FILOZOFICZNE PROBLEMY EDUKACJI
4 (2021), 1–19
doi:10.4467/25450948FPE.21.001.15166
www.ejournals.eu/FPE

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The pedagogy of asylum as a utopia of hospitality. A review of basic assumptions[1]

Abstract

This paper aims at the presentation of ethical and political grounds of the pedagogy of asylum, which, in its assumptions, refers to concepts of such thinkers as Emmanuel Levinas, Erich Fromm, George Steiner, Hannah Arendt, Michael Walzer, Avishai Margalit, Jacques Derrida and Janusz Korczak. Utopia of hospitality, presented in its basic assumptions, constitutes a look at the social life, life of individuals and communities, as concentrated in asylums, while its author thinks that it forms an answer to modern challenges to Western democracies, education and politics in the "Age of Migration".

Keywords: pedagogy of asylum, hospitality, utopia, other, contemporary philosophy

Słowa kluczowe: pedagogika azylu, gościnność, utopia, inny, współczesna filozofia

Global intensification of the migration movements by the end of the 20th century predicted further accumulation of this phenomenon and, therefore, announcement of the 21st century, the "Age of Migration", contribute to the increased significance of the phenomenon of "hospitality". In the perspective of global migration (see Agier, 2008, pp. 73–101), one should also consider one of the aspects of a simultaneous rebirth of interest in locality, community and culture-specific for them in the democratic Western world. After a period of its twilight related to rapid industrialization and attendant urbanization, a limited significance of tradition and an increase in the role of state and nationalist ideologies in the collective life. It seems that this dimension of the life of democratically organized communities becomes crucial in the context of intensified migration, as not the political asylum, administratively provided

[1] The article is a revised and significantly expanded version of the text "Gościnność wspólnot. W stronę pedagogiki azylu", which appeared in work: Włodarczyk, 2009a, pp. 124–137.

by the state or individual efforts of particular individuals, but the hospitality of societies and local communities, in which everyday life international and intranational migrants must find their place, constitutes the right area of their necessary support. In other words, the "Age of Migration" divides people into two roles: the migrant or the admitting side (see Agier, 2016, pp. 58–79).

Preparation of groups and communities for hospitality and education for asylum becomes an initial condition for social integration that may prevent isolation and, consequently, take one of the models developed within the framework of intercultural pedagogy – assimilation, melting pot or cultural pluralism. The tragic experience of the first half of last century, the culmination of colonialism, totalitarianisms, world wars, ethnic cleansings and Holocaust, with a decisive influence over the nature of modern Western liberal democracies, showed that the metaphor of space is an inaccurate measure of social and individual distance. It is evident in the era of the global flow of information, ideas, goods, services, resources, men and women, where the comforting fact is that time and space are no longer the limits for our access to the world. Still, it also has consequences undermining an individual sense of ontological security – equally unlimited access to ourselves in the scale of the world as a whole.

In other words, the titular issue of hospitality is accompanied by assumptions resulting from the theoretical perspective adopted in the paper, indicating the asylum as an educationally significant base for involvement in civic society. While entering the asylum, the subject may co-participate differently from the one socially dominant, experience discontinuity of social space and different rules for defining a situation. Experience gained in this way may become an essential component of its practical awareness, allowing for recovery of ethical and practical orientation in the world, critical distance to dominant social relations and motivation for involvement in the democratic civic society. This peculiar therapeutic effect of asylum, enabling subjects to restore prudence, motivation and self-efficacy, constitutes an intermediate step, bizarre laboratory preparing for involvement in operation with others and among others.

Of course, the concept of the pedagogy of asylum is here an element of Utopianism. Actual realizations are in practice something more and something less than the assumptions of the idea, which has a research and critical potential (an ideal to which we can refer specific realizations), a regulative potential (indicating the conditions for the possibility of asylum organization) and an emancipatory potential (a dawning of practical and discursive awareness of the subjective participation in the social life). Therefore, at the level of existence of particular groups we can talk about ersatz asylum. This paper aims at the presentation of ethical and political grounds of the pedagogy of asylum as the Utopia of hospitality, which, in its assumptions, refers to concepts of such thinkers as

Emmanuel Levinas, George Steiner, Hannah Arendt, Michael Walzer, Avishai Margalit, Jacques Derrida and Janusz Korczak. The utopia of hospitality, in its basic assumptions, is a look at the social life, life of individuals and communities, as concentrated in asylums, which may be a response to modern challenges to Western democracies, education and politics in the "Age of Migration".

