

Hungarian Social Pedagogical Narratives

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Abstract

Criticism about the school system leaving the premodern era mixed expectations of modernization and special post-modern challenges even in the early years of the twentieth century (only to have this crammed mix become even more dramatic from the turn of the twentieth century history). Endre Ady, the progressive poet and publicist of the early twentieth century, referring to his school experiences in one of his poems, wrote: 'Perish, shackled schools!'. And this contained both the first emergence of educational reform efforts, and the deschooling commands of Illich. The interpretations and development demands typically moved in three directions.

There are movements of comprehensive school reform and revolution, thriving for the image of a 'new' school, with numerous 'new schools' getting into focus throughout Europe². The creators of the new school image answered the challenge with functional change: in most cases, different versions of the system of 'expanding' functions (Freinet 1972; Kerschesteiner 1912; Gáspár 1977; Mihály and Lorand 1983) were representative, but the shrinking school-functions were also a particular kind of 'renewal' response (Mihály 1980).

There are movements that believed the school system to be ontologically obsolete (or even inherently harmful), and this is the movement that came up with the vision of 'deschooling humanity', as Illich put it (Illich 1971; Holt 1971).

The practice – and the following doctrine – established the synthesis of the two endeavours, with Hegel's concept, so to speak: 'preserved through eliminating' the school system; changing it in a way it hardly resembles its ancient form (*ecole de la Rue*, city as school – Feran 1977; Bárdossy, Kovácsné and Tratnyek 1993 –). In other respects, the emerging adult education targeting 'students' of heterogeneous age definitely draws a different picture of schools as well – in no small part because of its direct relationship with the world outside the school system.

Our paper focuses on analysing the correlations among the three types of response – both in theory and practice. We propose that besides traditional educational philosophy, education history and school research approaches, new discourses are required to explore the nuances of this phenomenon and a new approach is necessary to address the problems arising from the nature of the school system.

Key words: school based pedagogy, social pedagogy, narratives

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² Reform pedagogy and innovative school movements are the answers of Euro-Atlantic type of cultures, urbanized, modern societies of the twentieth century to apparent social crises. Historical analysis of these movements in international scientific literature is rather divided. For a short period of time, they basically entailed 'revolutionary' movements promoting changes in lifestyle as well, be it a political/social movement or a life reform movement promoting the exodus. During the 'Soviet Thermidor', assessment changed, even those innovations that showed the most social sensitivity were seen as the faithful incubator of the children of the bourgeoisie. The 'leftist' conservatism met the 'rightist' in New School criticism and 1986 brought a fundamental turning point and integration of assessment when these aspirations have taken shape as alternatives in the name of postmodern pluralism (Snyders 1973; Sáska 2009; Vincze 1981).

The research problem in a historical context

It was common for the reform movements that imagined and built the *new school* after the turn of the twentieth century, to endow (or want to endow) the school with several new functions, besides the traditional 'acquisition of certified knowledge' – or the modernized knowledge-transfer. In other words, these ideas have driven (or would have driven) all the socially relevant activities – in a more or less 'pedagogically tamed' version – back into the community space called school, from which they originally emerged (Gáspár 1977). A typical direction of the expansion – both in historical and synchronous description – was activity schools; 'school republics' and 'school states' and their simulations, built on the school-city system model (Trencsényi, 1994b); models that integrated wider cultural and educational functions into schools themselves (community school, complex 'educational centres', called Community Centres (ÁMK i.e., 'Általános Művelődési Központ' in Hungarian, meaning General Cultural Centres)); and sometimes the combinations of these (Trencsényi 2012). Therefore, it is not a coincidence that the advocates of these reforms, revolutions and changes talk about a 'new' school image³.

Parallel to this, the other intent is the humanization of educational space, or the creation of a humanizing counterpoint. This kind of thinking always questioned the *raison d'être* of authority-based education, or at least its primacy. It was rather based on the child's interests, meaning both the realization of autonomy and aspects of social integration (Nohl 2000). At the same time, it was also the criticism of schools, challenging the hegemony of the school system in terms of adequate socialization in modern society. According to this social pedagogy mentality, the authority structure of the family and school will not, and cannot, provide answer to dozens of issues affecting adolescents. The *recreational space* (Nagy 2013) and the juvenile (including adolescent) lifestyles prevailing in its subsystems will be different from school because the roles are formed depending on the spontaneous – or manipulated, but seemingly spontaneous (in the words of Vilmos Csányi, who talks about education in an evolutionary sense, 'despotic') – formation of the community, experiencing the possible liberation from authority (Csányi 2011).

The objection is legitimate that the recreational space historically existed in the premodern era before the age of schooling as well. The 'degree of freedom' of childhood and adolescence in this period was by no means the same as in the modern era, or in today's post-modern age. Traditions, habits, holidays and the routine of weekdays, the rituals and liturgies heavily determined, and made the little free time left for independent decisions and playing strictly functional. The school gradually ensnared the entire, developing individual, (aside from a few exceptions) excluded, basically delegitimized the group factors and real (not

³ It was presented elsewhere (Nagy & Trencsényi 2012) that the 'new' attribute of reform pedagogy included both a new scientific image of society and children and several new features of this society (and of the children, adolescents and young adults living in it), and – at least to the same degree – the cult of the 'New' influenced somewhat by modernity still in harmony with the late artistic avant-garde approach (Trencsényi 1993).

hypocritically declared) community aspects. Because of this endeavour, the ‘extracurricular’ recreational space got a new meaning – primarily a symbolical meaning of autonomy aspirations⁴.

