Education as a Problem Vis-à-Vis the Question about Education

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Abstract

The point of departure for our considerations is a well-established opinion that in the age of rapid global changes of the contemporary world, education does not meet people's expectations and despite the attempts to reform it, remains in crisis. We attempt to specify the foundations of the problematicality of contemporary education and to put forward a methodological approach serving to enhance the understanding thereof. The authors distinguish between *the problem with education*

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and the primary *problem of education*. It is demonstrated that what is responsible for *the problems with education* is to a large extent "problem reasoning," which dominates the relation between contemporary man and his environment and is blind to the distinction between problem and question. Blurring this distinction and expelling important issues from the realm of education translates into focusing attention on standardized teaching and neglecting vital issues pertaining to upbringing, which results in the forming of "one-dimensional man," who fails to deal with uncertainty of the contemporary world, while "forgetting" the non-problem-related, which means—positively speaking—question-related, modes of implementing his open existence.

Keywords: education, problem, question, expectations, uncertainty.

Izobraževanje kot problem z ozirom na vprašanje o izobraževanju

Povzetek

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Izhodišče za naše razmišljanje je uveljavljeno prepričanje, da izobraževanje v času hitrih globalnih sprememb sodobnega sveta ne izpolnjuje pričakovanj človeštva in kljub poskusom reform ostaja v krizi. Skušamo natančneje določiti temelje za problematičnost sodobnega izobraževanja in predložiti metodološki pristop k njenemu boljšemu razumevanju. Avtorji razločujejo med *problemom glede izobraževanja* in primarnim *problemom izobraževanja*. Pokažejo, da je za *probleme glede izobraževanja* v veliki meri odgovorno »problemsko razmišljanje«, ki obvladuje razmerje med sodobnim človekom in njegovim okoljem in je slepo za razlikovanje med problemom in vprašanjem. Zamegljevanje te razlike in izrinjanje pomembnih tém iz območja izobraževanja povzroča osredotočanje pozornosti na standardizirano poučevanje in zapostavljanje pomembnih zadev glede vzgoje, kar ima za posledico oblikovanje »enodimenzionalnega človek«, ki se ne zmore soočati z negotovostjo sodobnega sveta, saj »pozablja« neproblemske, se pravi – izraženo pozitivo – na vprašanja navezane, načine udejanjanja svoje odprte eksistence.

Ključne besede: izobraževanje, problem, vprašanje, pričakovanja, negotovost.

Introduction

Education for all, provided in a systemic way, is undoubtedly a great achievement of modern states and societies. There is no doubt that extensive systems of schooling contributed to both the economic growth of the national states as well as to the citizens' position in them. At the same time, the majority of countries, including the ones most economically advanced, are afflicted with the problem of education, which is experienced as a discrepancy between the hopes accompanying it and the results obtained—the discrepancy which is growing even larger and becomes increasingly alarming despite numerous reforms in that area. It is enough to pass a glance at any of the numerous reports published by various international organizations to become convinced that education's "maladjustment" to the challenges posed by the contemporary world and its "not catching up" with the pace of civilizational changes are commonly experienced maladies not easy to overcome. Formal educational institutions, including higher education, in which young citizens of the "developed" and "developing" countries spend a lot of their respective time, are under growing doubt whether this very time invested actually makes young people ready to face the contingencies and uncertainties of the contemporary world once they have completed their formal education. And although in the light of these critical misgivings there emerged multifarious research programs, and subsequently also some corrective measures, it would be quite a stretch to say that the problem with education is about to be solved; rather, consecutive implemented reforms generate new problems.

In short, until recently the catch-all mass education has been conceived of as an indicator of the modernity of contemporary societies, but nowadays it is failing to catch up with the pace of changes occurring in the surrounding world. In this paper we work out a research perspective that, starting from "the problem with education," discloses a too narrow and one-sided way of the understanding of this problem; this one-sided approach induces the mechanism of a vicious circle in tackling the problem by rather producing further problems than solutions. Then, we put forward a method of overcoming this obstacle of the vicious circle.

Let us first, however, clearly point out that the spreading of mass education, which basically occurred in the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century, was

regarded by many generations to come as a tangible instance of development and progress. Perceived either as a sign of the link between a citizen and the emerging modern state (as in, say, the approach of Wilhelm von Humboldt or Friedrich List) or as the individual development (e.g., in John Dewey's approach), education was a means to both efficient actions and to a gradual democratization of social relations, with a growing belief that there is a need for equalizing opportunities for the full participation in education and social life regardless of one's (stratum, class, or milieu) descent. The affirmation of education systems still prevailed in the sixties, and—to a lesser extent—in the seventies of the 20th century, when, despite numerous reservations, they were conceived of as well-organized places enabling a "step into a modern world of enlightened rationality" (Dahrendorf 1968, 24) as well as the basis for "institutional isomorphism,"[1] spreading the assumptions of the education systems of the economically developed countries over the whole world. However, the critical voices started to be more and more audible, with the criticism being especially launched against the low capability of the genuine equalization of opportunities (Pierre Bourdieu, Margaret Archer). As time went by, the critical voices prevailed over those of affirmation, with the former being formulated from various ideological positions which demonstrated the deficiencies in realizing the goals dictated by economic rationality (Michael Porter), or from the contrary positions which were especially critical towards globalization (Heinz-Dieter Meyer).

Universal education, which used to prevail as a vital segment for building the modern state and laying foundations for the technological progress—especially in the era of the evolution of economic relations ranging from mere manufacture to mass production—, was over time subject to growing criticism when it became more and more apparent that the education system cannot catch up with the new wave of technological and economic transformations. The latter ones, since the seventies, have contributed both to the gradual shift from mass to flexible production, while searching for the methods to make also organizational structures more flexible, and to the withdrawal of the previous demand for standardized and narrow skills in narrowly understood

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1 Cf. DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer, Ramirez, and Soysal 1992.

professions and jobs. At the same time, more and more research revealed the ultra-stability of education systems as well as their dependence on the previous paths of development.[2]

The observations adduced herein urge us to state a general claim that there is a growing problem with education, the solution of which by dint of "improving" the education system (including "improving" teachers' competences or any other variations of "improvement" or "excellence" criteria adhered to by universities) along the lines of operative standards is becoming less and less probable.