1. Utopics and education

The phenomenon of Utopia owes its name to a text of 1516 by the Renaissance humanist Thomas More. The contents of the text, alongside a social discussion about the potential and the appropriate way to realize political and social ideals, consist of an extensive account by one of the discussants, Raphael Hythloday. The narrative concerns an island far from Europe, unknown to the inhabitants of the old world, which has been the most daring embodiment of the above ideals for several centuries. This detailed and enthusiastic way of discussing the ultimate social organization and the devices to keep it at the expected level, of ideas of a world of everyday life that is as improved as can be and achievable, have become widespread and assumed the form of a literary convention. However, the problems related to the history of the organization of the community on the island of Utopia, invented by More, should not be reduced to a mere literary convention. The recognition of a tradition well-rooted in Mediterranean culture, to which Thomas More deliberately alluded and unwittingly gave it a name and viability, as well as the equivalents of this phenomenon created and developed outside the Western world, has contributed to defining the complex subject of interdisciplinary research, which is utopics, well-developed today, the topics of Utopia. In other words, according to Ruth Levitas, the constructions of imaginary worlds, free from the anxiety of everyday life, can be found in one form or another in numerous cultures.

Furthermore, a view that Utopia is not escapist nonsense but rather a constitutive part of the legacy of humanity should be regarded as a foundation of a vibrantly developing, already well-established direction of research, known as *utopian studies* (see Levitas, 2011, pp. 1–9, 179–205; Sargent, 1994, pp. 1–37). The very value of images of sufficiently perfect possible worlds increases with technological achievements, the development and expansion of education and the democratization of societies, whose citizens gain, among others, the chance to discuss the expectations of their future through interactive media. In addition, we seem to be increasingly aware of living in a world of excesses of competing utopias that colonize the world around us. At any

rate, it is to stress that utopias are not merely literature or remote, hard-to-reach places, but the horizon of tomorrow as well as the social and political aspirations and expectations that activate human ambitions and offer a sense of achievement.

Nevertheless, the 'stigma' of Utopia is evident. Since, in common parlance, Utopia is nothing but an unrealistic ideal, an illusion, a fantasy, and clear evidence of naivety, its creators try to avoid associating their works with this very meaning. For example, in his essay *Utopistics: Or, Historical Choices of the Twenty-first Century*, Immanuel Wallerstein observes that his studies do not address a perfect and imminent future yet try and indicate an alternative and, arguably better and historically feasible, one. This future will be made possible by a simultaneous use of scientific knowledge about politics and ethics (see Wallerstein, 1989). This is, in his opinion, a sober, rational and realistic assessment of social systems, their limitations and capacities, which is why, to preserve the above significant difference, he describes his research as utopian. Today, similar measures, caveats and certificates of credibility are contained in the famous publications of Rutger Bregman and Yuval Noah Harari. In other words, in the context of the collapse of Eastern European communism and the immensity of crimes committed over the centuries in the name of particular utopias, it is not easy to openly admit to it. Especially that too many people find it convincing to say that dystopia is our most probable historical capacity, one we may already have put into life, and the very pursuit of utopia only brings us closer to this point on the horizon of history.

2. The right of hospitality

In the philosophical treatise *Toward Perpetual Peace*, written more than 200 years ago and slightly forgotten but now frequently invoked, Immanuel Kant foresees that in the future, the only chance to keep peace will be the subordination of particular sovereign states to common law, to which the republican state, as he expressly indicates, is best suited. Kant makes the right of hospitality one of the more essential elements of this project. As he says:

> (…) *hospitality* (a host's conduct to his guest) means the right of a stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner by another upon his arrival on the other's territory. If it can be done without causing his death, the stranger can be turned away, yet as long as the stranger behaves peacefully where he happens to be, his host may not treat him with hostility. It is not the *right of a guest* that the stranger has a claim to (which would require a special, charitable contract stipulating that he be made a member of the household for a certain time), but rather a right to visit, to which all human beings have a claim, to present oneself to society by the

> right of common possession of the surface of the earth. Since it is the surface of a sphere, they cannot scatter themselves on it without limit. Still, they must rather ultimately tolerate one another as neighbours, and originally no one has more of a right to be at a given place on earth than anyone else (Kant, 2006, p. 82; Derrida, 2000, pp. 3–18).

However, while extending this issue, Kant reserves that:

> The right of hospitality, that is, the right of foreign arrivals, pertains, however, only to conditions of the possibility of *attempting* interaction with the old inhabitants. – In this way, remote parts of the world can establish relations peacefully with one another, relations which ultimately become regulated by public laws and can thus finally bring the human species ever closer to a cosmopolitan constitution (Kant, 2006, p. 82).

