

Malgorzata Przanowska

Listening and Acouological Education

Education is far more than just information, knowledge, and competencies. Education is more than acquiring skills in order to solve problems. What is this “more”? Within the notion of *Bildung* (education) there are at least two strands which constitute this “more than”.

Hegel described education as a successful transformative development of the subject, in which it becomes itself in society. By contrast, Georg Simmel (1858–1918) described the constraints of modern social subsystems in education. We no longer learn in order to become ourselves, but we only obey the imperatives of the “objective spirit,” the systems of science, law, language, economy, religion, and so forth. Simmel makes a case for education as a transformative experience which stops modern alienation and conduces to self-development.

The other strand is the phenomenological and hermeneutic one. Here, education means opening up the depth of the self, life, and world. Additionally, and like in the first strand, it is no longer the detached subject that is educated, but the embodied self. The late Merleau-Ponty, the late Heidegger, and the late Lévinas described perception and human existence as an event. Heidegger’s notion of *clearance* (*Lichtung*) is a new concept of a subject and of an object which are no longer opposing entities. In the same vein, Lévinas sees subjectivity as one and the same as subjection to the other.

It is against this backdrop that as a philosopher working in the field of education I wholeheartedly endorse the new approach of an *acouological education*. For in her book Malgorzata Przanowska lays open a new understanding of education that brings together the two strands of education theory which deal with education understood as far more than just learning. Here, education as listening means being addressed by questions and by transformative experiences that entail personal development.

This new “listening-based” philosophy of education abandons the prevailing activity-based concept of education which obviously has its own right wherever effectiveness is needed. By contrast, *acouological education*, as Malgorzata Przanowska puts it, goes back to a layer where activity and passivity do not yet oppose to each other. When listening means understanding, it means self-articulation at the same time. Reversely, by this understanding and self-articulation of a subject, something exterior, for example, a new idea, finds an opportunity to come into existence.

We definitely need more education theory of this kind, namely philosophically informed and at the same time dealing not with other theories – but with processes and phenomena which are even closer to ourselves than our normal conceptual thinking.



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