagogical science, the Philosophy of Education is indispensable.

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