Then, the short remark made by Kant somehow gives away how this project is far from the observed state of affairs and simultaneously far-sighted:

> If one compares with this the *inhospitable* behaviour of the civilized states in our part of the world, especially the commercial ones, the injustice that the latter show when *visiting* foreign lands and peoples (which to them is the same as *conquering* those lands and peoples) takes on terrifying proportions (Kant, 2006, p. 82).

Hospitality as a central theme of the philosophical project returns in the 20th century in the concept of Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas is also a witness to the frightening consequences of inhospitable practices of the West. Just like Kant, although about a different – Jewish – intellectual tradition, he contrasts the ontology of war with the eschatology of messianic peace. More importantly, for Levinas, hospitality, differently than for Kant, constitutes the very foundation of subjectivity, the basic structure of the individual's ethical sensitivity. Thus, in the Preface to the *Totality and Infinity*, his main work published for the first time at the beginning of the 1960s, promises: "This book will present subjectivity as welcoming the Other, as hospitality" (Levinas, 1969, p. 27).

In his research of ethical phenomena, establishing subjectivity defined in this way, i.e. responsibility, freedom and justice, he problematizes interpersonal relations. He starts from the fact that even when belonging to one group, community, society, culture or tradition, we remain inherently separated from each other and as a result are endlessly distinct for each other. As he says:

> The other is the Other. He and I do not form a number. The collectivity in which I say "you" or "we" is not a plural of the "I". I, you – these are not individuals of a common concept. Neither possession nor the unity of number nor the unity of concepts links me to the stranger [*l'Etranger*], the stranger who disturbs the being at home with oneself [*le chez soi*]. (...) But I, who have no concept in common with the stranger, am, like him, without genus. We are the same and the other (Levinas, 1969, p. 39).

For Levinas, the dialogical relation is initiated by recognition of the order "you may not kill" by the Same as its duty. Originally, in the form of resistance to

the desire to kill the Other, it manifests itself to the Same in contact with the testimony of otherness, i.e. with the occurrence of the Face of the Other on the horizon of sensual experience. Consequently, the Same gives way, thus selflimits its freedom. Ever since, the relation between subjects is unsymmetrical and pedagogical. The Same becomes a student when he recognizes the Master in the Other, a teacher of its hospitality, and respect for the Other's life is an ethical rather than a legal duty (see Todd, 2003, pp. 1–41). Eventually, according to Levinas, responsibility for the Other appears to be much more far-reaching. Levinas explains it by referring to the biblical tradition:

> "Thou shalt not kill" or "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" not only forbids the violence of murder: it also concerns all the slow and invisible killing committed in our desires and vices, in all the innocent cruelties of natural life, in our indifference of "good conscience" to what is far and what is near, even in the haughty obstinacy of our objectifying and our thematizing, in all the consecrated injustices due to our atomic weight of individuals and the equilibrium of our social orders (Levinas, 1994, pp. 110–111).

The Same learns responsibility from the Other, from every Other who is also the Other for the Other, which again requires justice, answering the question: who of them has priority? How to keep balance, peace? According to Levinas, the need for knowledge – moderation and prudence – originates from the need for justice (see Levinas, 1969, pp. 212–214; Levinas, 1991, pp. 153–162; Włodarczyk, 2009b, pp. 228–237).

Not settling for the concept of subjectivity, Levinas develops his philosophy multilaterally and consequently. Having into regard the presentation of main assumptions only, we should settle for the statement that Kant's placement of the right of hospitality in the centre of the international order design impresses the real potential and scope of the concept of Levinas, in which the pedagogy of asylum is included as the general framework.

3. Asylum and rituals of small groups

In many of his writings, Erich Fromm criticizes the typical alienation of modern societies, one who diagnoses lost humanity and an apologist for radical humanism. Like Levinas, he draws on the Jewish intellectual tradition; this is evidenced by his numerous references to the Sabbath ritual and the related concept of Messianism (see Fromm, 1951, pp. 241–249; Fromm, 1966, pp. 96–120, 152–157).