Certainly, there are many definitions of education. Roughly speaking, it can be described as a process of formation of the human being by way of upbringing and teaching. These two processes, the former of which—generally speaking— is responsible for the world of values, sense, attitudes, and purposes, whereas the latter for knowledge and skills, used to be inextricably intertwined. The understanding of the course and function of the said processes derives from a certain conception of what human being is. After all, the point of departure for grasping education is always some sort of a philosophical—and at times also a theological—conception of human being which prevails at a given time and place. That is why it is no accident that recent—i.e., embracing the last two centuries—historical changes in the understanding of what human being is led to a clear crisis of the possibility of its self-determination by way of education. The most dramatic change, which is nowadays noticeable with respect to the original understanding of the notion of education and which remains compatible with the currently dominating conception of man (as *homo faber*), is the separation of upbringing and teaching, which has very far-reaching consequences indeed. Simply put, for some time, teaching has constituted the focal point of education.[3]

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2 Cf. Hajdar and Gross 2016, 11–31.

3 In the last two or three decades, this tendency was additionally strengthened by international research on cognitive abilities with reports based thereupon issued by such organizations as the IEA or OECD (cf. one of the first significant international reports: Martin, Mullis et al. 1997), as well as reports by other institutions referring to the data derived from international comparative studies. Their consequence, not

Since the state seized control over its citizens' education, this education is labelled as a system; namely, "the system of schooling," and also "the system of higher education;" or, in general, "the education system." The process of education was to a large extent designed and one keeps trying to implement it as a process reflecting a certain—influential especially in the period of forming the systems of universal education—understanding of scientific procedures, or even of scientific-technical ones, with the latter of which being characteristically marked by the problem-solving approach. However, by no means does this imply that in school education *en masse* one managed to apply the said pattern of the educational process which is oriented at posing and solving problems; quite the contrary, organizing education on the basis of problem-solving reasoning still remains utopian. However, this does not prevent one from complacently regarding education—and other systems of the modern state alike—as the scientifically-technically organized system of problem-solving. On the one hand, problem-solving reasoning entered the modern education system and the reflection thereupon, thus opening new theoretical and practical possibilities; and on the other hand the said problem-solving reasoning became a problem itself which—as it transpires—considerably hampers human development.

Namely, the main weakness thereof is the fact that gradually and imperceptibly—i.e., in a way that is not easily detectable in any particular decision—it reduces this openness to unidimensional openness of scientific-technical nature, which leaves little room for other ways of *experiencing reality*,

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necessarily intended, was a growing focus on what is quantitatively measurable and comparable across various countries, and even cultures, which diverted attention from the issues not subject to the above measurement and lying mainly in the sphere of upbringing. Furthermore, in such countries as Poland, in which there was a change in the political regime putting a stop to the long term of government based on communist ideology coupled with its project of raising man of "the new type," schools themselves willingly dissociated themselves from upbringing-related tasks, while associating them, not without reason, with the excessive coercive pressure of the unified official ideology. However, the tendency to shift the focus—in comprehensively understood education—onto teaching particular subjects has its prior causes, with those causes having such aspects that are connected with the transformations in the Western culture within the last few centuries, which, as it seems, brought profound and more universal consequences to education. It is precisely this aspect that is going to be of interest to us in our forthcoming considerations.

including most of all—which is of utmost importance for education as such—
the ones which were once responsible for the realm of human development.
These other ways in question are still needed nowadays but are barely present
in the education systems. Comprehensively speaking, the problem with
education stems from the fact that an education system only partly solves what
specifies its own challenges and obligations related to designing solutions in the
realm of education, and partly generates particular problems itself, thus giving
rise to a sort of a vicious circle. To break this circle, one should separate the
problem *with* education from the primary problem *of* education, and pose the
question about more rudimentary properties of education itself than the ones
represented by the historically shaped—in terms of solutions and strategies—
education systems.

The elaboration of a fundamental methodological approach

One cannot help having the impression that these days there exists an
incessant increase in the number of requirements which are more and more
frequently addresses at universal education. Sets of competencies grow but
are not satisfied,[4] and, as a result, this growth is directly proportional to the
dissemination of the feeling of distrust and disappointment towards the manner
in which education functions and in which direction and at which pace the
changes therein proceed. The number of changes in question has grown in the
recent decades to such a degree that it merits the label of permanent change.

One should ask whence this distrust and the feeling of disappointment, as
well as the need for incessant changes in the education system come. In the
course of historical transformations of social, economic, political, and cultural
life, people experience the phenomenon of education, while cherishing some

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4 One of the numerous examples of the postulated extended scope of the skills taught
may be *The e-Skills Manifesto* (Bergaud et al. 2012), promoted by such organizations
as—among others—the UNESCO. Such studies rightly bring up the need to include in
school curricula entirely new skills that would enable us to catch up with civilizational
changes. Equally rightly, one expects from universal education to sharpen traditional
skills such as mathematical reasoning or the ability to interpret texts of our culture,
which can also be justified by civilizational transformations but is transferrable onto
the realm of practical operations on the scale of the whole system only with difficulty.

commonplace beliefs (these are going to be referred to as "obviousness" in the forthcoming part of the paper) about it and—based on that—having some expectations towards it. The question is: to what extent are the socially—and thus also historically—shaped obviousness and expectations justified by what education *per se* is. For it can be the case that the commonly shared convictions about education at a given time and place, the feelings, experiences, and hopes related thereto, etc., concern something that—granted—is believed to be education but still diverges from the proper sense of education.[5] After all, education is not only what people do with it. The notions of "degenerate education" or "apparent education"[6] do not only refer to what people expect from education (and which does not meet their expectations), but most of all they refer to how much a given education system diverges from the *sense of education*. That is why, the problem with education is somehow connected with the problem of education itself, in which we ask about what education primarily is, while trying to "remain" in this state of questionness (M. Heidegger) towards education's current mode of existence. Thinking about education is usually a response toward the transformations and challenges of the world that surrounds us. And it is precisely in this very context that one may consider the currently experienced crisis of education.

Education is a problem/question, and—so it must be added—it is one of the most fundamental ones. This neatly corresponds to the augmented problematicality of the category of human being.[7] There is a strict connection between this problematicality of education itself coupled with the one of human being *and* the problem that we, contemporary people, have with education. The juxtaposition of these two problems, the one of education as such and the problem with education, urges us to assume as a research perspective the mixed approach; or, putting it even more sharply: a boundary-crossing approach. The problem with education can be depicted as the problem of tension between a given society expecting specific changes in universal education (materialized in an education system) coupled with

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5 Cf. Przanowska 2015.
6 Cf. Filek 2001, 100–117.
7 Cf. Scheler 1987, 47.

an attempt to permanently implement the said changes *and* education's tendency to stick to what is obvious, to ultra-stability, as well as to its reluctance to undergo any process of transformation. First and foremost, the problem may be regarded as an issue of sociological nature, with the issue stemming from the observation of empirical reality. When we say that determination of what education is presupposes some understanding of the nature of the human being, human being is always understood as a social being. This holds true even when by the concept of education we mean self-learning (e.g., H.-G. Gadamer)—even then in this internal field of influence between the educating and the educated what we deal with are relations of social nature. For this reason, education is in fact deeply immersed in society irrespective of how—in a given period—the formal education system would like to settle this issue.

