

## COMENIUS'S WORKSHOP OF HUMANITY AND EDUCATION AS LIFELONG PROCESS

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John Amos Comenius has become the first theoretician of general life-long education through his conception of pampaedia. His "Pampaedia" presents a very elaborate conception of education. In Comenius's opinion the well of practical wisdom lies in knowledge of the world, i. e. in the knowledge of nature, the arts, and the Wholly Writ. He introduces his idea "of the world as a school" in the Czech version of "Didactica Magna". It also includes his striving to find the relations between the development of nature and mankind. D. Čapková says, "The individual philosophy which he later call pansophia promotes not only individual intellectual enrichment but also in the proper form it leads to the shaping of both individuals and societies, and to the enhancement of good morals and deeds" (Čapková, 1985, p. 39). Comenius writes in the 10th chapter of "Didactica Magna" that in schools, the workshops of humanity, not only arts to be taught but also ethics and piety" (Komenský, 1926, p. 79).

When he determines the programme of life-long education for everyone, he also determines its starting point its successive phases. "Quond universalis Culturae Votum revocet nobis eorum, quae in considerationem venire solent in Nihil, Aliquid, Omnia, divisionem summam, quam inter Ideas vidimus..." (Komenský, 1948, p. 22).

Comenius's theoretical reflections on the theory of education are influenced by various positive and sometimes negative stimuli. When he studies in Germany, he comes across the encyclopedic ideas in the works of his Professor Alsted. He felt personal affinity towards Alsted's striving because he himself tries to achieve a harmony between science and the Bible. Inspired by Alsted's encyclopedic ideas Comenius arrives at the decision to write "Theatrum universatis rerum". In this work he calls the world a school. he wants the Bible, the world, nature and the human society to become sources of practical wisdom. That he is deeply interested in the progress of science and technology can be attested by his buying of Copernicus's famous work "De revolutionibus orbium caelestium".

The Renaissance influences Comenius deeply. He is enthusiastic about possibilities to study the surrounding environment, the world, planets, the forces of nature, peoples, traditions, languages, and world history (Didactica magna III., p. 3). The Renaissance pedagogy is interested in new problems. New attitudes to children, to

their personalities, interests, needs, abilities are a sign of a new holistic attitude to human life. Comenius implants many revolutionary ideas into this field of study. He insists on the education of children from early childhood, from the nursery school. He even thinks of some upbringing before the child is born. All his ideas are full of optimism for the new possibilities of education. He believes in the possibility of educating every child. This is considered of vital importance not only for the private aims of the individual but also from the standpoint of the objectives and aims of the whole society.

Comenius considers the systematic training and strengthening of knowledge and abilities, character, and of all mental powers a very important means of changing the society. All individual qualities obtained through such processes are very important for emending society. He referred to education of the young generation as the best way of eliminating all vices from the society, of emending communities, nations, churches. He returns to an idea which is vivid and consistently applied during the Czech Reformation. It takes all people to be God's creatures and to be equal as a consequence. It gives them equal right to education. Comenius is interested in pansophic education the aim of which is to achieve wisdom. He tries to push through the idea of general education which is to be organized from the nursery schools and related to practical needs and aimed at universal education. Comenius's "Pansophia" is an attempt to give some structure to training, to arrange the acquainted knowledge in some system so that all sources of controversies among people could be eliminated and universal harmony could be achieved. School is to be the means of achieving this aim.

Comenius does not have in mind the education of an individual or a few individuals. He has a vision of the general education of all people in all arts and sciences - in everything. In his opinion people are to be taught everything that can make them happy and wise. To be successful in the school of life, people are to be well educated and education, which is the spring of true wisdom, is to be comprehensive, harmonious, and closely related to moral opinions and ethic convictions. He never separates knowledge of an individual from the character, because only a moral, learned person, who has acquired the proper way of living can be wise. When he defines the curriculum of ethics lessons, he thinks about how to lead the young generation to accept the cardinal virtues. He puts wisdom in the first place followed by prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice.