Fromm sees the Sabbath as the original contribution of Judaism to global culture and considers its concept to be one of the major ones offered in the Bi-

ble. As an element of Jewish law, it is for him "is a central institution of biblical and rabbinical religion", but the only one of the Ten Commandments, which refers to a ritual and as such the Sabbath "was and is the most outstanding phenomenon of Jewish practice" (Fromm, 1966, p. 152). The Messianic era as the "Sabbath of Sabbaths" is a promise of an age of universal justice and mercy and thus becomes part of everyday experience only as an idea. This is not the case with the Sabbath, which, in its form of a group, communally performed ritual, gives the individual the opportunity to realize and experience freedom, harmony and peace, as a substitute for the Messianic time permanently present in social practice and human experience (Fromm, 1966, pp. 155–156). Resting on the Sabbath day, with numerous prohibitions of activities, the meaning of which Fromm reads in terms of work defined as interference and disturbance of harmony between man and nature and in social relations changes the individual's goals by rationing the practice. Therefore in this way, not so much goals but rather restrictions on practice are imposed. These restrictions force changes in people's ways of doing things and thus offer a new framework for human orientation in the world and open up a critical perspective on emancipation, crucial for pedagogy. Fromm's understanding of this phenomenon transcends the context of Judaism. Fromm sees it as a model for small groups which, for all their diversity, in practice, create environments devoid of authoritarian elements based on the ideals of radical humanism.

Fromm's analyses and readings of the figures of the Messianic time and the Sabbath ritual indicate several issues for the pedagogy of asylum (see Włodarczyk, 2016, pp. 289–295). The first one concerns the distance that, according to Fromm, groups of a diverse nature can maintain while simultaneously sharing a radically humanistic orientation towards an alienated society. Such distance does not contribute to a gradual dissipation of the asylum potential while the activities of a small group are beginning to resemble authoritarianism, which transforms asylum into a ghetto. The small, independent groups which Fromm sees as the nucleus of change are those capable of anticipating and perpetuating the values essential to radical humanism in everyday practice, individual and group memory.

The second issue of importance for the pedagogy of asylum concerns the suspension of time and make room for a different kind of temporality, namely the one to come. According to Fromm, this is precisely the uniqueness of the Sabbath as a joint change in the way and forms of action, which means that the anticipation of Messianic time is not only symbolic but also real. In other words, coming across this form of Messianic time in practice becomes part of its present experience. This peculiar gesture of hospitality, exclusion and anticipation, distinguished in the model of the Shabbat ritual, a component of "col-

lective art" (see Fromm, 2002, pp. 335–344), remains unnoticed when we focus on the relationship between work and leisure or on the various forms of activity suitable for the types of religious or secular rituals mentioned by Fromm; they are superimposed on this transformed time structure, which cannot be experienced in its pure form. As a result, it should be noted that asylum is not a proper space for social change but a place of activity that prepares for it, where the emotional bedrock of the subject can be transformed to some extent.

The third point concerns pluralism. The Shabbat ritual model allows for different forms of activity and organization, which share the same general frame of orientation. This means that the groups that fall within this model and whose membership is voluntary can be very different. They can be, for example, relatively homogeneous internally, but together can make up a mosaic of pockets of educational resistance, in which many people with varying ways of conduct, of different class and ethnic origin, of different sexes, ages, abilities, views, aptitudes, competencies, and interests may seek either an experience that opens up to themselves, others and the world, a strengthening or an opportunity to develop corresponding forms of participation, education and involvement. In this sense, asylum, as a non-existent place of temporary residence only, can go unnoticed, being a discreetly present and only analytically determined aspect of these groups.

Considering the relationship of the Sabbath to the other days, the issue of the impact of asylum experiences on how group members function in their respective areas of social practice should also be raised. Not only are the effects of asylum experiences transferred outside the group. It is practically crucial to find that, as in the case of Sabbath, Messianic time becomes the content experienced in its ritual, in the case of asylum, the Utopia of a new harmony is no longer just an abstract projection of a future which is unattainable today. As a consequence, experiencing this otherness makes us speak of a point of support for social criticism. The experience of a different, contrasting order may make us sensitive to the imperfections of social practice in everyday life. Equally important is that, in conditions of alienation that dominates the society, the constant revival of asylum is at the same time a memorable source of self-crystallization of its criticism and the notion of a new harmony. In conditions of asylum, the subject can self-diagnose, experience and become aware of the possible dissonance between external requirements and internal needs. This is impossible without a change in the educational environment, which takes part not only in shaping the character of individuals but also in constantly strengthening and sustaining their social function via its inherent suppression.