The sociological perspective enables us to approach the commonly experienced problem with education; however, what it leaves open, is the problem of education as such. At the same time, it seems that only a juxtaposition of these perspectives provides the solid ground for an understanding of the problem of education. While distinguishing the categories of *experience*, of *obviousness*, and of *expectation* within a sociological perspective, there simultaneously appears the justification for adopting a philosophical perspective; or more strictly speaking, for a phenomenological one which would allow us to shift from empirical research regarding education to the philosophical one. The incentive to do so is provided by the fact that it is precisely the concepts of experience, obviousness, and expectation that play a vital role in the phenomenological approach. They characterize the basic subject of phenomenology, which is intentionality. Intentionality, dating back to the works of the early phenomenologists (F. Brentano, E. Husserl), constitutes the most distinctive feature of main phenomenological threads such as experience and experiencing the world in all its richness of sense and possibilities. Phenomenology is primarily a kind of philosophy which emphasizes the role of experience, learning, and questioning.[8]

8 Cf. Sobota 2017 (especially, part I).

Therefore, the problem that the contemporary world has with education directs our attention to a more fundamental question: the one about its essence. This essentially philosophical question is certainly not unobjectionable, especially from the perspective of social science. After all, what social science takes as the ultimate given fact is what people actually do themselves, not what they ought to do.

The question about the essence of education is, first, such a problematic issue, because contemporary philosophical discourse undermines the sense of speaking of essence or nature of anything, especially of the essence of human being and of its artifacts. Instead, one resorts more willingly to the categories applied in, e.g., cultural anthropology, with categories being responsible for the research of the different manifestations of human behavior. From this position, it is difficult to speak of universal essence or of the problem of education. What is labelled as an education system, is merely a certain form of organization of the development of human being in the last two centuries. Moreover, this form might as well be inapplicable in the centuries to come. However, if one, secondly, assumes that there exists something like the "essence" of education which somehow corresponds with the "essence" of human being as such, then there emerges the question of what its content is, how it can be establishes, and why—when confronted with the historical reality (of the last two or three generations)—the gap between its supposed ideological content and concrete reality is increasingly widening. Taking into account—while researching the problematics of education— the philosophical approach under the umbrella of phenomenology, with phenomenology already having boasted a rich tradition of exploring the social phenomena[9] and confronting them with the above-stated objections, one should note what follows. Basically, phenomenology has two distinct faces. On the one hand, we have static phenomenology, which treats each phenomenon as being subsumable under its own genus or essence, with this genus (or essence) in turn constituting the distinctive properties of the phenomenon in question. There are several indictments (oftentimes valid) against this approach: idealization, substantialization, petrification, excessive universalization,

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9 Cf., for instance, Schütz 2008.

totalization, overlooking subtle, albeit important, differences, or the lack of historical awareness, etc. On the other hand, we have genetic phenomenology, which, while not resigning from researching essences, approaches its subject matter "historically;" that is, it studies the genesis of sense departing from the accomplishments of transcendental consciousness. This approach is in turn criticized on the grounds of its idealist-transcendental attitude. Making use of the merits of these two approaches, while not committing ourselves fully to either of them, we treat phenomenology as an art of philosophical questioning. Phenomenology is a perfect incarnation of a research approach to the world, with the approach in question being free, open, and always ready to dissociate itself from its previous determinations, and thus always starting anew, and in this sense being primordial. This sort of a research approach—in accordance with the principle of intentional correlation—is not regarded as something settled once and for all, but rather as something characterized by "questionness" and the problematical.[10] In accordance with this approach, while speaking of education as a problem, one can treat the supposed essence of education not as anything substantial which exists in some sort of a Platonic realm of ideas, but rather as a problem, as a question which can be more or less efficiently indicated, elucidated, and investigated but will never be ultimately answered. And in precisely this sense the posing of questions never ceases to be valid. Hence, perhaps, instead of speaking of essence, which inevitably brings up essentialist associations, it would be more to the point to speak of the *thing* of education. In analogy with Heidegger's "thing of thinking," (the thing of) education is here understood as an issue, a matter. However, the problem in question is not an arbitrary one or one being conceptualized as merely a means to a certain goal, but rather as a public thing (*res publicum*), a thing (an issue) to be discussed, a matter of public concern.[11]

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In accordance with the above, the present considerations are of formal-eroteric (Greek *erotesis*—question) character and are at least in their certain parts conducted from the phenomenological perspective. The formal-eroteric

10 Cf. Sobota 2017.
11 Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that in some Slavic languages the word "thing" (Polish: "rzecz") refers to a proto-Slavic ancestor with meanings: "language," "word," "speech."

nature of present considerations implies that—in opposition to the material approach, which, while starting from a given problem-related content, strives to find one solution or another—one studies a problem *qua* problem, and by the same token, a question *qua* question; that is, one studies what constitutes its problematicality/questionness, what its genesis is, and what are the possibilities of solving or of answering it. The formal analysis of a problem/question does not directly lead to its solution or to an answer thereto. Hence, the investigations presented herein at present stage—the one of specifying a general method—resign from analyzing any detailed issues; the analysis is here conducted at a meta-level, relative to above-mentioned detailed in-depth issues. However, we are strongly convinced that the conclusions elaborated in the course of the present analysis related to the order of education theory and practice are neither abstract nor useless. The determinations adduced herein serve to specify a research perspective for disciplinary sciences, with the perspective in question having both theoretical and practical validity in comprehending the problem with education (as already sketched in the introductory part of the present paper), with „formal education," with an education system, including its *practical* side—although considered from the vantage point of the problem of education as such.

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This phenomenological, formal-eroteric approach to the issue of the core and sense (of education) corresponds with—as is well-known from tradition—the conception of human being as "an open question" (H. Plessner): conceived in this vein, the human being appears to be a being once and for all divested of any specific content, a being deprived of essence (P. della Mirandola), existence which always exceeds essence (M. Heidegger), open being (M. Scheler), which at once is what it is, and is not what it is (J.-P. Sartre), encountering—in what is going on around it and within itself, in historical reality imbued with—"indeterminate places" (R. Ingarden), a being indeterminate (J. Litwin). Thus understood human being fulfills its "essence" by way of a dialogue with reality, by answering the questions that life poses. In this manner cultural reality is woven, with this sort of reality being of thoroughly problematic nature. It is an interplay of questions and answers, problems and solutions thereto. One of such fundamental questions that one poses—with human being understood as an open question—is precisely the issue of education. To grasp its core,

viz., sense, is to delineate and illuminate the problem field within which there appear particular phenomena constituting what is traditionally labelled as education.