Extracurricular approaches do not surpass but provide a counterpoint to schools providing the benefits of a variety of socialization models in freely chosen authority-free situations⁵. Their keywords are person-centred, development-oriented, resource-centred (and not problem-centred) approach as well as the equal recognition of recreational and social space, and the service orientation that derives from this (Nagy, Bodor, Domokos and Schád 2014). Their pedagogical characteristics are: customer focused and open-ended meaning that concepts like these do not have predetermined contents, methods or forms, they are created by the participants. The pedagogically authorized person does not exercise effective control over the processes, thus does not fill the role of a traditional teacher. These educational activities are well-defined but have ‘incomplete’ definitions, since they indicate an ever-changing and developing practice. Unlike school pedagogy, these activities do not have agenda-like targets; the methodology of non-formal learning achieves openness (both spatially and in terms of future planning) exactly by eliminating those agendas.

The innovations of the social pedagogical approach can be summarized as follows:

- Child-centred, activation-oriented attitude.
- It marks out progressive pedagogical concepts as its goals: *compensatory, based on freedom and collaboration*, promotes children’s rights and the values of individual education (Fóti 2009).
- It undertakes to ensure the desired quality of peer interactions: such as creating social and community situations, student participation, self-governance and the presence of peer mediators.
- It requires social contact: personal approach applies to both the treatment of and increased attention towards children, and it is apparent in acceptance, inclusion and tolerance alike.
- It develops new cooperation with the parental home, local and professional environments, child welfare systems, professionals and institutions (Mihály 1999; Bodony 2014; Makai 2007, 2013)⁶.

⁴ Tamás Barcsi forces this issue in his social and cultural history study (2012).

⁵ ‘Why is it particularly relevant to talk about it as a *combination of roles*? We live in a pluralist democracy, with all its contradictions! There is no superior state to distribute the roles in the name of heteronomous morality. While earlier, an institutional system tried to cover the roles of children and adolescents, today there is no institution that could appropriate and nationalize them! It used to be the state or even earlier the church that sat on the top of hierarchy; *if children did not work as pioneers, they got a 3 as a behaviour grade, if they studied in music school and went to the cultural review; they represented the pioneering team, even though they did not acquire those skills there. If they broke into the grocery store, they got punished for it in school. School ordinance prescribed whether they could be in public spaces after 8 in the evening or not.* Today, values and roles are not interdependent or dependent on authority. The legitimate answer to the lack of structure can only be to support every role in the integration into social structure.’ (Makai 2007, 321).

⁶ Even though the latter only looks at this phenomenon from the perspective of child welfare, it draws important conclusions in terms of this study on the concept of children and teenagers existing in several different social roles. The main characteristics of these adolescents are the following: in most cases, they have families, as the definition of ‘not raised in the family’ does not rule out the existence

By the implementation of these principles in schools, the dominance of the subject – lesson – school year – class – mark structure is disrupted: integrated, complex subjects are created (called *epocha*), Forest Schools, the array of project tasks, flexible lesson plans transform the school time, mixed-age learning groups are organized for the purpose of social learning, formative assessments (mostly text reviews) become practice.

The fundamental question is, did the above principles as social constructs only influence intellectual thinking about the school as an institution – as utopian visions –, or did they have a lasting or even irreversible effect on the actual operation of the mainstream school system? We see the reality between these two alternatives: there are periods when these effects are noticeable in schools but these periods (unique innovations, school movements or even enlightened educational policy aspirations) are bound to be short-lived, the power of restoration is stronger and the reasons for that can be well differentiated and analysed. Among the reasons, we can find the traditional, often described inertia of the educational institution and pedagogical culture (Golnhofer and Nahalka, 1992), and the insistence of the guardians of ‘the great bastions’ (Takács 1987) on preserving their (humble) control over the more and more ‘impertinent, pesky kids’ (Csányi 2011). Parental society also often expects and supports the traditional school system that teaches obedience, gives tasks to students and provides mobility opportunities in return⁷. The analysis of macro-social situations leads to this conclusion as well. New, revolutionary powers see reform education principles as a short term ally (basically driven by the goals to create their own, new social elite and middle class) – from the Hungarian Soviet Republic and Soviet Russia to Hungary after World War II – but in the end their consolidation supported rearrangement. It must be noted that these revolutionary powers were usually states lacking resources and reform educational schools are costlier than their traditional counterparts.

The answers of reform education experiments from the discourse of cultural anthropology

Professional literature expressly about education – apart from some Greek text fragments (Trencsényi-Waldapfel 2003), and Quintilianus – usually starts with ‘exhortations’ on the family education of highborn, regal and noble children (for ex-

of said families, does not mean they grow up entirely without their families. These adolescents are the frequent visitors of a wide spectrum of the system of recreational institutions (cinemas, discos, dance halls, sports, malls, etc.), consumers and creators of culture (they surf the web, chat, listen to music, play videogames, read, watch television, write poems, they support sports teams, etc.); they have civil communities, community roles (friend, boy scout, pioneer, peer helper, member of amateur art groups, churches or even sects and marginal groups). Adolescents can take on income-producing roles as well (in the form of student jobs, ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ casual jobs and incomes, student loans, various social welfare benefits) and they can become savvy or dragged-into participants of mass demonstrations and movements.