The next issue to be addressed in the context of the pedagogy of asylum concerns the subjective conditions of emancipation possibilities. In the Shab-

bat ritual model, which includes the potential for asylum, the strengthening of the voice of the conscience becomes possible through the distance from the conditions that weaken or cancel it and through the conditions that are appropriate for this model of activity, since the conscience can only reveal itself to man in an indirect way, by experience. Furthermore, the Shabbat model presupposes community practices designed to open up to a new form of relationship. The revival, restoration or strengthening of the confidence shown in them and the experience of the confidence shown by others requires conditions appropriate to the potential for asylum. On the other hand, the observation that people intuitively and universally look for small groups in which to engage in community practices seems to support its fundamental premise, with the particular importance of these pockets of educational resistance.

4. Hermeneutics of translation

In his classical work from the 1970s, *After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation*, George Steiner discusses, mainly using examples from the Western literature, the issue of hermeneutics based on translation, thus consolidating the fundamental relation of translation, interpretation and understanding. As we read in one of the prefaces:

> translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in *every* act of communication, in the emission and reception of each and every mode of meaning, be it in the widest semiotic sense or, more specifically, verbal exchanges. To understand is to decipher. To hear significance is to translate. Thus the essential structural and executive means and problems of the act of translation are fully present in acts of speech, writing, and pictorial encoding inside any given language. Translation between different languages is a particular application of a configuration and model fundamental to human speech even where it is monoglot (Steiner, 1998, p. XII).

In other words, "inside or between languages, human communication equals translation" (Steiner, 1998, p. 49).

I want to limit the complex issues related to Steiner's proposal and emphasize here only their selected consequences, significant concerning the pedagogical issues and the issue of the pedagogy of asylum.

Firstly, Steiner subordinates the act of understanding to the skill of translating, as in this sense 'to interpret' means for him as much as 'to translate'. Secondly, he does not juxtapose intercultural, intracultural and intrasubjective communication but indicates that they are based on the same foundation. Therefore, cognitive intercultural competencies are potentially specific for every individual, provided they can perform any acts of comprehension, and

can be further developed through education. In other words, comprehension competencies are assumed to be intercultural competencies, while every hermeneutical act is in fact an exercise in the transfer of meaning, an intercultural translation. In this perspective, a difference among these three areas – intercultural, intracultural and intersubjective – would consist mainly of the sum of experience acquired in them and the degree of identification with them.

Thirdly, essential competencies required for communication are not based on knowledge only. However, it is impossible to separate them from knowledge, erudition, i.e. acquisition of knowledge about a different culture or language does not provide the understanding with this culture or language, as it requires the skill of translation because these orders are disproportionate. But interpretations obtained in the case of intercultural communication competence characterized in such a way with only one culture or language refer simultaneously to all other cultures or languages.

Finally, we should also take a look at the action as a type of translation. For example, when we work some theory out, we perform acts of translation within its area, deriving from various sources and authors. However, if it is to be applied in practice, it needs an additional act of translation: from the thought to the system of action different from it. Therefore, the theoretician cannot lead its concept to such a record stage, instruction that it would not require further interpretation during translation into practice. So thinking, speech, action constitutes different orders of practice, distinctive languages requiring translation. As Steiner says, while referring to the artistic activity:

> The French word *interprète* concentrates all the relevant values. An actor is an *interprète* of Racine; a pianist gives *une interpretation* of a Beethoven sonata. Through engagement of his own identity, a critic becomes *un interprète* – a life-giving performer – of Montaigne or Mallarmé. (...) When we read or hear any language statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate. Reader, actor, editor are translators of language out of time (Steiner, 1998, pp. 28–29).

5. Development of the shared space and the role of subjective powers

In her works, Hannah Arendt provides multilateral analyses of the public space, its architecture, principles of participation and the nature of the mutual impact of subjects operating in it. As she explains in *The Human Condition*:

> The term "public" signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it. This world, however, is not identical with the earth or with nature, as the limited space for the movement of men and the general condition of organic life. Rather, it is related to the human artefact, the fabrication of human hands, and affairs that go on among those who inhabit the man-made world together. To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time. The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak (Arendt, 1998, p. 52).

The very moment of the constitution is significant from the point of view of the hospitality issues:

> The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized. (...) Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever (Arendt, 1998, p. 199).

Analyses of the public space and contexts of its formation proposed by Arendt offer insight into the political structuration and fragmentation of a collective, whose dynamics and nature depend on the establishment of the dominant system.