Since the categories of obviousness and expectation constitute the common framework for the human experience of reality, then one can validly ask about their share in this special field of experience which is education. Phenomenology of broadly understood forms of social life has already made some important insights in this respect.[12] What is specifically thereby meant is a phenomenology of teaching and learning, a phenomenological description of the situation of the acquisition of knowledge, in the course of which what happens is a peculiar interplay between previously held and acquired (in the course of learning) obviousness *and* expectations which one eventually satisfies or is disappointed with.[13] Resorting to these categories, one is able to connect the empirical sociological analysis, being a suitable tool for elaborating the problem with education, with the phenomenological analysis, which excels in elucidating the problem of education. This connection is, obviously enough, not free of difficulties. Generally speaking, we hereby suggest that the research should proceed in a spiral movement: starting from commonsense observations and empirical findings, from a wide array of phenomena, the research should refer them to rudimentary formal determinations of philosophical nature only to steer them again towards sociological-empirical research, and then again to enter the level of phenomenological description, which, in the next step, gets in turn confronted with empirical material, etc. The first problem (the one with education) always presupposes a connection of given problematics with many other phenomena which occur in historical reality and are on this basis related to the problem under scrutiny, thus oftentimes constituting multifarious interdependencies. By contrast, the other problem (the one of education) is subject to an elaboration in the opening and determining a priori—albeit not free of historical dependencies—the conceptual content of the scrutinized issue. The just invoked metaphor of a spiral should not be treated too literally.

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12 Cf. Schütz and Luckmann 1979; Bombała 2014; Schütz 2012; Berger and Luckmann 2010; Lippitz 2005; Pelcová 2014; Manen 1990; Gara 2009.
13 Cf. Brinkmann 2010, 2015, 2017.

Granted, the metaphor in a sense orders the research procedure but at each stage thereof, the scrutinized phenomena are uncovered in a manner characteristic of social science only to become—after slight modification—subject to the phenomenological analysis. Both perspectives engage in an incessant dialogue with one another, while sticking to their respective methodological assumptions. It should be noted that this does not imply a shift from the empirical to theory, and the other way around, neither from theory to the empirical, and the other way around. The phenomenological perspective does not reduce to providing "a theory" and the sociological one not to verifying it. Rather, the philosophical approach itself takes up both theoretical challenges and is simultaneously marked with a practical approach. It is also the sociological approach that is both about theoretical reflection and the interpretations (based thereupon) of the ascertained social actions and about practical approach. Both perspectives never fail to take heed of the question: "What is to be done?" However, first and foremost, the connection between these two research perspectives allows us to pose the question pertaining to

30   "the primary problem of education," and at the same time, of the historicalness of such a problem, with the said historicalness projecting its pure content onto the interdependencies of historical transformations of a given culture and civilization. In this manner, one can answer the questions that cannot be posed from the perspective of an analysis of the pure conceptual content of the problem. For example, one can in this way ask, whether and how new technologies, which nowadays dominate reality, impact the primary problem of education (avoiding technological determinism). What is equally important, is the following: do the phenomenon of mass education (also with respect to higher education) and the following changes in peoples' expectations towards this very important realm of social reality impact (and if so, then to what extent) the very problem of education. These sample and other similar questions, or so it seems, are of utmost importance for understanding what happened (and is still happening) with modern education; that is, education formalized in modern systems. Intertwining these two perspectives—the phenomenological and the sociological one—in the above-mentioned particular issues, allows the tapping into the phenomenon of the interplay of social reality *in sensu largo* and the formal education being framed within a system.

The analysis of the phenomenon of education taken up herein should commence with the indication of the basic phenomenological resources. The above-mentioned definition of education as the human being's forming process must first be captured at the level of experiencing its primordial sense. This means that—at a preliminary stage of our considerations—we should—if possible—refrain from analyzing the functioning of an education system, understood as a certain organization of a public sector of social life. In place of this, one should make all the effort to "touch upon" education first at the level of its daily functioning, within the life-world (*Lebenswelt*), and, therefore, at the level of obviousness and expectations, as they appear here. Therefore, it becomes clear that the tension between explaining changes through the influence exerted by outstanding individuals[14] and the explanation in terms of social transformations engaging "ordinary people,"[15] is preliminarily settled in favor of "ordinary people," searching, in the expectations and obviousness cherished by them, for institutional micro-foundations, decisively determining whether the introduced changes succeed or fail.[16] And then again, what comes handy at this point, is the phenomenological tradition, which opens and sustains the research perspective, sensitizes us (researchers), and allows for analyzing phenomena in their pre-discursive, pre-objective, pre-thematic mode of givenness.[17]

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Because life-world is essentially of historical nature, it is not immaterial for the research conducted herein which stage of history we have now reached and to what extent what happened in the last centuries affects our understanding of the human being and the world. That is why the phenomenological perspective adopted here cannot turn a blind eye on historical dependencies of the given situation. Still, what is considerably more important than historical facts, is what happened within the sense of the last few centuries shaping our spiritual

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14 Cf. Fligstein and McAdam 2011.
15 Cf. Powell and Rerup 2017.
16 This direction of thinking, based upon extensive empirical studies, raising a conventionally concretized heuristic issue of "the rationality of the process of educating," was also represented in the monograph which is a written record of a team project (cf. Milerski and Karwowski 2016).
17 Cf. Gara 2017a.

outlook. The phenomenological approach is not supposed to get lost in the maze of unreal divagations on "pure essences," and for this very reason this approach is to heed the historical transformations of life-world; what is by no means at stake here, is to confuse the order of eidetic research with the order of the narration regarding past events. On a positive note, what is indeed at stake here, is to treat the scrutinized essences as historically variable and as being subject to the historical transformations of the question.