⁷ An example of this is when in Csetény (one of the poorest small villages of Northern Hungary inhabited by Roma people), young school managers tried to introduce the pedagogical model of Rogers to the small local school, which resulted in protests by Roma parents, demanding ‘a school for »peasants«, an ordinary school’ (Kereszty & Pólya 2002). Likewise, the young Roma researcher Péter Bogdán fears the schooling of Roma children, in light of the hegemony of alternative pedagogical methodologies (2011).

ample King Saint Stephen's Admonitions to His Son, Emeric; or the literary works of Erasmus of Rotterdam and other Renaissance authors), where the monarch teaches his son, his heir the behaviour fit for royalty⁸. Strictly speaking, it was the development of public schooling (Trencsényi 2007) that created the professional language and literary background for educational sciences which involves school and later 'non-school' pedagogical processes in its discourse. As psychology assisted pedagogy with *better*, more efficient, humane and more adaptive school operations (Rapos, Gaskó, Kálmán and Mészáros 2011), the sociological approach provided a harsh criticism of the school system, up to the point of describing or even demanding deschooling as a real process (Dutton 1976; Sentient, 2003). After all of these, the entry of the 'discourse of cultural anthropology' to the educational science mentality is only a bonus. To quote the 'evolutionary' school theory of Vilmos Csányi (2011), the function and reason of sending those 'pesky kids' to school is not even knowledge transfer (which is more and more in need of institutionalization), but to 'learn democracy'.

There are optimistic, reformer answers (as well) in these mentalities. The answers of reform pedagogy follow three principles:

- Schools can be reformed – both from the inside or the outside; however, in our argument it is not a pivotal issue.
- The main aspect of the reform (process) is mostly humanization, differentiation, emancipation and achieving student participation⁹.
- All of this can be described by the tools supporting reconsideration

The idealist schools of the first heroes of reform pedagogy (Cecil Reddy, Montessori, Steiner, Dewey, Sándor Karácsony etc.) were born along these lines, but mostly due to cataclysms of the outside world – economic crises, world wars, dictatorships, etc. – they 'grew cold' or at least shrank to a realistic scale. Most of the initiators of the 'second era', followers of the pioneers and users of their work (Petersen, Korczak, Freinet, Domokosné, Sztéhlo, Mérei and Kardos – the founders of NÉKOSZ pedagogy), did not primarily preach world-saving and world-conquering reforms, only tried to claim space for their own aspirations – with greater or lesser vehemence and varying results. Especially around 1968, demands of 'alternative pedagogical principles' became the motto of 'space for us' movements (Trencsényi 1993; Bodonyi 2014), thus these 'islands' – international school funding companies, communes, etc. – were able to persist where the principles of reforms could prevail. However, these remained islands. The citizen pipe dream, namely the one putting the school of the bourgeois society as the claimed medium of meritocracy in the place of the privilege-based emergence, soon dissolved. The school system – following the open or hidden message of the state exercising power over schools and the church(es) under its influence (Nagy 1992) – still legitimized social differences as a difference between acquired knowledge forms (Lóránd 1980; Ferge 1976). Moreover, the school system – as most sociol-

⁸ We should not forget about the parody of this, either – a good example of this is Rabelais' novel about educating the giant princes (Gargantua and Pantagruel).

⁹ In other words, *person-centred* (Rogers 1959, 2005; Klein 2007, Vastagh 2015) or summarizing all the differentiating markers: *adaptive* (Rapos, Gaskó, Kálmán & Mészáros 2011).

ogists of the twentieth century stated – not only did not manage to dampen disparities but amplified them due to its covert curriculum, middle class mode of operation and ‘class-based’ knowledge included in overt curriculum (Bourdieu 1971, 2008; Lóránd 1980; Ferge 1976)¹⁰.

All in all, it is only possible to be mobilized through more schooling. Firstly, time spent in schooling means more time spent in comfort and being exposed to less danger (anecdotes from black African teachers often reveal that this way they can save children from extremely exploitative child labour and sometimes even from the savannah wildlife); and it is a fact that children can learn new behaviour patterns from each other in the spontaneous interculturalism of school social life. Finally, the legitimate knowledge students will grow to possess and use should not be underestimated, as it is essential in social communication (language code, health and lifestyle skills, citizens’ action, specific professional expertise, etc.), and this will earn them their certification, which is indispensable in modern society. Worldwide education sociological data shows that higher education leads to better opportunities in life (Radó 2007; Delors 1997), and this experience legitimized schools for a long time, especially amongst the lower middle-class with a chance of mobility¹¹.

Until school-assisted mobility exists and is perceived by society, the resistance against schooling is manageable both in case of the more ‘prominent’, feeling safe in their future; and those who realistically see their future as hopeless. As the ‘school-friendly’ lower middle-class is thinning, thanks to polarization, schools begin to lose their social prestige. At the ‘top’ of society, there is no need for the supporting power of school anymore as education can be ‘purchased’ and in more than one case, knowledge sources at home far outweigh those in public schools. And what is more important, there is nowhere to be mobilized as the ‘place’ is already provided. The school’s system of rules and hierarchy are a nuisance, parents are challenging school authority and withdraw their children from school. And the school is ‘happy’ to be liberated from them as nuisances (Golnhofer, Nahalka 2001; Trencsényi 2001, 2011)¹².

The school basically becomes a social institution, ‘simply’ a warming place, eatery, a place of psychological care, leisure centre; or in worse cases, a guarded ghetto for children of deprived social groups. Logically, these students are not the favourites of the school and the teachers and as their hopes and chances are dwindling, so do they withdraw from schools (or do not even enrol in the first

¹⁰ In this sense, schools speak the argot of ‘educated citizens’ or they serve the creative technocratic ideals.