For the pedagogy of asylum, the complex phenomenon of mutual impact, capable of being distinguished from this perspective, as well as an uneven distribution under the conditions of democratic centres of power – governmental, public and subjective – of non-uniform, often incomparable power, organizing the life of a given community, is of particular importance. Discontinuity, resulting from repealing each other by impacts generated by these numerous centres, becomes the seedbed for distinguishing separate spaces of relative autonomy, protected from a direct impact of the outside, including disciplinary authority, and needed for trusting commitment of subjects to the establishment of new relations. In other words, intersubjective space, relatively free from defined roles and orders, hospitable for everything new, different, constitute one of the principles founding the otherness, asylum.

For this type of association, subjective powers distinguished by Arendt – of judgement, forgiveness, making and keeping promises – corresponding with the necessity of participation in the public life and prevention from the unpredictability of consequences of human acts not synchronized with each other in the community, are of great significance. They help separate select principles temporarily applicable to the asylum. Arendt writes about the powers of making and keeping promises, as follows:

> These moral precepts are the only ones that are not applied to action from the outside, from some supposedly higher faculty or experiences outside action's reach. They arise, on the contrary, directly out of the will to live together with others in the mode of acting and speaking, and thus they are like control mechanisms built into the very faculty to start new and unending processes (Arendt, 1998, p. 246).

6. Thick and thin morality

Universals on which the principles and purposes of education could be based are the foundation of intercultural pedagogy. If we talk about the need for "unlearning of domination", respect for otherness and also irreducibility of differences among cultural practices, ways of life, developed and transferred between generations by particular communities, we also need to be able to justify limitations of hospitability or interventions on behalf of the abused. We need to be able to handle the paradox of our intolerance of intolerant behaviours of other people. We want to follow responsibility and justice, despite our particular membership in numerous cultures, groups, strata, classes, nations, worlds of life, genders, types of abilities and disabilities, communities of residence, etc. Striving for neutrality constitutes both an issue of international and global institutions' functioning and particular communities, open and closed groups and particular individuals.

Apart from the above-mentioned concept of subjective powers, the Pedagogy of asylum derives from Michael Walzer's thick and thin morality.

The formation of thick rules of morality is related, according to Walzer, to the dynamics of the public space of a given community. The thickness of consolidated yet continuously transformed customs in the interaction processes exceeds the ability of their conceptualization or codification. Their knowledge is practical, related to learning processes, taking over and modifying knowledge and lifestyles functioning in a given community by individuals, which educational processes model expectations and practices of subjects connected with this community. It does not mean that public space constitutes the only source of morality, where people are together. Individual invention and primary socialization, which may oppose secondary socialization, cannot be ignored, which concerns immigrant communities. However, the power of habit, mimicry, routine causes that for most members of a given group, the thick morality may become a comfortable point of reference to assess all human behaviours and directions of one's actions according to the principle of shared obviousness. However, on the other side, one should look at thick morality as profoundly rooted in subjects, providing them with a sense of ontological security.

Walzer does not propose the transformation of thick morality so that it has an over-group nature entirely. He realizes that it is impossible. A "universal" moment, thin morality, as he calls it, is necessary for a situation of contact with a visitor, a stranger who does not share our practices of thick morality. These are those special situations when our action, deriving from resources of the subjective experience of being in the world among people, must find its reference not, as usual, to thick morality, members and practices of well-known community, but to the horizon constituted by humanity. In other words, thin morality is a derivative of the reproduction of thick morality. In this sense, it is an attempt to find what can connect, be accepted among strangers and groups when they land next to each other, enter interdependence. Therefore, Walzer distinguishes:

> Morality is thick from the beginning, culturally integrated, fully resonant, and it reveals itself thinly only on special occasions when moral language is turned to specific purposes (Walzer, 1994, p. 4).

According to Walzer, thin morality, "universal" moment that undermines the obviousness of thick morality, testifies to human solidarity, becomes a basis for a social critic (see Walzer, 1993). Participating in the life of a given community, he knows its customs. Still, while simultaneously siding with strangers and victims, he confirms the legitimacy of the minimal code (thin morality), which should protect strangers and victims from claims put forth by specific, thick morality, but also should impose on newcomers duties related to participation in humanity. The impartiality of the social critic has its sources in his study of the interrelations between the particular and the "universal" (see Walzer, 1994, pp. 85–103).

More broadly speaking, reference to that universal moment should become, as a result of education, a component of any critical awareness, communication reasonability of every citizen of the democratic society. Thus, the Walzer proposal does not promise a decreed in advance solution for contradictions specific to modern societies. Oppositely, as he notices:

> But there is no avoiding it, and it may well be that the most important thing people learn in civil society is how to live with the many different forms of social conflict (Walzer, 2004, p. 72).

7. Decent society and deconstruction

The duty of hospitality is not something that could or should be imposed if empowerment, autonomy, respect for otherness remains the education rate.

