

Recenzent: prof. nadzw. dr hab. Anna Kožuh, University of Primorska / Univerza na Primorskem,
Koper – Capodistria, Slovenia

Barbara Sitarska

Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities
Faculty of Social Sciences
Pedagogy Institute

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6640-8469>

JOHN AMOS COMENIUS' IDEAS IN VIEW OF MODERN EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

*Man does not only change under the influence of prayer,
but also through his own education and participation in
"human matters amendment"*

John Amos Comenius

Abstract

The article analyses selected John Amos Comenius' ideas together with their reference to modern educational challenges. It is mainly based upon two of the scholar's works: *Great Didactics* and *Pampaedia*, as well as the available studies of Comenius' writings. The article mostly concentrates on the idea of lifelong learning, which can refer to contemporary education. In the age of European integration it is a priority educational challenge. The article also refers to teaching and learning in John Amos Comenius' pedagogical thought, to the teacher and students in his grasp, to the natural teaching methods and the demonstrative method; to his *art of teaching and education* with reference to modern didactics. The author emphasizes Comenius' adoration of knowledge (*pan-knowledge*), in which he perceived the nations' brilliance and wisdom, and of books, which he considered to be *the most exquisite teaching instruments*, and which are competing with the modern media in the 21st century. The final part of the article presents the results of a qualitative survey of John Amos Comenius' ideas with reference to the present, conducted among first-, third- and fifth-year Pedagogy students in November 2010.

Key words: John Amos Comenius, philosophy of life, pedagogical ideas, pansophic education, difference and complexity of educational conditions in John Amos Comenius' times, John Amos Comenius' ideas in Pedagogy students' view.

1. Introduction

John Amos Comenius, a 17th-century Czech educationist, philosopher and theologian, whose other homeland was Poland – Leszno, is still alive among us¹ and fascinates us with his wisdom. It is astonishing that in the 21st century we discover the vitality of his works, philosophy and education science. His views were far ahead of his times. Nowadays we associate them with far-reaching *European integration and ecumenism*. AT PRESENT WE CONTINUE COMENIUS' WORK, MEETING

¹See: B. Sitarska, *Dlaczego Jan Amos Komeński wciąż żyje wśród nas ?*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mních (eds); *Jan Amos Komeński w kontekście kultury i historii europejskiej XVII wieku*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, vol. 3, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2010, pp. 149 - 160

HIS DREAMS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION.² The Europeans who are fascinated by John Amos Comenius emphasize the fact that Poland (mainly Leszno) became the reformer's other homeland, and it is there that his most important works were created.³

Since time immemorial, we have been trying to get to know, explore, understand and interpret John Amos Comenius' ideas, to recognize the meaning of the heritage of his educational thought in modern Europe, which is seeking its new identity in the process of integration. The universal message of his ideas of education, ahead of their time and breaking the existing religious and cultural barriers, becomes subject to reflection. To what extent are his ideas up-to-date nowadays and can they give rise to new theories being developed in the global civilization of the 21st century?⁴

As far as Comenius' extra-educational activity is concerned, the following facts are especially worth emphasizing: his striving for the unity of churches; numerous appeals for "world amendment", especially for constant peace; attempts to build international cooperation, which was supposed to be achieved by founding *Collegium lucis* – an institution functioning as a kind of ministry of education; his demand of the democratization of education, with making education available to girls and the disabled; last but not least, tackling many novel issues such as: mental development and its stages, psychological foundations of teaching methods, the school's interrelations with other educational institutions, especially with the family, international cooperation in the field of the research of education. The fact that Comenius realized that those problems existed – they still do – and that he constantly emphasized their importance for the future is the main reason for Comenius' glory.⁵

Nowadays, Comenius appears as a teacher of Europe, or even a "teacher of the nations". He wanted to "create a human being through education, objective demands of knowledge and society, the development of his mind and acting abilities, for the common good (...), he strived to struggle with the existing social order to enable every child to develop fully and become a human being."⁶ (...) That is why Comenius, the "teacher of the nations" is so close to us and our times.

Comenius' specific philosophy of life he called *pansophia* is essential for understanding his educational concept and his approach towards teaching problems and the role of the teacher that we are interested in. It includes an educational message. Comenius himself described ***pansophia as specific universal knowledge***⁷, understood not only as intellectual, e.g. as a kind of encyclopaedic knowledge, but as transmission of all of what concerns human consciousness and what he includes in the rule: ***to teach everything about everything to everyone***⁸ (*docere omnes, circa omnia, omnino*). In *Pansophiae prodromus* he attributes a special purpose to the rule, which he formulates as reaching universal cognition, possessing and using all things.