¹¹ We can often perceive that teachers like these children more, as they are obedient, they can be tasked with different tasks, they ‘take the hint’ (Pöcze 1987; Golnhofer & Nahalka 2001; Trencsényi 2001, 2014b). It is no coincidence that the school-building movements of Luther, Comenius, János Apáczai Csere (aiming for ‘social progress’) and later labour movements kept the demand for schooling, access for good schools on the agenda (Vág 1971). Quoting another great poet of the twentieth century, Attila József, three things are necessary: ‘Stone houses, *schools*, wells’. (Flóra, Már két milliárd...) In another approach, Zsigmond Remenyik spoke of schools as much-needed institutions in his poem (Templom és iskola, Church and school), in the protection of the diaspora identity of minorities. Behold another argument for the ideological nature of preserving the institution of schools.

¹² It is true that during reconstruction cycles and the organization of new elites, importance of the socializing role of schools pops up, from time to time (Forray & Hegedűs 1989).

place), the 'truancy' phenomenon reappears from time to time. The school-mediated knowledge is useless to them, often completely alien to their subculture.

Nevertheless, like the thought of 'the place of a child is with family', even the reformers did not question that there 'has to be a place' – between family and other subsystems of society – which serves the purpose of this ideological *betweenness*. The question accompanies the history of school: With what foundations, methods and forms should it be accomplished? The answers received critical attention in interpreting the phenomena of postmodernity, as new generations have a great demand for access to these 'intellectual and mental warming places' in urbanized and globalized conditions as well. They need to experience peer relations in an organized way, supported by expertise; the foundation of their motivation and basic learning skills; the integration of their family values and literacy to other families' values and literacy. In light of this, schools (school ideologies) responded in several ways (Mihály 2005):

- They started to promote their own supremacy, giving bad reputation to not school-mediated values, not promoting competition and cooperation, but professional isolation. This concept saw the television, the Internet, and sometimes even the family as an opponent. Their common argument was: only the school can show the right path. In the shadow of this, 'constricted school', students always created their own empire (Mihály 1999) with an 'under the desk revolution' (Karácsony, 1948), from W. Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and the 'Putty society' (Gittegyilet, the mock society children founded in Ferenc Molnár's famous novel, *A pál utcai fiúk*), to *Second Life* and *World of Warcraft*.
- They tried to restrict the more and more diverse extracurricular socialization services, influence their operations, the students' access to them (i.e. tying certain services to study results), in an attempt to win back 'disloyal' parents, for which the ideological foundations were: schools are, after all, the most effective in conveying social norms. This version is, however, rejected by somewhat advanced bourgeois democracy and it is generally acknowledged that schooling and the student status is only one of the roles of youth, it does not cover the full spectrum of an individual: the recreational space is an opportunity to interrupt the totalization processes 'self-generated' by schools as mentioned by Mihály (1999). This school model often takes the 'poverty of cultural stimulus' of the target groups of society and the deinstitutionalized state of settlements as a legitimating argument; drawing in activities and communities that would function 'normally' in a modern environment, assimilating them as an answer to disadvantaged situations (while retaining the right of selection).
- They acknowledged and were even 'happy' about modern relay systems, local communities and the (institutional or non-formal) environment that provides, in some way, legitimate social values and literacy, looking for intensive cooperation and partnership; they did not seek domination (open school system). These school models brought into focus an element of the 'outside world': they organized school around *work* as a cohesive element (activity schools being one of the strongest educational reform trends); or tried to establish rights to have a say in the entirety of life activities (after the model of school city-systems, in

the form of *school republics*). They tried – one way or another – to include leisure time, community experience, democracy and even public ownership; or to focus on culture in a broader sense (non-formal culture creation, cultural consumption), instead of – or besides – school centred education. In this model, where the scope of institutional users is multigenerational, serves multiple roles, the traditional student role can be preserved through elimination – as the creators of the ÁMK thought (Vészi 1980; Eszik 1996; Jeney 1986; Mihály 1999; Trencsényi I. 2015)¹³. Community school experiments could provide an answer – perhaps synthesizing all of the above – to restoring the relationship between society and the alienated schools, especially in the optimistic mode of ‘permanent education’ in Europe (Dave 1976; Mihály 1978; Delors 1997)¹⁴. The basic principles of these schools are to have the ‘layman’ institutional users taking their share in ‘exercising power’ and the use of services, like the actual founders, the parents in Waldorf schools, but even Hungarian General Cultural Centres wanted to follow the same principles¹⁵. In the model of community schools, a third key principle is for ‘non-professionals’ to appear in the role of the teacher as well (local Roma woodworker in Ságújfalú, the ‘tale tree’ of Tiszafüred, an agricultural engineer father in Pesterzsébet, etc. (Lőrinczi 1992; Trencsényi I. 2015)). This ‘extended’ school ‘squared’ is almost not a school anymore! The movement described above answered the issues of deschooling by preserving the eliminated school, thus providing a positive response to school critics, such as Holt, Reimer and Illich.

Experiences all show ‘reschooling’, even with models most different from the traditional school system: this was proven by the big Hungarian ÁMK re-

¹³ Another alternative of historical movements is actually the typical structuring of the world of schools. Both the *settlement* (Nagy, Nizák & Vercseg 2014), and the *city as school, ecole de la rue* type solutions are pointing to this direction. But the most prominent in this process is the legitimacy of the ‘third sector’, the autonomous youth groups. There are approaches that provide support for schools (settling back to their original functions), through amplifying this environment. Our example for this is the Polish *Szkola szrodowiskowa* (environmental school) or more so the French ZEPs (Trencsényi, 1987), places where schooling has been given priority and where – contrary to the name – the environment of the school was amplified in order to prevent schools from reproduce inequalities.