However, it should be noticed that social institutions and standards may be formed in a given community to obligate individuals, thus accustomed to specific behaviours humiliating others and ourselves, regardless of their intentions.

It concerns the public life institutions, which regulate social relations and – as areas of socialization – effectively strengthen them. It is something entirely different when a given individual, while demonstrating its invention, acts to the detriment or consults prosperity of some person and when rules of operation of some institution dictate it to do this. In a democratic society based on egalitarianism and pluralism, decisions related to the world view should depend on particular individuals. However, there is still the issue of the ethical foundation of all institutions shared by natives and migrants. Hence, Avishai Margalit distinguishes two areas. As he writes in the *Introduction* to *The Decent Society*:

> The idea of a civilized society is a microethical concept concerned with the relationships between individuals, while the idea of a decent society is a macroethical concept concerned with the setup of the society as a whole (Margalit, 1996, p. 2).

In other words, it may happen that the given community of people who refer to each other nicely in direct contact creates a civilized society; however, it does not mean, according to Margalit, that it is a decent society. As he assumes: "A decent society is one whose institutions do not humiliate people" (Margalit, 1996, p. 1). Margalit justifies a negative form of this deontological rule because, firstly, eradication of evil constitutes the issue relatively more significant than the promotion of good. Secondly, the very expression of respect rarely may become the primary purpose of action. It is more often something in type of its side effect. Thirdly, it is easier to identify a humiliating action than a respectful action.

For the pedagogy of asylum, it is vital that within existing and newly-created institutions, such as educational ones, individuals of a different culture yet dependent on one another not be obligated to mutual humiliation. This is to assure that these institutions do generate conflicts on this basis and do not promote and strengthen attitudes leading to routinization of humiliating actions in the socialization processes. Not so much individual, but community hospitality is the rate here.

For the pedagogy of asylum, similarly to Jacques Derrida following Levinas, questioning itself constitutes the condition for openness. Lack of radicalism may be a too early – *a priori* – refusal to the other. Involvement in deconstruction increases and accelerates a risk, making extreme demands before and regardless of whether they appear together with the migrant's arrival.

The act of deconstruction indicates conditions, local conventions in which the other is entangled, deprived of its right to its otherness in different ways; obligated to abdication, unable to come as itself, is subject to transformations and deformations. Deconstruction as the preparation for the arrival of the other bears the stamp of a political act, oriented towards exposure, weakening or elimination of barriers and conventions established due to the local power of defining meanings and limits, political and cultural hegemony, ethically motivated act: responsibility for the other, care about it and justice (Derrida, 1996, pp. 86–88). Derrida emphasizes the nature of this claim, e.g. in the concept "democracy to come" (*la démocratie à venir*):

> "Democracy to come" does not mean a future democracy that will one day be "present". Democracy will never exist in the present; it is not presentable, and it is not regulative idea in the Kantian sense. But there is the impossible, whose promise democracy inscribes – a promise that risk being perverted into a threat (Borradori, 2003, p. 120).

Therefore, the introductory rate is not only whether a given order can stand the appearance of the other, strange to it, whether it can survive the intrusion of deconstruction, radical demands, but whether it can move, transform internally to hold this otherness in its area. The durability of asylum is not so much permanence but continuity. That is why it can be said that involvement in acts of deconstruction has an ethical dimension and mainly maintains our readiness:

> We must thus be dutiful beyond duty, we must go beyond law, tolerance, conditional hospitality, economy, and so on. But to go beyond does not mean to discredit that which we exceed. Whence the difficulty of a responsible transaction between two orders or, rather, between order and its beyond. Whence all these aporias, and the inevitability of an autoimmunity risk (Borradori, 2003, p. 133).

Susceptibility to deconstructions understood in such a way decides on making the asylum potentially hospitable.

> Pure and unconditional hospitality, hospitality *itself*, opens or is in advance open to someone who is neither expected nor invited, to whomever arrives as an absolutely foreign *visitor*, as a new *arrival*, non-identifiable and unforeseeable, in short, wholly other (Borradori, 2003, pp. 128–129; see Derrida, 1997, pp. 27–28).

Suppose it is to remain the asylum. Asylum must eliminate its barriers to cross its thresholds. However, openness means also exposing oneself to risks. Each admission of somebody new involves a risk of blowing apart the order, its complete and irretrievable loss. Therefore, involvement in deconstructions is triggered by pedagogical foresight out of concern for the other and for oneself as the other.