It is possible to notice three directions of Comenius' interests: social, political and educational. These directions can be related to three origins: *the Bible, the nature, and the human being*, and to three basic tools: *faith, senses, and reason*. Such triads are quite characteristic for the theoretical depiction of anything that mankind has created, which could eventually be justified by the Holy Trinity. It is also correspondent with the period of Baroque, which sought such harmony and rules.

For Comenius, everything has its origins in God, not only due to God's act of creation, but also as His reflection, and by following His actions. This fact also gives rise to the need of harmony in the world as well as in the human being, violated by the original sin, which at the same time is possible to be rebuilt through a return to God thanks to Christ's salutary act, which brought man back his dignity and role in

² See: *Introduction*, ibidem, pp. 8-12

³ See: W. Korthaase, *O twórczości Jana Amosa Komeńskiego w Polsce*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mnich, M. Richter (eds): *Werner Korthaase - badacz Jana Amosa Komeńskiego*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, vol. 2, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2009, pp. 177-182

⁴ From the assumptions of the organizers of the conference *John Amos Comenius – a teacher of Europe* held in the John Amos Comenius State School of Higher Vocational Education in Leszno

⁵ Cz. Kupisiewicz: *Szkice z dziejów dydaktyki*, Impuls Publishers, Cracow 2010, p. 55

⁶ J. A. Comenius, *Wielka dydaktyka*, Introduction and comment by B. Suchodolski, Wrocław 1956, p. XCVIII

⁷ Sztobryn wrote an introduction to pansophic foundations of John Amos Comenius' pedagogy for volume 3 of "Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletin, pedagogy series", *Jan Amos Komeński – współczesne interpretacje i reinterpretacje jego twórczości*, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2016, pp. 25-34

⁸ See S. Sztobryn, *Polska komeniologia we współczesnych bibliotekach elektronicznych*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mnich (eds), *Jan Amos Komeński a Europa XVII wieku*, Studia Comeniana Sedlcensia, vol. 4, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2012, pp. 261-262

the world. The task that should be undertaken is to make man more aware of his mission and introduce him into its accomplishment, which demands teaching and education.

According to Comenius, everything comes from God and approaches God, everything emanates from God and flows back to Him. The human being himself, God's most perfect picture, bears traces of the Trinity in his nature. Comenius finds their reflection in the basic expressions of man's activity such as: to know (*scire*), to be able (*posse*), to want (*velle*), which can be related to a more dynamic triad of activities in the form of knowledge (*sapere*), action (*agere*), and language (*loqui*), whose initials in Latin make the SAL category (*growing – sale*), perceived as the one that sets the objective of education.⁹

What also emerges from the above approach is the rule of harmony, or so called *panarmonia*, according to which all things are reflection of God. It is pansofia that was an attempt to depict this rule, perceived as wisdom, or knowledge of all things that exist, the way they exist, their aim and possibilities of their usage. What also follows from it is that man should use these things according to their purpose, overcoming his own advantage and domination over things: he should use them in accordance with their and his own materialization.

2. John Amos Comenius' first great didactic system imbued with the idea of teaching and education and the present education system

John Amos Comenius is very close to us as a leading constructor of reliable foundations of the modern didactics and its first system, in which he referred to it as an "art of teaching". What did he bring in didactics, in building the first system addressed to all people regardless of social or economic position, creed, race, nationality, physical or psychical ability?

Robert Alt – an outstanding German pedagogue and historian of education devoted a comprehensive monograph¹⁰ to Comenius, in which he writes, among others, that his education science shows scientific characteristics and a deeply humanistic and democratic character. He greatly appreciates Comenius' contribution to building the foundations of the modern theory of teaching and learning. Comenius' works still hold an incontrovertible place in the reading list for Pedagogy students. According to Alt, the following theses of Comenius' constitute the greatest value of his output:

- The world is cognizable thanks to the cooperation of the senses, thinking and the hands' function; this cooperation should be developed in people from early childhood till late old age; the world/nature is ruled by certain rights, and so are teaching and education; the rights that rule the world are derived by Comenius from the nature, not from the Bible or Aristotle's writings;
- Education should be available to everyone, about everything, as it is a necessary condition of "world amendment"; we should only teach the most important things that are useful at the same time, appealing to the mind, the tongue and the hand, as it is what also happens in the process of cognition. The main aim of education should be preparing the students for eternal life. Accordingly, they should be accustomed to such virtues as wisdom, moderation, persistence and justice. It is possible because man, as an active being, can acquire these virtues through exercising them;
- Effective teaching is supported by: friendly atmosphere, order in the school and, as we would put it nowadays, teaching methods that activate students, stimulating their independent thinking and acting; education should be made compulsory for all children and young people between 6 and 18; good results of education are brought by respecting the rules of approachability, demonstrativeness, and the combination of theory and practice, including work experience appropriate for the students' capabilities.

⁹ See: B. Bellerate (ed. allii), *Filosofia e pedagogia*, pp. 174 - 176; See also: M. Nowak: *Rola nauczyciela w procesie dydaktycznym w ujęciu Jana Amosa Komeńskiego*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mních (eds): *Jan Amos Komeński a kultura epoki baroku*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, vol. 1, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2007, pp. 47-50

¹⁰ R. Alt, *Der fortschrittliche Charakter der Pädagogik Komenskys*, Berlin 1953, pp. 91, 50, 130

- Much attention should be devoted to teachers' education, as they should be well prepared for their work in a school, both practically and theoretically, as the people who "direct children's and youngsters' learning".

John Amos Comenius' contribution to building the foundations of the modern theory of teaching and learning is equally highly evaluated by **Wincenty Okoń**, a modern Polish educationist, who attributes being the author of the didactic system to the Czech pedagogue. This conclusion is supported by his definition of the system as *a group of internally compatible statements, based on a uniform system of didactic objectives, contents and rules, concerning the ways and organization of the teacher's and students' work*.¹¹ These are selected theses:

- He gave the term "didactics" a wide meaning and considered it to be the only pedagogical science embracing the problems of teaching and education. He was urged to do so by social motives, including Hussitism and peasants' and townsmen's fighting with feudalism; the bases for his didactic ideas were provided by the SENSUALISTIC THEORY OF COGNITION (in the process of cognition, the senses are the most important, as they guarantee the genuineness and certainty of gaining knowledge). A special role in teaching is played by the demonstrative method.
- The quality of teaching and education can be improved by the UNIVERSAL METHOD OF TEACHING. He emphasized the importance of methodologically composed textbooks. He was the author of some, with *Orbis sensualium pictus* ("The world presented in pictures") deserving special attention. His faith in the methodological book was even greater than the teacher's himself.¹²
- Teaching should be conducted in a class-lesson system. He advocated a four-level division of the education system with 6 years' levels: the maternal school, the mother tongue school, the Latin language school, and the academy. Students' own activity plays an enormous part in teaching, which "makes them human beings".
- Contact with the "world of things" enables students to co-activate the mind, the hand, and the tongue, with the mind being a "mirror of these things", the hand – an "imitator", and the tongue – a "language". *This dialectical view of man and his abilities as an expression of PEDAGOGICAL OPTIMISM is modern through and through*.¹³

Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, the creator of the genetic psychology system, author of the pedagogical work *Where education is going* and the Czech pedagogue's biographical note, states:

- Education, or teaching is a process of child formation at home and at school, which takes place all your life and embraces endless acts of social adaptation which a person has to undertake throughout his life; education cannot be separated from home or school as it constitutes a whole of social life, which means that people's society is the educating society. This thesis of Comenius' was a forerunner of the idea which has only been developed in the modern times, mainly by Florian Znaniecki, the author of the term "educating society".
- There is a peculiar symbiosis between man and the nature, which makes education and teaching a system of conclusions and directives of behavior based on them, arising from the natural laws rather than being a question of techniques; the nature is the creator of forms which organize the teaching process and its educational effects when reflected in the human mind thanks to the parallelism of the nature and man. There is a close relationship between the organs' cognitive functions (*mens, cerebrum, artes*) and the actions themselves (*manus, operatio, artes*), with the actions considered to be primary, and the functions – secondary. Therefore, in teaching examples must precede the rules, and reflection must follow the action.