¹⁴ In the models of organically established school systems (especially in Scandinavian countries and the USA), it was not the more or less enlightened, absolutist state that initiated the building of the school network or exercised control over the process but the new local communities, religious or secular self-organizations, seeking knowledge not obtainable in family socialization. In its wake, there are alternative learning venues in existence in Denmark, parallel to the ‘official’ school system. In addition to folk schools, they also include the *ungdomskole* intended for endangered youth groups (Trencsényi 1994a).

¹⁵ The Hungarian teaching profession gained an insight into the primary sources of community schools from Csaba Lőrinczi (1992), a history teacher who emigrated to Canada in 1956. With the coordination of the Soros-foundation, there were several pilot-programs in the ‘90s, with considerable financial support. Earlier Lajos Jeney, a school architect gaining his experience from international sources and János Vészi, a cultural historian got to the idea of integrated communal-cultural-educational centres in an organic way, by contrasting the somewhat idealized image of agora, synagogue, the medieval marketplace with the jaded institution specification of modernization. This became the model of the *General Cultural Centre*. Many innovators, researchers, developers and cultural managers have joined this movement, even though during the socialist state, the bureaucracy never gave them enough breath and the regime change swept them away, set ownership barriers before them and the re-centralized state-owned schools can no longer enter the service of local communities.

search (Eszik, Fóti, Pócze, Somorjai, Trencsényi 1990; Pócze & Trencsényi 1987). The parents of Waldorf schooled children often complained about the teaching staff reclaiming power over the school (in the name of efficiency). Even Vekerdy himself gave an account of the pitfalls of nationalization (2011). These ‘school islands’ could mostly exist barely tolerated or even persecuted by the establishments of the time, their existence also hindered by the organizational nature of school systems, aspiring for homogenization. It was a typical phenomenon for the outstanding teacher personalities¹⁶ who created and operated these schools (see above for the ‘heroes’ and their followers) to only be able to keep these institutions running as long as they were personally present as an active, cohesive force (Trencsényi 2011).

So the question arises: why did these schools that tried to model the entirety of life – or at least a part of it – not spread; why did they remain spatial and temporal inclusions in the history of schooling? Is it possible that these elements have not been incorporated into the pedagogical mainstream because they were functional only as specific, isolated cases, especially with humane central figures and masters but not as system-level principles¹⁷? Maybe these inclusion-like examples only have an ephemeral lifespan because they only have personal and not institutional guarantees for their existence?

The ‘stories’ of reform pedagogy mostly consist of heroic beginnings, consolidated operations and (mostly tragic) destructions. Waldorf schools get swept away by fascism, Jena-Plan schools are made impossible by the strictness of East Germany, Makarenko gets dismissed (and then cynically appropriated) by Stalinism, Janusz Korczak becomes smoke and ashes with the rest of his students in Treblinka, national colleges are being closed, the New School of Domokosné, the Boy’s town (created for the adolescents who became outcasts during the war), and the Gaudiopolisz (created from children’s homes in the capital by Gábor Sztéhlo Lutheran pastor, patterned after Father Flanagan’s Boy’s Town in America, established 100 years ago) were devoured by the so called “socialist” school system, supporting conservative pedagogy. Ferenc Loránd, the ‘Hungarian Makarenko’ of the 1960s leaves his successful reform school, Kertész Street, later failing in the experiment of a boarding school on Róbert Károly Boulevard in 1979, the ‘international children’s year’; while the school experiment of László Gáspár, the other big, late socialist experimenter gets rendered impossible. Törökbálint becomes the new scene of political games concerning education after the death of ‘pater familias’, the ÁMKs (Általános Művelődési Központok, i.e., General Cultural Centers) vanish after the nationalization of schools, etc. Furthermore, if we look beyond the actual political and cultural context in this short list and regard the ontological

¹⁶ We do not deny that, in that time and place, all of this was both for the most noble educational intentions, and achieved the most notable pedagogical results. Besides, these models – at least in their ideology – were predominantly not the conquests of the ‘totalitarian state’, their ideologies were closer to some kind of social commitment, mostly to help the non-institutionalized, impoverished local communities (although sometimes hinting at a kind of ‘affectionate violence’, under the paternalism of helping), often against the state or the social mainstream.

¹⁷ Cf. the revolutionary school typology of Ottó Mihály, which gets engrossed by the state after its success (1999).

explanations, it will be easier to understand the silent or loud breakdowns (Kahn 1992; Makai 1996)¹⁸.

Is it inevitable that these examples will remain in the guilty conscience of the collective memory of the profession only as admirable utopias? Is it possible that the answer to the ‘postmodern challenge’ – even in the regions that are disadvantaged or stalled in development – is not the open school system, but to acknowledge or even develop and facilitate the meaning of the ‘third socialization space’ (the actually free leisure time) and to reimagine the functions of schools among these conditions? If the radical transformation of the school system is facing difficulties and meanwhile, the ‘third socialization space’ (Nagy 2013) is more efficient in the competition dictated by dynamic markets, in prestige and in behaviour-shaping effect, then it would be worthwhile for the support policy to focus more on the latter. This way, schools would not be seen as a representation of the school system’s exclusivity but the means to create checks and balances via pedagogical means to ensure cooperation and peaceful coexistence in this complex, ever-changing system. In our opinion, they could successfully fill in their ‘secondary socialization’ role by taking up mediator duties (Csoma 1983).