8. The child as the foreigner

In one excerpt of his famous essay *The Child's Right to Respect*, Janusz Korczak introduces the figure of a foreigner, to which he likens the child (Korczak, 1992, p. 176). Like a foreigner, the child does not understand the language and knows his bearings, laws, and customs. It is easy to deceive them, take advantage of their ignorance and ignore them. One could stop considering this simile as an impressive stylistic figure, but the resonance with the foreigner's motif significantly present in the Hebrew Bible and the intriguing afterimage of the surprising identification seem to demand a different approach (see Włodarczyk, 2020, pp. 214–225). The list of analogies between the condition of a foreigner and a child, indicated by Korczak in the essay, can be extended. Foreignness can be understood as far-reaching differences in our perceptions, prevailing over similarities; a stranger is different from us in a complicated way to express, but sensually and emotionally tangible. The foreigner is far more different from us than we are from one another. These differences are self-apparent in appearance, language, behaviour, images, knowledge, taste, ways of being, relationship practice, socialization and upbringing, beliefs and ritual patterns, measures of goodness and justice, the extent of tolerance, creating and arranging places, constructing tools, humour, art, play, the pursuit of happiness, and mourning. It is difficult to say what distance is necessary and in what dimension. It is impossible to feel the crisis from here and how many years or decades of stay may disenchant foreignness in a meeting or a fleeting encounter with someone. The birth of a child brings about an analogy consistent with Korczak's intentions. However, even with parents and loved ones, the distance and the number of dimensions of otherness, in this case, exceeds the scale and scope of what makes us different from adult foreigners.

Their interesting list can be found in the first five parts of *The Child's Right to Respect*, titled by Korczak "Indifference and Distrust" (Korczak, 1992, pp. 161–167). In fifteen passages, he discreetly examines and presents the differences between children and adults in terms of size and potential of strength, increase in knowledge, degree of control over oneself and one's environment, ability to withstand hardships, stage of psychophysical consolidation, subordination to authorities, material dependence, life experience, relation to the immediate environment, life expectancy, social importance, autonomy, rationalization, and degree of social control. In all these dimensions, social functioning differences turn out to privilege the adult and to disadvantage the child. In a world tailored to an adult, the child's otherness is reduced to a litany of deficits, which the child can make up for, at least in part, for the price of humbly accepting dependence and relatively minor importance. A severe dependence also awaits

a foreigner who, while migrating, enters a world of a complex tangle of ideas, relations and rules obvious to an indigenous inhabitant, who can count on the forbearance or solidarity of his relatives, friends and neighbours. In the many dimensions of this tangle, the receiving party retains the advantage and only too often remains unaware of the arising inequalities and abuses.

It is precisely these that the explicit prohibition formulated in the Hebrew Bible seems to be directed against. It recalls a category also adopted by Korczak: "You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex 23:9), reiterated in one of the subsequent books, in the form of induction: "You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Dt 10:19). Thanks to the figure of a foreigner and newcomer, prohibition and injunction seem to correspond to the child's inalienable right to respect, both in terms of reducing adult tyranny and the obligation to care for the child's well-being and development (Korczak, 1992, pp. 174–179; Liebel, 2018, pp. 204–238). Amazement at the foreignness of the child, which could make us philosophers and poets open to the otherness of the Other, sensitive to diversity, does not in Korczak's eyes usually provoke more than anxiety and often triggers enmity rather than establish an asylum. An asylum like the Orphans' Home at 92 Krochmalna St. in Warsaw, established thanks to Janusz Korczak, Stefania Wilczyńska and many others.

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The assumptions mentioned above concerning the pedagogy of asylum require a connection, which constitutes the subject of my separate monographs: *Lévinas. W stronę pedagogiki azylu* [*Levinas. Towards the Pedagogy of Asylum*], *Ideologia, teoria, edukacja. Myśl Ericha Fromma jako inspiracja dla pedagogiki współczesnej* [*Ideology, Theory, Education. The Thought of Erich Fromm as an Inspiration for Contemporary Pedagogy*] and *Utopia and Education. Studies in Philosophy, Theory of Education and Pedagogy of Asylum* (Włodarczyk, 2009b, 2016, 2022). Similarly, the justification of the need for asylum in the context of challenges of the "Age of Migration" and the establishment of the very utopian project in the current of intercultural pedagogy created in the spirit of critical pedagogy and dialogic pedagogy requires an extension. However, I consider it appropriate to distinguish and summarise the ethical and political grounds of the pedagogy of asylum to be subject to consideration and discussion in such a concise form.

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