

The reform of the higher education according to Sándor Karácsony

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Introduction

The study's aim is to show Karácsony's view of the higher education between the two World Wars. He not only as a high-school teacher and as university professor, but in his public functions, strived for restoring the relation between the educator and the pupils, into a natural (for him) connection, and he was out for developing tasks, and expectations of the schools, and the reformed institutions. Sándor Karácsony's view is equal to the classic approach where pedagogy has to set out fundamentally from the relation between the educator and the educated person. The aim is the pupil should be a matured adult, and the pupil becomes adult when he accepts the other man's autonomy.

He contemplates the pedagogy as the contingent of the theory and the practice and lays the emphasis rather on its efficiency. He joins the pedagogic theory to the educational practice. The main parts of the study:

1. Short biography of Sándor Karácsony, the more important areas of his activity
2. Sándor Karácsony's view, his philosophy of the university reform

Sándor Karácsony short biography, the more important areas of his activity

Sándor Karácsony (1891-1952) is one of the most original person of the Hungarian philosophical and educational thinkings.

He was born in 1891 on country Földes. He attends to the local reformed people's school, then the reformed student hostel's of Debrecen. After the excellent matriculation certificate he goes to Budapest. He is the university's Hungarian-German academic specialisation student. Between 1911 and 1914 he is foreign country universities' guest student. (Genf, München, Graz, Wien) During that period he makes contacts with many people, e.g. Hermann Paul, Wilhelm Stertberg linguist, Friedrich von der Leyen folklorist and Wilhelm Wundt with his folk psychology tendency, who has an exceptional big effect on him.

Returning home he starts folk psychology research work at Földes parish's nine neighbour settlements. He obtains his teacher diploma in 1918. Afterwards he cuts into the work of KIE (Christian Joins in Youth Association) (1920), he is from 1922 its co-chairman. He helps the activity of scouting. Between 1922 and 1931 he is the editor of the journal entitled "Az Erő". He is switched on in 1927 into the MTA dictionary commission's work.

He becomes the doctor of philosophy, pedagogy and Hungarian linguistics. Then in the MEKDSZ (Hungarian Evangelical Christian Student Union's) he holds linguistic and pedagogic seminars. From 1934 works as a private tutor on the University of Debrecen, performing him exceptional popular. From 1942 he is elected as the pedagogy professor instead of Gyula Mitrovics. As the founder of the Institute of Social Psychology (1942), Karácsony developed a unique system of social psychology, which describes the relationship of man with other people and with God. In his view, the social psychological foundation of pedagogy consists of four major parts:

1. Linguistic, literary education and the intellectual functioning of the social soul.
2. The upper limit of the social soul and education for the transcendent
3. Social education and the volitional functioning of the social soul.
4. The lower limit of the social soul and legal education.

From 1945 he was the president of Nemzeti Szabadművelési Tanács (National Free Cultivation Council). As the communist party handles him with continually strengthening criticism, it is made to renounce his position in 1950, and is retired by them then. After the spiritual shock after two years, dies in 1952. (*Bognárné Kocsis, 2010*)

Sándor Karácsony's philosophy of the university reform

Sándor Karácsony as a practising educator, researcher, a man of his age was aware of the situation, with the problems, what was going on in the Hungarian pedagogic life. He gave voice to his opinion, that can be recognised in his book entitled "*A Magyar észjárás*" the most thoroughly. Probably his best-known sentence is the following:

„The Hungarian public education reform is unimaginable and futile on the surface. It is a wasted effort to variate any of the existing elements.” (Karácsony, 1985. 178. o.)

One chapter of his book entitled "A magyar észjárás" (The Hungarian way of thinking) deals with the university reform, but this book also deals with the reform of elementary schools and secondary grammar schools. He emphasizes, that an intense humbleness is needed to the university reforms.

The reason of the reforms and changing is that the level of the education is not adequate.

That is why they try to improve the actual situation with

1. selection
2. talent-searching
3. severed control
4. curriculum changes
5. reformed teacher-trainings
6. postgraduate courses for teachers

7. textbook-revision

8. new regulation.

The big amount of the measures needed shows, that the problem is big.

Sándor Karácsony sees the solution in the specialities of the Hungarian language and nation. According to his philosophy all upbringing is lingual upbringing. We may be fruitful if we take the peculiarities concerning the language into consideration in the teaching (illustrativeness, coordination). (*Karácsony, 2002*) The capital problem is, that teachers use a so-called “translate-language” at school, that mostly can not be understood by the students. Hungarian language is not suitable for the broadcasting of the culture peculiar. The intelligentsia is not able to continue improving the culture in a Hungarian system.

The uniform world view of our scientific system is frittered onto little pieces, onto subjects which do not form into a full whole one in the head of the students. The curriculum is not suitable for the Hungarian philosophy, the students load much time on learning unnecessarily because of this.