In the 10th chapter of "Didactica Magna" he explains the notion of education in details. He argues that through education mankind tends towards greater humanity and greater perfection. He believes that these tendencies manifest themselves in harmony of wisdom, cardinal virtues, and piety and he describes them as the unity of ratio - oratio - operatio (Komenský, 1926, p. 79-87). He reminds us: "Qui proficit in literis et deficit in moribus, plus deficit, quam proficit."

In "Didactica Magna" he uses the pansophic notion *omnes omnia* (everyone ought to be educated in everything), *omnino*. He emphasizes: without universal education it would be impossible to understand the extremely complex relations that constitute reality. When he speaks about the general emendation of society, he lies special emphasis on cultivating human beings to play an eminent role in the process of emendation. He decides to use *humanae gentis cultura universalis* (*omnis, omnibus*,

omnino, excoli) (Komenský, 1948, p. 23). In his opinion these words suggest the positive lifelong development of all members of society. *Cultura universalis* is not applied to an individual or a few people. It is applied to all without exception.

Comenius views the purpose of education in a new way too. He rejects as completely futile the old conceptions of education which were only verbal and formal and an education for education sake. He sees inspiration in everyday life. He supports the development of his "inner harmony", the harmony between the psychological and physical aspect of the individual. He advocates developing exercises for health, cultivating morals, wisdom and piety, and encouraging love of life, freedom, work and truth, and personal performance.

In "*Didactica Magna*" and in "*Informatorium*" Comenius determines the curriculum for the successive phases of a young person's life until the age of 24. From the very beginning he thinks only of enriching national community through education (*The Bohemian Paradise*, 1632). Having lost all hope of returning to his homeland, he starts working on a new project. This time he has in mind the international community. He considers omnia as suitable for this purpose.

In "*Informatorium*" he outlines his idea of education in the pre-school age. His concept includes physics, mathematics, optics, astronomy, geography, history, economics and politics - all, of course, in a very simplified form.

"*Janua linguarum reserata*" and "*Orbis pictus*" are designed as textbooks for older school children. They are both in the form of encyclopaedia rendering the most complete picture of the world. These textbooks are intended for the Latin school. The best denomination of individual grades in this school be derived from the subjects: grammar, dialectics, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music (both practice and theory), and astronomy (*Didactica magna* XXXI, p. 1). *Septem artes liberales* are conceived in such a way that the practical subjects will precede the formal ones (*Didactica magna* XXXI, p. 4).

Comenius lies extraordinary emphasis on practical wisdom and life experience. He always understands it as the unity of theory and practice. In this unity he thinks he has disclosed the secret of perfection.

In Saros Pataky, where he lived between 1650 and 1654, he engaged himself in working out the project of the pansophic school. Although *schola pansophica* is devoted to school children, it is another important step in the theory of *pampaedia*, i. e. of general education. In this work he accounts for the relations of all elements leading to success in general education. He accounts especially for the relations between things and individuals, places, time (Komenský, 1960, p. 25-93).

Comenius divides the process of training into several grades. The studies of the first grade (*primaria studia*) ought to be aimed at substantial matters: wisdom, eloquence, honesty and piety. The training on the first grade could be meaningful only when connected with the second grade (*secundaria studia*). At this grade the pupils are to learn further details in order to make the knowledge of the first grade more complete and acute. These two types are supplemented by the third grade (*studia terraria*) which includes relaxation, repose and games. They all prove necessary for preserving physical and psychological health. Having in mind the necessity of keeping the body fresh and the mind bright, Comenius schedules his plan of pansophic studies according to the

extent of the curriculum and the time necessary to master it (Čapková, 1970, p. 713-714).