The problem of education as the education of problem

The encounters of pedagogy and philosophy, already boasting a long-lasting tradition, ceaselessly direct our attention towards an open mode of human's being. It looks as though it is precisely in the context of the problematics of education that the human being best exposes its existence full of possibilities or, to put it more sharply, the full array of the possibilities of being. This open being which, at the very outset, is not endowed with any specific content but only points to biological conditions conducive to its birth into living in a culture (*homo sapiens*), is filled with content in the course of its actualization. In other words, the core of human being is what s/he becomes in historical reality.[18] As a person immersed in time, s/he is not only transient but also deliberately shapes his/her transience, thus creating the content of his/her idea. Their particular decisions and deeds change both their own life and the life of the collective. And this is precisely the way history emerges. If by the concept of "history" we understand the process of human's self-formation, that is, what human beings do with themselves, then we can perceive history as a ceaseless process of education *in sensu largo*. This perspective was first indicated by Johann Gottfried Herder. Education is the historical actualization of the idea of the human being. Or, as Eugen Fink put it: "in a broad sense, education encompasses the whole spectrum of the cultural activity of man" (Fink 2005, 21). Thus understood education is reflected by the old Greek idea of *paideia*, which is a spiritual formation of human being under the influence of the entire culture one was born into.[19] In thus stated historical horizon of

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18 Cf. Dilthey 1991, 224: "What man is, only his history tells." (our translation)
19 Cf. Jaeger 2001. Cf. also: Tymieniecka 2000.

human's experience, specific moments of education-related experience are confirmed.

The above-mentioned open nature of the human being and its "actualization" is best heeded by education when the formation process protects and solidifies the said openness, that is, when the very problematic nature of the human being comes into the limelight most expressly and adequately. With such a situation we deal primarily during a dialogue, which constitutes an opportunity for mutual questioning and answering.[20] After all, there exists no similarly open and receptive cognitive perspective as the new and hitherto unknown perspective of the questioning-searching attitude. What is thereby meant, is not only education in the form of a dialogue which takes place between a teacher and his/her student. Rather, what is meant, is the formation of a questioning attitude towards reality itself,[21] in which each daily situation becomes a peculiar "issue" and a maiuetic waking up of the consciousness of the subject of experience towards providing an adequate answer.[22] In this model, which is—incidentally—not the only one feasible, but which, as we stated, corresponds best with the open nature of the human being (and thus it seems to fit human nature best), education becomes formation which not only departs from openness—which is after all presupposed by any model of education as its *Bedingung der Möglichkeit*—, but also aims at its protection as well as its extension. Within thus understood process, any answer emerging is—as Martin Heidegger used to say—only the last step of a question. Formation consists in shifts from ignorance to knowledge, and the other way around. It is precisely while referring to thus understood nature of the human being that John Dewey formulated his influential conception of education as the ability to deal with problems, to spot them, and to search for the solutions thereto by the trial-and-error method, that is, by an experimental method. In this sense, the

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20 Cf. Buber 1968 and 1993; Lévinas 2002. Cf. also: Gadacz 2015 and Gara 2008.
21 The category of "questionness" is an important heuristic category of the contemporary pedagogic thought and the appreciation thereof is related both to phenomenological and hermeneutic sources of inspiration, as well as to searching for such inspirations in the ancient Greek philosophy. Cf. Rutkowiak 1995, 34–35. Cf. also: Folkierska 1990; Wierciński 2015; Jodłowska 2012.
22 Cf. Böhler 1981, 88.

problem of education turns out to be the education of problem. At this point, we start facing the risk of misunderstanding, which stems from the possibility of the two-fold interpretation of what the problem as such is.

After all, there are many types of problems, related to different circumstances, which are in turn a function of time and place. A person who lived in the prehistoric era had different problems compared to the ones of an inhabitant of medieval France; and still other problems are experienced by contemporary people. Although, from a theoretical perspective, it is possible to describe the formal structure of a problem as such, on a daily basis one encounters, not problems as such, but rather problems qualified with a specific attributive adjective: life problems, love problems, health problems, financial problems, family problems, personal problems, business problems, as well as—much less frequently—theoretical problems, artistic problems, and religious problems. There are as many sorts of problems as there are situation-types. Furthermore, the problems can be categorized according to the complexity of their difficulty: there are hard problems, insuperable problems, trivial problems, and pseudo-problems, etc.[23] A problem situation requires the ability to define the problem, and to pose an adequate, right question, and to find a solution thereto. There are different methods helping to achieve that. Spotting, defining, and solving problems, as well as posing questions, is what people learn throughout their life. In this context, the condition of the contemporary human being and the awareness of inevitability and necessity (that both accompany them) of endless confrontation with the problematicality of the surrounding world demonstrate the characteristically contemporary form of socio-cultural function of education, with this function being expressed by the idea of permanent education.[24]

Educating by spotting problems and posing questions assumes that the basis of the education process is not the human being understood as a being who can say "no" (M. Scheler), but rather it is the human being who is ready to question. When we speak of problematizing and questioning, what we thereby

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23 Cf. Cackowski 1964.
24 In this context, the well-known formula "learn to live well" is almost ranked as a symbol of the contemporary "extended" education function as a life-cycle process. Cf. Wojnar 2000, 30–32.

mean is a certain attitude; or, alternatively—an act in which the subject opens itself to "things in themselves." The operative truth about them gets somehow suspended and things appear as if they are situated somewhere between reality and unreality.[25] Questioning triggers the process of variation in which what is certain becomes questionable, and what is real—merely possible. For the questioning subject, reality is not anything ready-made or determined once and for all. Instead, reality is indeed marked by the trace of questionness: it is indeterminate, unresolved, and it craves for being specified. Reality being called into question manifests itself in the horizon of certain possibilities, the majority of which stem from a given tradition, and thus has a historical character. In the course of socialization, this tradition becomes accepted and regarded as the medium of experiencing the world. The tradition is responsible for the feeling of familiarity when it comes to experiencing the world; this familiarity stems not only from the "certainty" that the world is as we know it, but also from the circumstance that the world was as is already earlier on and will remain thus in the foreseeable future.[26] This feeling protects our daily life, guarantees the meaningfulness of our plans, and contributes to our individual and collective identity. Practicing the art of questioning aims at urging this self-solidifying identity to transcend itself, to question the foundations and the directions of development it had scheduled for itself. Problem-related education is not exclusively oriented at knowledge. It also appreciates the element of ignorance which is contained in a problem/question, while it also teaches how to cope with this ignorance *qua* ignorance.[27] The purpose of thus understood education is not the mere transfer of ready-made knowledge into students' minds so that they stop asking questions, but rather the enhancing of the strength and profundity of questions, the raising of eroteric consciousness,

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25 A contemporary example of such problematizing and questioning cognitive attitudes, which are constituted in the relations between what is real and unreal, are the studies and analyses related to the phenomenon of fantasies. Cf. Piasecka 2018.
26 Cf. Schütz 2012; Gara 2016.
27 An element of ignorance as the necessary link to reach knowledge has been long neglected in school education. What gives a rather painful testimony to the above fact, are the analyses of treating school pupils' blunders, which give reasons for condemnation rather than for overcoming the barriers of learning. Cf. Biedrzycki et al. 2013; Federowicz M. et al. 2015; Karpiński and Zambrowska 2015.