The educator’s personality, philosophy and views have huge significance, in this interaction. Karácsony talks about an informed, wise, opened to all problems educator. This means that the teacher should stand above his pupils in intellectual, ethical sense, as an ideal, with higher intellectual knowledge, values, and behavior patterns. The only expectation, related to the pupil, is to be receptive and shapeable. The educator’s task to stir the pupil’s interest, in order to arouse his imagination. (*Bognárné Kocsis, 2009*) Sándor Karácsony taught his disciples to think, which is worth more than all knowledge transfers.

The education will be “modern” if the educator and the pupils find the common language and use it. They will be Hungarian, if they communicate in Hungarian, relates to fellows in Hungarian manner. (*Karácsony, 2003*) The main features of this relationship are:

- Autonomy, which means the acknowledgement and knowledge of that both participants in the upbringing are independent personalities;
- Sincerity, which means the authenticity in one, that is, when one presents himself in his human nature;
- Lightness, which is valid both for the thinking and the speech. Since the real communication may come into existence only in this manner;
- Freedom, which presupposes the acceptance and the endurance of activity of the other human. This is possible only in a coordinating relation;

Sándor Karácsony states that the conditions of a more serious, fruitful university reform are missing. The higher education should be organised according to the Hungarian way of thinking. He formulates these theses in ten points:

1. The universities have to be legally independent institutions. The supporters have to respect the autonomy, the maintainer may not practise a power measure.
2. The ideal of the freedom has to reign on the universities. The university stu-

dents have to be satisfied with knowledge in a natural, spontaneous way. It is not allowed to regulate it in their choices. Let him be allowed to decide it from whom to learn, whose to listen to.

3. The dialogue is the universities' natural language form. This peculiarity results from the coordinating role of the Hungarian language, which pervades our thinking.

4. The piety pervades the Hungarian universities. What does not mean that he would accept the exchangeability of the things as a fact, that is why he searches, with more knowledge he may solve the secrets which cannot be explained for him.

5. On the universities the direct, personal relation is very important. It depends not on the equipment, but on the professors working there what the standard and the life will be like in the given institution. Knowledge can only be imagined in social contacts, which mediator is the language.

6. For the ones teaching in the higher education not definition-teaching is their task, but upbringing onto the thinking. The listeners have to be taught to rephrase the traditional knowledge treasure for themselves. The professors' role are the exemplification, the helping and the severe claim, that let the students provide the possible largest performance. This performance may be diverse according to the Hungarian temper, since the tightened, hard work is followed by loitering, substantial relaxation, despair, then studying again.

7. The Hungarian university can not be reformed from outside. Only from within and in one way is capable of being renewed, if there is a serious and scientific work. This criterion is capable of selection. If not these determines the atmosphere of the university, modifications are needed.

8. There can not be a difference from the university ideal and the actual reality created. It may work simply on the highest standard, it does not have a sense otherwise. Its mission: to pass the intellectual treasure, and to teach onto abstract, logical thinking.

9. The universities' tasks are not merely explaining the world around us, but to show, that life is a "marvellous, infinite and timeless secret".

10. The higher education may not deny its Hungarian peculiarities, so that it is objective and primitive. It works well if they let him to live on a Hungarian manner, but if the subordination is forced on it, it vegetates on a passive manner.

"The Hungarian university does not need a reform, let him be allowed to expound himself simply." (Karácsony, 1985. 491. o.)

He saw in context the events around him, the problems of the Hungarian people, the questions of pedagogy, and the importance of faith in the life of the individual. Based on his writings it can be stated that he offered a form of life, a life programme which was not only for pedagogues, and the main theses of which hold their ground in a European comparison as well.

Summary

Sándor Karácsony was a popular and recognised teacher in his period. His work and activity was acknowledged by the students as well. His educational philosophy has already had several criticisms, primarily from the communist party's people, from ideological, political viewpoints. But there have happened people also, who blamed him for the deficiency of the concept, the lack of the pedagogic system. While studying, thinking through his works, it might be declared that Karácsony's thoughts were embed in a peculiar system, revealing of what must not be given up.

As an education science specialist, Karácsony applied his concept of social relations in the world of pedagogy; he showed how to connect with fellow men effectively and successfully, how to create smaller and larger communities, as well as how to educate people for this. In summary, it can be said that, besides professional knowledge, the personality, attitude, faith, and ethical convictions of the pedagogue are stressed.

According to his opinion the Hungarian university can only work well, if students can choose their teacher, and the curiosity, the research characterise them. The teaching method should be the dispute and conversations instead of courses, presentations. The Hungarian university can only become efficient, if it is independent.

More items of Sándor Karácsony's literature highlight the importance of the pedagogues' self-knowledge and self-image in the living out of their vocation, and the professionalization of the teaching career. Karácsony's life example taught that, in addition to accepting the other person, one must know the individual's theoretical and practical ideas about leading his life. It also has to be taken into account that man has to adapt to external conditions and relations (society, work place, family) on the one hand, and also to the expectations of his own inner life and nature on the other hand. Examining Sándor Karácsony's findings on education it can be stated that he speaks not so much about education but rather collaboration and a sharing of life.

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