In "Pampaedia" he refers to twelve pre-conditions for the successful development of human nature. The first is love of life and respect for life. Having in mind this pre-condition, Comenius speaks especially about an active life and about work for the welfare of all people. The second pre-condition is respect for human dignity, the third is comprehension of the world. This enables him to step to the next pre-conditions which is an understanding relation between facts which leads to formation individual s character. Comenius insists on a concise draft of facts that could improve the individual. He insists that the individual is to refuse all things detrimental to his life. He gives prominence to life spent at work, to life spent in plenty and to free use of the results of one s labour. In his opinion people ought to obtain some status and acknowledgement by the society they live in. People ought to be able to persuade others of truth. They ought to be able to keep self-control because self-control in Comenius s opinion is a product of good morals, living in mutual concord, and security. Of all these pre-conditions he introduces piety in the last place to point out that this is the most important pre-condition because piety directs people to virtuous activities (Komenský, 1948, p. 39-42).

"Pampaedia" is Comenius s masterpiece. It completes his previous works "Didactica Magna" and "Via lucis". Here he gives the most precise details of the omnes - omnia - omnino system of life-long education. His view of education as a means of emending society is here expanded with the greatest consistency. In "Pampedia" the life of any human being is divided into successive phases and each of them is identical with a school grade. Comenius has suggested four school grades in "Didactica Magna" which cover the nursery school, national, Latin and university. In "Pampaedia" they are expanded so that they cover the entire life of a human being, from the moment of conception until death. He added new grades: the school of manhood, followed by the school of old age and finally the school of death. He again emphasizes the importance of training but not only for school age children. He sees the necessity of life-long study to meet the demands of universality. When he is writing "Pampaedia", he is thinking of the general education of mankind. All people are to be given the opportunity of education. He expresses his view in these words: "Everyone ought to be trained and instructed in everything to become universally cultivated." (Komenský, 1948, p. 104).

Omnes in "Pampaedia" includes everyone, irrespective of age, from birth (even from the pre-natal period) until old age and death, people from different communities (family, school, church, and state) and the mentally handicapped. No distinction is made as to the age, sex, social status or nationality of people. He also insists on opening the way to the education of the barbarians (Komenský, 1948, p. 26-38).

The curriculum was intended into perfect human nature through the searching for truth, the love of goodness, the ability to express one s opinions and the freedom to act (Komenský, 1948, p. 22-23).

The curriculum of omnia in such a way that an individual of any age can be changed in a school. In comparison with "Didactica Magna" Comenius stresses the pre-school upbringing in the 1st grade and even the pre-natal period. He is firmly persuaded that the success of further education depends on the quality of training that

young school children receive. He also associates the hopes of emending the society with the quality of education. He expands these views in the Xth chapter of "Pampaedia".

Omnino in "Pampaedia" stresses these truths: independent thought, speech, action. People are to learn to distinguish the important from the unimportant not only in their lives but also in society.

The first four chapters of "Pampaedia" explain the targets, contents and methodology of universal education. The further three chapters describe the means of achieving these targets: comprehensive schools, books covering all fields of interest, and excellent teachers devoted to their tasks of cultivating the young generation.

The 7th chapter is a treaty about teachers. They ought to have a broad cultural background and possess the skills and knowledge to be able to teach everyone everything.

Comenius supplements these seven chapters with the "Schools of life", i. e. "schola geniturae, schola infantiae, schola puritiae, schola adolescentiae, schola juventutis, schola viritatis, schola senii, schola mortis". He sets down which are the most important subjects to be taught at certain ages. At the preschool age the children are to develop their senses, skills, and especially their ability to talk. At the children are to learn how to become good, honest, and just. He analyses the methods of teaching ethics, especially how to set good examples, how to give many good pieces of advice, and how to teach the children to become disciplined. All these subject are to be on the curriculum in the first grade. Comenius s firm belief in the dependence of emending the society on the quality of elementary education is again expressed in this chapter. There is no hope of emending the society and its members if the elementary education is of a low quality. Only well educated people are able to distinguish between good and evil and can be good and excel above others. The happiness and welfare of and individual are dependent on the training obtained at this early age. A man cannot get rid of his lack of culture and the faults caused by improper upbringing. What could be remedied at the early age cannot be remedied at all at an older age. This is the reason for paying such great attention to the upbringing of a child even though it is still in the cradle (Komenský, 1948, p. 136-139).