the broadening—as it is colloquially said—of horizons. The notion of a horizon, so enthusiastically applied within phenomenology, with phenomenology being the philosophy of a truly questioning character,[28] is a metaphor of openness, distance, searching, the unknown, and as such it tallies smoothly with an equally common metaphor of the human being's existence conceived of as being on the road.[29] On the one hand, questioning, which lays the foundation for the very process of education, as the striving for an answer tries to substitute knowledge for ignorance: after all, what is at stake, is neither a question in and of itself nor any free-floating questioning. On the other hand, what education is about, is not to make somebody omniscient but to strengthen their open questioning nature. Each acquired piece of knowledge, each problem solved, each acquired skill serves the purpose of opening the human being even further. Hence, this situation is rather paradoxical: the human being develops through acquiring experience, learning, cognizing, which is supposed to make them even more open, more questioning, and aware of their ignorance.[30] Thus understood education does not close the human being in some sort of better or worse tailored world of "eternal truths," but instead, teaches it—as opposed to the economics of our "post-animal existence"—to live in openness.

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Thus understood education, which tallies well with the open nature of the human being, is rightly contrasted with various forms of "education" involving (with the process not being free of violence and ideology) "inculcating" the rigid and ready-made formulas in the form of specific attitudes, beliefs, and goals into the student's mind. Abstracting from various ideas of education, which appeared in the distant history and which heeded the need to protect and develop the open nature of the human, we have already mentioned that the conception of education which best fits the above-stated pattern— as far as education of the last century goes—is John Dewey's philosophy of problem-oriented reasoning.[31] Education based on problem-reasoning is

28 Cf. Sobota 2017.
29 Man construed as "a being on the road" is a rather common metaphor occurring in the earliest works of culture. In the context of philosophy of education, cf. Gara 2017b.
30 Cf. Ablewicz 2002; Wulf 2016.
31 Cf. Dewey 2004, 160: "To say that thinking occurs with reference to situations which are still going on, and incomplete, is to say that thinking occurs when things are

therein connected with democracy understood as a socio-political regime, which promotes freedom, mobility, tolerance, and openness of all the citizens. However, still one question remains: is what is understood—in the vein of Dewey—by the concept of a problem sufficient to adequately describe and properly develop the already-mentioned open nature of the human being? In other words, one might ask would the problem with education be ultimately resolved or at least adequately uncovered if one day one actually would manage to implement in the overall school education Dewey's "problem teaching?" The doubt addressed by this question relates to the already-mentioned ambiguity of the category of a problem.

First of all, we often use the terms "problem" and "question," while regarding them as being *equivalent*. However, in the course of the development and problematization of the idea of the human being and of education in the historical reality, what starts to be clear is a more and more conspicuous difference between problem-reasoning and the questioning attitude. "Problem-reasoning" is blind to this distinction. At the same time, there are different attitudes or styles of searching and openness, among which only *one* represents the Deweyan problem-reasoning. Clearly distinct, albeit often confused with the just-mentioned mode of reasoning, is reasoning as questioning. Let us try now to elucidate this difference since it specifies the research perspective from which the already-stated problem with education clearly stands out, including in particular school education and the historically shaped education system coupled with its inherent tendency towards ultra-stability and towards its distancing from the surrounding world—which is, from its position, perceived as being external.

While not discussing details, one may safely say that a problem as such is wholly oriented at its solution and makes sense only insofar as it appears within a certain theoretical-practical framework of interdependencies. It presents a certain alternative which craves to be settled in accordance with the adopted goals. The desired end-state that *ought* to occur is already known; what is unknown, are the means leading up to solutions which, once discovered, annihilate the problem and thus make it invalid. A solution to a problem is

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uncertain or doubtful or problematic."

guided by certain—pre-assumed—directives; it must always be the proper and desired solution; that is the one in accordance with our expectations. The problematicality of a problem is an obstacle lying in our way to the solution thereto. The solution in question normally involves discovering some method; it implies in turn that a problem is of rather technical nature.

Originally, "problems" appeared only in the language of mathematics.[32] Thence, this parlance of problems was projected onto the other realms of culture. Nowadays, we live in an epoch of problems. The category of problems dominates almost all spheres of life—starting with personal experience and everyday practice, through politics, and up to science, philosophy, and religion. This state of affairs derives from swift development of science and technological progress. What is more, it seems that such concepts as progress, science, technology, the state, or labor were invoked in the first place for the sake of solving problems. And these problems—as is well-known today—to a large extent emerged due to the cultural supremacy of the said concepts. The grand transformations of social, political, and economic nature creeping all across Europe for the last two centuries may be perceived as problems: social problems, labor problems, economic problems, national problems, class problems, religious problems, problems of power, schooling problems, problems of history, problems of minorities, of migration, women's problems, as well as problems with poverty, etc. People perceive their lives as a concatenation of problems. The spectrum of problems ranges from the problems of personal character, business problems, health problems, the ones of psychological and emotional nature, etc., up to grand existential problems, world-view-related problems, and metaphysical ones. Social organizations and political institutions are dedicated to supporting people in their daily struggle with their respective problems. Modern states appointed education systems to fight the problem of illiteracy; and then went on to "improve" the said education systems so that they could overcome the problem of functional illiteracy, or the one of unequal opportunities, or of social exclusion. The relation between being (as the term is used in the common parlance, that is, in the sense of a tedious struggle for survival) and solving dozens of problems can be readily translated into the

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32 Cf. Proklos 2003, 61–64.

language of metaphysics. And, so, one might validly say that Being as such has today become a Problem.

However, the question is of different nature altogether. Certainly, we do not thereby mean the grammatical form of an interrogative, because this in turn is a mere linguistic expression of certain psychological phenomena and of some issues to be resolved which may operate as questions, but they do not have to function as such. The questions one poses do not directly stem from the prior state of knowledge which in the course of questioning should get developed to such a degree that the next stage of cognition should be reached, which is in turn supposed to give rise to the next question, and so on and so forth ad infinitum. Questions are not aligned in the series of a signifying progress, as problems are. In the face of a question, the continuity of the tradition does not derive from the fact that questions, and problems alike, disappear once they are solved: that problems become invalid once one finds solutions thereto, with the solution in turn becoming another problem; and it is precisely in this manner that cognition assumes the character of progress. In case of questions, these are always the same questions as the ones posed by previous generations, and which will be posed by future generations. But this means that the above-mentioned continuity—however paradoxical this may sound— assumes here a disrupted form. The question—as derived from tradition—is always of preliminary character and it must be always posed anew—as if it had never existed before. In this sense, in the face of the question, everybody is a novice; there are no experts on questions. This means that each person in a sense consecutively starts from scratch, reenacts this beginning in their own peculiar way, thus creating history, which can be referred to as a community of questioning subjects. Furthermore, let us note that an answer to a question looks quite dissimilar to the case of a problem scrutinized above. An answer to a question may prove to be unfavorable to the questioning subject, although it can be true and valuable; the questioning subject takes it to be a temporary suspension or the postponement of the process of questioning.