Nevertheless, this provides some answer to the challenge of lifelong learning as well: since this school model is no longer the school of children and adolescents, but that of a ‘learning society’. This desirable inter-generational learning experience could drastically change the culture of the children’s school system as well, since the ‘school desk’ of adults is not the same as the one with which pupils used to displease their teacher in *Tanár úr kérem*, the satirical school novel of Frigyes Karinthy in the beginning of the twentieth century. Servicing their learning methods could be the most important engine of innovation for school culture.

Yes to schools? Socialization functions

Calling Csányi’s ‘evolutionary’ approach to our aid, the function of ‘mass education’ in this accelerating ‘modernization’ can be defined as ‘wearing in’ new generations, as a socialization challenge. This ‘wearing in’ includes stronger ‘interference’ in the lives of school children’s families and not a ‘selfless’ support in accordance with an educational ideology. This intention is the explanation for the necessary expansion of the impact and scope of activity connected to schools. This is joined by – especially in these parts of the world – the concepts of ‘dual education’, where schools represent the more ‘scientific’, ‘efficient’, ‘better’, etc. education, compared to the more ‘conservative’, ‘subcultural’ and ‘poorer’ family and environmental education. There is always a group of society that does not see this intervention as aggression and is not worried about the totalitarian incorporation of children’s privacy; mostly this is what legitimizes the ‘expansion’ of schools (the institutionalized mediation of school-based knowledge). Actually, these groups are the ones who legitimize the state that performs this task (sometimes by paradoxically incorporating

¹⁸ On the topic of this ordeal of fluctuating odds, see the book of László Trencsényi, titled *A maratoni sereg* (The Army of Marathon, 2011). In this analysis, a reason for relapse and failure could always be found for the past half decade; based on this trend, it is important to examine the ontological necessities of failures.

the humanistic alternative institutions that represent philanthropy, love for children and other ethical values). A state like this can be conservative and counter-revolutionary but also modernizing and revolutionary as well. Think about the legislative powers that established Ratio Educationis or the 'revolutionary' states establishing the so-called communist regimes, strongly socialized before they had taken power (e.g. Nékosz)¹⁹ and after the takeover, they seized control of the curriculum and operation of schools. Historical experience points out that these 'intrusions' do not achieve great success, their contra-productivity is proven time and time again by the various little revolts and breakout attempts²⁰.

On the other hand, the meaning of schools as secondary socialization spaces reflect the fact that they were 'created' as a way to learn social behaviour beyond blood relations and natural communities. Children grown out of the 'heart-felt' love relations of a family and the world of overarching care and acceptance can integrate into the community and later the society, through this medium. Still critical pedagogy prevailing in postmodernity denies this socialization order of modernity, considering the given (and in fact, all-time) society and societal relations unworthy of integration. A more 'mellow' definition of integration has been created because even revolutionists will say hello, eat their soup with a spoon, they won't jump from a moving tram, they wear undergarments, sit on chairs and sleep in beds, they don't bump into people on the street – or if they do, they know what to expect –, they bury their dead and greet their new-born, etc. Besides, the concept of families being these comforting nests since the beginning is rather uncritical as we know that in different eras it was not really the truth, the transition between particular primary and secondary socialization spaces was quite colourful in different cultures. However, it is true that a whole different set of rules, norms and relations can be learned in educational institutions and these are necessary for both the individual and society itself as a 'training ground'.

The question is, what is the historical, cultural anthropological reason behind the fact that the school system 'grew to love' this social duty so much, it noticeably has a hard time letting go of children and adolescents (or as Csányi put it, the 'pesky kid')? There are various ideologies for this situation. These range from the primitive argument of 'If you leave school and something happens to you, I will get arrested', to the actual protection and interests of children. Since the 'outside world' is bad, threatening and dangerous – let kids be kids (to put it badly, 'infantilize' them as long as we can). *Nota bene*, so they will have an even harder time 'integrating' into

¹⁹ Moreover, they even operated 'counter-schools', for which there are examples going back to the time of Hussites (Földes 1964).

²⁰ The metaphor created by Sándor Karácsony, the 'under the desk revolution' (1948), classics of fiction and modern cinema bring up this topic time and time again. This is confirmed by the doctoral dissertation of Balázs Almássy (2016), which is based on the careers of the great generations of poets and authors of Nyugat ('West', an important Hungarian literary journal of the twentieth century) – Kosztolányi, Babits, Juhász, Móricz and others –, and the fate of their heroes through rising and falling. The 'school' of Ottlik (Szekszárdi, 1991) and the critical realist 'new wave' of Hungary in the '60s yielded several novels about this insurgence: *Sárfényes* by Márta Gergely, *Szent János fejevétele* by Lajos Galambos, *Bekötőút* by Antal Végh, *Iskolavár* by Gábor Czákó. We can mention movie classics like the *Dead Poets Society*, the drama *If...*, or *The Strawberry Statement*, or the Hungarian film *Szevasz, Vera* by Herskó, *Pókfoci* by János Rózsa, *Jutalmazás* by Dárday, *Sipoló macskakő* by Gyula Gulyás or even the whole educational work of the Balázs Béla Studio in the '70s.

the world of work, family founding, citizenship, and formerly the compulsory military service, after leaving school. We can say that the school creates – either with good intentions or out of (instinctive or conscious) professional self-defence – an ‘in-between’ socialization space, a set of norms, behavioural, learning and knowledge culture that can only be enforced within the school system²¹. The primary explanation deduces the nature of schools from the specialities of the school system and the increasingly independent system of values its staff represents. Pedagogues are an expert in this (or at least they think they are), they can retain their power in this environment – both over children and their parents –, so they establish and develop this world²². But the new generations, the ‘angry young men’ of the mid-twentieth century are not interested in this ‘bright future’ anymore²³. They created their ideals in the present by maximizing leisure time in every way possible (summer camps, truancy, etc.) and by their own, different ‘exoduses’. Does the state (with support from families) operate these schools with ever increasing compulsory education to ‘curb’ these adolescents? And teachers, parents and state officials all curse this ugly consumerism for leading youngsters towards false values and false prophets by offering deceitful pleasures.

