



Concepts of pedagogy as an applied philosophy: Paul Natorp, John Dewey and Sergius Hessen

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ABSTRACT

Paul Natorp, John Dewey and Sergius Hessen are usually considered to represent three different philosophical and pedagogical doctrines developed at the turn of the Twentieth century. These are, respectively: neo-Kantianism, pragmatism and humanistic pedagogy widely rooted in Wilhelm Dilthey's philosophy. Contrary to this common classification, Hessen himself described his own concept of pedagogy as an applied philosophy as a continuation of Natorp's thought. However, Hessen also noted that an approach very similar to his one can be found (with some restrictions) in John Dewey's theory. In this case, the fundamental issue is to determine the relationship between philosophy and pedagogical theory and practise. The main parts of this article will identify the specificity of this relationship: the specificity implied by the concept of pedagogy understood as applied philosophy. The concept of pedagogy, understood as an applied philosophy in its theoretical and practical aspects, is the basis for critical reconstruction of social life in general. It is the opinion shared by all three philosophers that this type of reconstruction should be based on the communal dimension of basic social interactions, that is, on the communal dimension of work. The only way for the renewal of a different form of social life leads through regaining through them an essential communal dimension of human work. All three authors agreed that to regain the communal dimension of human work by another form of social interaction would only be possible when certain conditions are present; that is, when work will be permeated by individual creativity. The presence of such conditions shall be ensured by the educational community. Thus, the educational community should be a starting and end point for any critical social reconstruction as well as for the pedagogy understood as an applied philosophy.

KEYWORDS

pedagogy and philosophy; neo-Kantianism; pragmatism; humanistic pedagogy; social pedagogy; educational community; work; creativity; reconstruction; social critique

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