While projecting the above distinction between problem and question onto the realm of education, what is most readily noticeable is the fact that the process of education, especially the one that resorts to the already-mentioned "problem-reasoning," is—as its name suggests—oriented at problems at the

levels of theory, organization, and school practice. In the language of questioning, this means that what is of utmost importance for the process in question is an answer; however, not an answer to a specific question, but a confident, proper, and right answer, that is, such that solves the assigned problem. The education of problem is an education of answer, wherein the latter breaks off from the process of its emergence and thus becomes a "statement," a "truth," and "obviousness" independent of it. This is paradoxical at least for the reason that the recipients of an education offer are in principle the ones who do not know, and who are at liberty and have a right to ask. However, the purpose of the education apparatus—curbed within the rigid framework of an education system—is to make those who are ignorant "answer"—and answer correctly, which implies answering according to the expectations of the questioning person (or, strictly speaking: of an examiner). "Question," on the other hand, is in this case a privilege bestowed upon teachers (which, certainly, confers certain powers on them). The privilege in question transforms questioning into examining, the subject matter of the latter is what is already known, and which suppresses the collective process of posing questions. School space does not constitute an intergenerational community of questioning subjects and is not receptive of new experiences. In place of thinking via questions, what is promoted, is at best "problem-reasoning," which means reasoning by answering.

Education systems were designed in the period of a fascination with natural sciences and under a certain delusion that important problems can be solved by resorting to the pattern of rational thinking based upon the said sciences. A fitting instantiation of this movement is the already mentioned Dewey's pragmatic philosophy[33] and its pedagogic implications. Without entering into details, let us merely state what follows. Dewey emphasizes the universality of the problem attitude and tries to project the causal scientific procedure onto the didactic process. However, this model of education does not permeate our universal education. The simplified pattern of education within our model of universal education assumes the form of (school) subjects as reservoirs of given knowledge which is verified, segregated, and

33 Cf. Reut 1992.

deemed unquestionable. Dewey states: "Science is a name for knowledge in its most characteristic form. It represents in its degree, the perfected outcome of learning, —its consummation. What is known, in a given case, is what is sure, certain, settled, disposed of […]" (Dewey 2004, 204).[34] What is thereby meant, is the optimal method of reaching the scientific truth. However, this message, which is highly problematic from the vantage point of contemporary philosophical discussions, was rather disfigured within the confines of actual schools. Actually, the above message has been reduced to uncritical trust in the "apodictically true" knowledge; that is, the already discovered one and the one ready to be acquired, and thus in truth not requiring to be discovered anew and not urging consecutive generations to pose the very same questions all over again. It is the spirit of scientism that guides the content of curricula. Scientific thinking and problem-reasoning based thereupon became, on the one hand, an unsurpassable ideal that the school reality sadly cannot reach. On the other hand, scientific thinking—as a direction of thinking—marginalized all other types of experiencing the world, especially the experience by way of developing an intergenerational community of questioning subjects.

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Conclusion: between the problem of education and the question about education

The considerations presented herein are of preliminary formal-eroteric nature, and focus on uncovering the philosophical problem-related and philosophical-historical assumptions of comprehending education as a problem. In line with the formal-eroteric perspective adopted, our task was not to provide a solution to this problem, but rather a reflection on what characterizes the very problem and what is lacking in the research perspective determining this problem. Why is education a problem?

The point of departure for our considerations was the commonly shared impression, confirmed by sociological research, that despite many civilizational and cultural accomplishments that the Western education has recorded thus far, education, as designed by (and for the sake of) modern

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34 Cf. also: Reut 1992, 164–165.

states, gives rise to unrelenting express criticisms in all of the developed countries.[35] The criticisms in question express the disappointment with what education—which to a large extent is based on school education—managed and manages to achieve in the face of ever-growing transformations of the contemporary world. This very air of disappointment with the effects of education expresses what we labelled as *the problem with education*. After all, this is only one of the problems characterizing education. The other is represented by what we labelled as the problem of education—or the *education issue*, with the latter being possibly a more apt formulation. This last issue appears not so much in broad disputes over education as it does at the level of the insight into what education is as such, with the latter being much less present in public debates. As our preliminary definitional point, we took for granted the minimal conception of education as the historical and cultural process of the human being's formation within a coherent process of upbringing and teaching. As for our hypothesis, we assumed that the said problem with education is, first and foremost, connected with the ever-widening split of the idea of education (as a kind of bipolar formation). A philosophical assumption of thus understood education understands the human being as an open question. The human being is not originally determined by any specific content which would necessarily settle the issue of what a particular person should be in the given historical reality. The human being is by nature open to various determinations of its existence which, on the one hand, restrict the primordial openness of existence, and, on the other hand, fill it with real content, thus rendering this existence thoroughly historical. Therefore, general history is a reflection of the human being's self-formation by way of acquiring old and creating new cultural patterns. That is why we might as well concur with Dilthey in that what determines the human being can be revealed only by history. What corresponds best with this open and (at the same time) historical nature of the human being is a model of education—constituted by the said bipolar formation—that, on the one hand, protects and sustains the innate openness, and, on the other hand,

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35 Among numerous works, one can mention for example: Hajdar and Gross 2016; Szafraniec 2008.

does not content itself with this "emptiness," but rather fills it with content-rich forms of the given culture. The education process is then originally marked by the paradoxical character which constitutes the problematicality of the former. The slogan "education as a problem" expresses precisely this paradox related to the task of the human being's formation, understood as the simultaneous opening and limiting of the constitutive openness of the human being.

We attempted to demonstrate conclusively that the most consistent and influential model of an attitude towards education considered herein is the education centered around the so-called problem-reasoning. Education as a problem is the education of problem. However, speaking in this manner, we noted that there is a certain ambiguity in the concept of a problem, which results in the circumstance that instead of doing justice to the open nature of the human being and to the task of its harmonious development, problem-reasoning only widens the gap between the promises and possibilities of the contemporary world and aggravates what we labelled as the problem with education. That is why we put forward the proposal to distinguish between problem and question. Briefly speaking, a problem is oriented at solving a task, with the latter being invalid once the method to overcome it has been discovered. A problem is founded upon various assumptions which point into the direction of a solution. A question, on the other hand, is neither of technical nor of theoretical nature. As the questioning attitude, a question is of inherently "preliminary" character, and in this sense—while reiterating Plato's reasoning on the immortality of the soul (*Phaedrus* 245c)—one can say that a question never becomes inoperative. It is receptive to an answer which may be one or the other—regardless of whether somebody is therewith satisfied or not. Since the emergence of times of the domination of scientific-technical vision of life, thinking in terms of problems has almost totally ousted thinking in terms of questions. Also, public space and its particular sectors, including education, became the domain of managing problems. We live in an epoch of problems which is—as Heidegger put it—"the epoch of a total lack of questioning."