No to school? The inadequacy of the previous answers

This anti-market coalition is not really working as schools do not seem to be the best place to ‘domesticate’ the teenage gangs that inevitably come into being in urban environments. So based on traditional social pedagogy foundations, youth work is being developed, movements and organizations are created with different degrees of independence from schools (P. Miklós 1997; Trencsényi 1997, 2000) and in close collaboration with special education and social work culture, emerges the institutionalized childcare and flourishes children’s culture²⁴: children’s book

²¹ An explanation to this phenomenon is usually that the pedagogue of modern society never leaves the classroom, only changes his/her location, from sitting at school desks to professorship, standing behind the teacher’s desk...

²² It also makes a difference for the children whether the virtual and real ‘strongholds’ of the school system surround them as prison bars (which were described by critic and publicist Géza Takács as ‘bulky’; Takács 1987) or it surrounds them as the fabled ‘golden cage’ of István Benedek (1964); even though these are the two sides of the same cultural function.

²³ It is commonplace that the ideal ‘freedom society’ (as every ideology based on freedom) is imagined in the ‘future’ by the big dreamers. Schools, as ‘*windows to the future*’ (Rozsnyainé 1961; Makarenko 1979), are not depictions of the specific social relations of that age but the representations of the ideals of different groups, part of the ‘bright, planned future’ that will – as we now know – *never be realized*.

²⁴ In the structuring of this phenomenon, the scope of products, works and activities designed for, with and by children (sometimes to serve the pleasures of adults as well), is clearly distinguishable (Bús 2013; Trencsényi 2014a). Furthermore, tuition and the direct educational intentions gradually begin to fade – in no small part due to real market need but also taking on ‘alternative’ attitudes and mentality about children. It was the ‘existing socialism’ that drove (or truly stuffed) back pedagogy, and the world of children between the walls to restore the literary ideals of a ‘bad’ child improving through punishment. The pedagogical and cultural ‘loosening’ of the ‘70s was necessary for the child-image of modern pedagogies in children’s culture to recover. Similar phenomena can be detected in the history of student theatre and amateur artistic movements in general. They eventually became independent from the tutelage of schools – as part of the freedom struggles of young generations (Trencsényi 2012, 2013).

publishing, children's media, theater and movies, exhibitions, etc. Youth culture requires bigger and bigger space, with the world of youth clubs that can barely be domesticated anymore (Diósi 1983; Diósi & Köles 1983; Földiák 1977; Török 1987)²⁵. Zinnecker, and in Hungary, Gábor Kálmán (2006) calls the transition from provisional adolescence to school adolescence, experiencing their own youth culture, the paradigm shift of youth²⁶; until the youth of summer camps²⁷ become the youth of festivals (and today's world of Z generation screenagers).

In this case, the school system finds itself in yet another new situation. They must take into account the lack of competence, moreover the lack of social request for coordinating all of this: the paternalistic state would tuck it into the school, and in case of a somewhat freer society which does not have any resource, it must yield to the desire for freedom of families, young people and children or the rules of the market. On the other hand, the pedagogical responsibility – the need for an 'overall personality', 'holistic personality', etc. identified by psychology – determines the task at hand, not to treat the student only as a learning and exam-writing machine. On top of this lies the diversity of life paths in the information society, the learning methods of screenagers, the divergence of leisure learning situations and the revolutionary methods of gamification (Nagy 2013; Fazekas & Nagy 2016). This task requires teachers to take on a new role and the school system to become more open to respect the autonomy of the participants and to go into these relationships as equals (referring to youth offices, clubs, youth centres, etc.). This is where the paradox of the postmodern school system lies. New models became necessary or schools will disappear from the system of social institutions...

So the issue arises again that the answer to the 'postmodern challenge' – even in the regions that are disadvantaged or stalled in development – might not be the open school system but to acknowledge or even develop and facilitate the meaning of the 'third socialization space' (the actual free leisure time), and to reimagine the functions of schools among these conditions. It is obvious that the elimination of the school system is not a task on the agenda just yet, as it is kept more or less on the surface by complex interest associations. For a useful and legitimate survival, the consensus of both the rightful target groups (children and adolescents, students and not only their parents) and their partners (including the representatives of the leisure space and local governments, as well as government officials and organizations) is required where each have their own dreams, desires, ideas, intentions, traditions, perspectives and culture.

²⁵ Osborne's famous drama, *Angry young men*, or even Woodstock, can be seen as a symbol of the new world of youth, for which, autonomy aspirations from the 'corrupt' values and relations of parents were a primary goal.

²⁶ It is the same with the dance house movement, which became a Hungaricum in its own ideology as well: the neo-folklorist 'revival' is in the framework of alternative youth lifestyle (Bodor 2000).

²⁷ The mass organizations and movements in the first half of the twentieth century all created their own unique, almost formal learning spaces and opportunities (e.g., drills in Scouting, leadership training, religious groups, etc.). Freed from state tutelage, these movements are usually reduced to small, alternative 'sects' (P. Miklós 1997; Trencsényi 1997).