In Comenius s view the third school is "schola pueritiae" (school of boyhood) between six and twelve years of age. Here intellect is trained in addition to senses. Memory is trained together with skills such as reading and writing. The boys are taught mathematics and sciences in a simplified. At this age they are advised to start learning foreign languages. As the boys are trained for practice, for life, Comenius demands the best teachers to undertake the instruction of them.

The "schola adolescentiae" (school of adolescence) is concerned with cultivating intellect, languages and training writing. The curriculum ought to comprise three subjects: languages, sciences and ethics. similarly as in "Didactica Magna" this school is divided into six grades: of grammar, physics, mathematics, ethics, dialectics and rhetoric. Comenius stresses the importance of learning foreign languages. He has in mind one or two languages of neighbouring nations, then he has in mind Latin, Greek, Hebrew. He intends to introduce the so called Gallianus s exercises (Stiebitz, 1946, p. 270-271). Comenius considers diaries to be very important. That is why he advised the

students to write diaries of their own. He set them examples of organizing a diary, taking notes and making use of them for self-education and self-cultivation.

The "schola juventutis" (school of youth) occupies the fifth place in Comenius's conception of education. He calls it "an academy". It provides training for scholars, pansophians, able to use books in their work and work in libraries.

The academy is divided into three grades: "pansophic", "panBiblical" and "panetoimic" which is a school of practical training and exercises. In the first grade pansophia is taught on a theoretical level, in the second grade it is taught on the practical level. In the third grade the students are expected to go to libraries and to study there to get acquainted and draw inspiration from books of the most distinguished authors. Comenius defines the academy this way: a school with a standing academic staff, a place where books of the most varied contents are concentrated, a workshop of humanity where practical training and exercises are to be continued in a very lively manner (Komenský, 1948, p. 200). He thinks it is necessary to establish an academy in all empires and in all large regions-always at a place which is not very busy and is easily accessible.

The academy is completed by "an apodemy" which involves travelling and visiting foreign countries. Comenius considers it to be an inseparable part of the school of youth (schola juventutis). He wants every young man to travel. At first he expects to become acquainted with his homeland but then he is to go abroad in order to broaden his horizons, to make his knowledge more profound and to learn to understand foreign nations and their cultures. To gain greater benefit from the travels abroad, Comenius recommends that the young traveller learn about the people and their cultures in advance before setting off to his journey. Comenius also recommends the young man not to stay long away from his relatives. The last of Comenius's advice is to set a target for the journey - not to roam aimlessly. The itineraries as parts of the diaries reflect this demand.

Work is at the centre of "schola virilitatis" (schola of manhood). All the preceding schools are only preparatory steps to this school of life. The quality of work reveals the quality and level of individual culture and the standard of education. The work of an individual creates pre-conditions for the further cultivation of abilities. Creative work and perseverance, so that they can make full use of the results of their work when they reach old age, characterize the age of the mature man (Komenský, 1948, p. 238-250). When a man is in the prime of his life, his work is his school and he is expected to become a teacher not only of himself but also of other people. He is expected to become a teacher, a textbook, and a school - all in one. Even this school is divided into grades. In the first grade a man chooses his vocation. In the second he makes all efforts to do his work and in the third he enjoys the results of his work.

At the age when a man comes near to the end of his days, the school of old age (schola senii) begins. At this age a man is to evaluate all he has done in his life. He is to come to terms with his age and accept peacefully the idea of death. This school is to overcome faults, imperfections and defects in the manners of old men. They are to learn how to enjoy the pleasures of their lives and how to accept the inevitable end of life with peaceful mind.