The history of mass education in modern education systems, with mass education being responsible for the transformation of the notion of profession in the last two centuries, demonstrates in what way the originally construed

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human being's formation, which helped introduce it into the world of values and prepared it for life in service of society, got narrowed down to craftsmanship, which is in turn construed as an axiologically neutral dominion over specified fragments of knowledge and skills.[36] It also shows the collapse of the harmonious idea of education as a bipolar formation of a "complete human being" and the replacement thereof with one-sided process of developing a professional-specialist. Despite grand civilizational achievements which fell on the said transformations, which were up to recently labelled as progress, the criticisms launched at contemporary education, that keep signaling the problem with education, evidence the need for taking into account in the process of education something over and above specialist skills. Paradoxically enough, this is ever more conspicuous, the higher the pace of technological progress becomes, while generating successive forms of specialization.

While juxtaposing problem and question, and highlighting the assumptions and limitations inherent in problem-reasoning, we suggest that only the presence of open questioning—which does not imply the hegemony and the reversal of orders—is able to do justice to the open nature of the human being and to its need for transcending its own limits. Such questioning does not easily yield itself to being structured or well-organized and controlled. Neither is it easily manageable. That is why in an education system operating in the vein of problem-reasoning and organized by the state such questioning has gone outside the area of interest. Questioning was replaced by codified procedures of posing and solving problems. Additionally, the way of solving them was settled in advance. And this is precisely the very fact that lies at the bottom of school education becoming ever shallower. However, what, along with questioning, found itself outside the scope of the system, was the issue of upbringing, which—albeit recurrent in the disputes over the system—normally appears in the form of a ready-made matrix "to be applied," and is usually tailored along the lines of some political ideology dominating at that time.

However, posing questions as a way of developing the skill of dialogical thinking constitutes an important completion of problem-oriented reasoning. Only these two—questioning and problem-solving interconnected in

36 Cf. Sobota 2016.

particular educational processes, with repeatedly the same questions tackled by consecutive generations—provide the chance to become receptive to the complexity and variability of the contemporary world. School as the space for creating "a community of questioning subjects," understood as an intergenerational community, which enables us to face the growing volatility and uncertainty of the contemporary world—this is the starting point for a rethinking of the issue of contemporary education systems. Still, what is at stake, is to keep the balance between the openness of questions and the efficacy of solving problems. It would be in vain to pose questions and have a dialogue without developing the skills of pointing to and solving problems. On the other hand, excessively focusing attention on solving problems proves to be generating more problems than solving. This constant reminding of ourselves regarding questioning does not mean that the vision of the human formed in accordance with problem-reasoning, the equivalent of which in the future is some sort of "transhuman," is contrasted, out of sentiment, to the well-known ideals of humanism, related to, e.g., Greek or Christian heritage, to personalism, or to Jewish philosophy of dialogue. The temptation to contrast the modern "barbarian" world with "traditional" ideals is plainly too easy, and normally leads to an ideological instability of the education system. All appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the understanding of "progress" as well as the understanding of the "traditional" ideas in the context of education are based upon the experiences of the last two centuries, which is exactly what modernity brought with itself. Contrasting the two, does not solve the issue. There is no point in questioning the unquestionable accomplishments of modern, universal reflection. The point is rather to reflect upon the principle which (running counter to the original assumptions) started favoring education's one-sidedness—that is the one-sidedness of codified problem-reasoning. The connection between the problem attitude and the recurrent questioning is indispensable in the realms both of upbringing and learning, since it grants the possibility of efficiently dealing with the challenges of the contemporary world, while simultaneously maintaining a clear awareness of the broader context of emerging issues—an attitude, to which there seems to be no alternative in the face of, among others, such presently "pressing" issues as global warming or migration. It might be said that the herein suggested return to the integrity of

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the human being's flourishing through the strengthening of the significance of questionness—being peculiar to the human as such—and to the human being as an open question does not derive from a nostalgia for the old world, but is rather a response to the growing complexity and pace of the transformations of the contemporary world. This, perhaps, may be the only response, which is in turn a question itself …

However, this does not imply that when it comes to the explanation of the problem of education, we should concede *primacy* to questioning. Building such hierarchies, on the basis of which, in the next step, one generates easy remedial directives, is alien to the attitude of remaining in the state of questionness; the former normally leads to hampering the process of questioning and to imposing various ideological restrictions on the slowly unfolding space of reflection. It is impossible to reduce the problem of the historically shaped education to the said fundamental question about education. Both from the epistemological and the methodological point of view, distinguishing the problem with education and the problem— issue—of education, does not presuppose any hierarchical dependence between them. The fact that the primary problem of education is situated within the horizon of the idea of the human being does not imply that the problem with education is somehow subordinate to the former problem, with the latter problem taking into account its practical aspect and the requirement of efficacy. The phenomenological investigations that mainly focus on the problem of education can and must resort to the problem with education, the study of which takes empirical research. The fundamental questions about the human being and its experience of the world cannot after all abstract from people's immersion in the historically shaped world, including *this* (and not any other) specific education system. From the fact that this system neglects the issue of upbringing and shifts the emphasis almost exclusively on (oftentimes superficial) teaching we can rightly infer that the system in question performs its role as an educator only *partly*, and thus it does so inadequately in relation not only to the idea of education. Also, in the face of the requirements of the world we are trying to catch up with, there is little point in shifting proportions between upbringing and teaching. Dealing with one *or* with the other is a false disjunction. What is at stake here, is rather their integrity and discovering the interdependencies between them in particular

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representations, including each school subject—the interdependency between the current, historically contingent problem with education and the problem of education, with the latter of which pointing to the idea of the human being as "an open question." There exists a need for the reflection upon the question of how a natural tendency for each generation to pose the same questions *anew* may be integrated into and respected in the present, systemically organized *reality* of educating. This concerns especially the young people, their discovering of reality, the building of their own competencies, and their entering into adulthood under the conditions of oftentimes illusory proposals offered in the face of increasingly complex problems of the contemporary world.

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