The point of a renewed social pedagogy discourse²⁸

To be able to interpret the models of 'extended schools' and 'pedagogically facilitated youth recreation' – a coherent but somewhat alternative model in answer to school disorders –, we have to step out of the traditional pedagogical discourse. For this, a new definition of social pedagogy²⁹ is available as a twenty-first century interpretation³⁰ which regards social pedagogy as an interdisciplinary branch of science that is a reflection of helping, developing and facilitating social activities that are, in some sense, freed from the requirements and norms of the school system. There is a foothold in social pedagogy for social help, youth research, child and youth protection, the informal or non-formal world of children, adolescents and youth in general and their social culture³¹. In this sense, social pedagogy is both an integrative subdiscipline of pedagogy (harmonized discourse between related disciplines – sociology, social work, politology, etc.), and is discretely separated from the traditional subdisciplines of pedagogy, based on the nineteenth century scientific theory but reflecting on those as well.

While the school system is historically a top-down structure (as written before, it began as an institution for the elite, those in power, to evolve into an institution available for every social group), social pedagogy developed bottom-up (Giesecke 2000), as it was first created for the lagging part of society and evolved to be available for everyone. While previously the primary task of social pedagogy was to work with the marginalized sections of society and the physically, mentally or socially disabled or vulnerable (Schlieper 2000), like relief and penitentiaries; nowadays it became a service available for the full social spectrum. For traditional clients, social pedagogy will remain 'hard social pedagogy', for the other youngsters, it will have a 'soft' variant (as mental health and ventilation is important even for those who do not face class-based, sociocultural or mental challenges). Social pedagogy will not only be a 'first aid', it will become the 'immanent characteristic of the whole education' (Schlieper 2000), community education by the community. For this reason, the primary task of modern social pedagogy is to coordinate: education takes place in a community, in a web of social relationships (which school pedagogy often seems to forget about) but at the same time, the 'processes' happen in the personal space of an autonomous, independent person (Schlieper 2000).

²⁸ We cannot agree with the views of Zsuzsa Ferge, professor of Hungarian sociology and social work, (explained, among others, in a private letter sent to the authors of this article in 2016), who sees participants of the socio-educational discourse as the 'hackers' of social work theory. Professional historical and educational background might provide a basis for such an interpretation but this very study itself seeks to gather integrating elements under the banner of this concept.

²⁹ The definition of social pedagogy itself is the acknowledgement of education being a community process and not just the relations between adult and child/teenager 'bound together' by institutional hierarchy (Natorp 2000). Its development can be attributed mostly to the fact that schools could not make up for the family and social changes between the premodern and modern age and that pedagogical individualism got an almost exclusive place in the science of education (Niemeyer 2000).

³⁰ Traditional historical interpretation is based mainly on German professional literature but can also be found in French interpretations of animators, as well as in new Russian professional literature.

³¹ Including the culture, history, impact and operation of traditional and new mediating technologies, institutions, school institutions (kindergarten, dormitories, etc.) and other organizations taking part in the socialization of young generations.

It is not possible to fulfil every socialization task in a single institution, therefore socialization can only be interpreted in the context of pedagogically designed institutions and these have to determine their pedagogical functions (Giesecke 2000). Furthermore, the didactical design of educational space can become contingent in postmodernity; only parts of it (and even only parts of school education) can be planned and projected. This interpretation specifically implies the existence of beyond-school educational spaces. This way, social pedagogy can become equal partners with planned educational spaces, because – everyone being more or less vulnerable in Beckian society – its expanded client base has a need for social learning to be recognized in addition to school-based cognitive learning. A choice biography (Gábor 2006) formulated the task of social pedagogy in the twenty-first century, where the most important goal of youth and the process of growing up is to reconcile supporting the diversity of autonomous lives and integration into society (cf. National Youth Strategy 2009), in order to maintain the continuity of career without greater breaks.

This paradigm³² provides new, important approaches primarily for educational theory and philosophy and it also has relevance in learning theory – in context of non-formal, informal learning and andragogy. From the praxis side – taking into account the enrichment and mainly postmodern challenges of the social practice – making a new integrative educational science discipline is justified, as well as exploring its characteristics and a systematic summary of its research methodology. Social pedagogy in this new interpretation (Nagy 2016) aspires to show those areas whose professional creed and research focus includes pedagogical phenomena both exploring new fields, functions or communities and are beyond the limits of the traditional family- and school-centred pedagogy. In this interpretation – much like educational sociology – education is the ‘issue’ and social research is a tool, its goals to put educational issues in context of a social relations system. However, social pedagogy is not only an integrated concept of specific practices but can be distinctly separated from educational sociology as a particular discipline of educational science research. While educational sociology concerns itself with the sociological context, causes and consequences and indicators of pedagogical phenomena; social pedagogy looks towards the methods and operations of practices, that – either with the methodology of sociology or several related disciplines – can fit into the range of the helping, developing and facilitating activities mentioned above. Thus, social pedagogy does not refer to the sociology of education but the sociological context of pedagogy: the phenomena regarded as the ‘death’ of childhood and features of school adolescence and the whole prolonged adolescence; which interpretations transform the fundamentally sociological-educational discourse into a drama of educational sciences as well.

³² A different approach is the phenomenon of *home schooling*, not covered in this article. Do parents who draw their kids out of schools find the performance of schools as secondary socialization spaces poor or too much? It is a typical middle-class phenomenon where marginalized social groups ‘solve’ the issue through the reproduction of ‘truancy’, while higher class families typically ‘purchase’ (or make the state purchase for them) the more exclusive schooling opportunities, where their children can receive proper, fair treatment fitting their educational values. Do these families see this as a more appropriate way to avoid the (self-serving, more and more pointless) ‘eight years’ war’ going on in schools? (Benyovszky 2013).

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