¹¹ W. Okoń, *Wprowadzenie do dydaktyki ogólnej*, PWN, Warsaw 1998, p. 33

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 34

¹³ See also: Cz. Kupisiewicz, *Szkice z dziejów dydaktyki*, "Impuls" Publishers, Cracow 2010, p.52

- Teaching should be organized in accordance with the stages of children's and youngsters' intellectual development, and learning by heart should be preceded by making sure that the students understand what they have to remember.
- Special care is necessary for "people who are more mentally retarded by their nature" (today we would say: "intellectually disabled"). It is an astonishing postulate for the 17th century, as is the postulate of teaching girls as well as boys.¹⁴

An attempt of evaluation of J. A. Comenius' output was also made by **Bogdan Suchodolski**. Here is what he mentions:

- The new school built and run by Comenius in Leszno taught words together with teaching about things, built the students' knowledge of the world thanks to textbooks in which the picture served a demonstrative presentation of the words' meaning, appealed to the children's and youngsters' interests and cognitive needs. Textbooks should provide students with the knowledge of God, the nature and art. The contents to be taught should be interesting to the students and corresponding to their cognitive needs. The teaching methods, in turn, should be natural, should show things rather than their shadows, *teach wisdom not from books but from heaven, earth, oak and beech trees*; they should develop the students' minds, improve their speech, develop the hands' ability, shape their will - in a nutshell, they should educate comprehensively, as we would put it nowadays.
- Comenius strongly emphasized respecting the rules of universality in teaching, as well as organizational and programmatic uniformity of the school system. The universality was to make this system available to all people regardless of social or economic position, while the organizational uniformity was to ensure its structure corresponding to respective stages of psychophysical development, and the programmatic uniformity – common contents in accordance with the students' capabilities and cognitive needs.

Contemporary didactics focuses on the processes of discovering, experiencing and students' independent activity. In his theory of multilateral education¹⁵, W. Okoń distinguishes four ways of learning:

1. Through acquisition – in this way we mainly master descriptions of reality,
2. Through discovery – in this way we mainly master explanations of phenomena regularity,
3. Through experience – in this way we mainly master evaluation of values,
4. Through action - in this way we mainly master practical skills.

Modern didactics promotes teaching through assigning difficult tasks which are a challenge for the students, with secondary understanding and remembering the message. Contemporary school does not constrain the students' independence.¹⁶ The teacher *should allow them to take their own ways, even indirect ones, or the ones that lead them astray. Let them find out themselves that their way is wrong, let them look for another one. This way they will learn more than they would if they took the shortest way, led by the teacher.*¹⁷

In *Great Didactics*, John Amos Comenius formulated the rules and ways of easy teaching and learning.¹⁸ The effectiveness of teaching was to be guaranteed by the rules of:

¹⁴ J. Piaget, *Dokąd zmierza edukacja*, Warsaw 1948, p. 439; See also: J. Piaget, *Jan Amos Komeński (1592-1670)*, In: Cz. Kupisiewicz, I. Wojnar (eds): *Myśliciele o wychowaniu*, vol.1, Warsaw 1996; See: Cz. Kupisiewicz, *Szkice z dziejów dydaktyki*, "Impuls" Publishers, Cracow 2010, pp.53- 54

¹⁵ W. Okoń: *Podstawy wykształcenia ogólnego*, NK, Warsaw 1967, pp. 85-99

¹⁶ See: B. Niemierko, *Kształcenie szkolne. Podręcznik skutecznej dydaktyki*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warsaw 2007, pp. 101- 102

¹⁷ B. Nawroczyński, *Zasady nauczania*, In: B. Nawroczyński: *Dzieła wybrane*, Vol. 2, 10th edition, Warsaw 1987, p. 243

¹⁸ The universal character of general postulates concerning teaching and learning is included in Chapter 26 of *Great Didactics*, pp. 118-135

- Demonstrativeness (knowledge transmitted through the senses; “for knowledge the senses are the starting point, so the way of cognition goes to memory through image, then the understanding of general things shapes, finally, when things are understood well enough, a conclusion appears which confirms the certainty of cognition”)¹⁹
- Availability, systematicity, and difficulty graduation (the nature goes from the easier to the more difficult, from things close to children and youngsters to those more distant)
- Revision of the acquired knowledge, and using it in practice (the knowledge of things is very important, but its practical use is as important; at the same time Comenius emphasizes a good example and frequent exercise).

Comenius paid most attention to education through the senses, therefore he is widely recognized as the author of the demonstrative method.²⁰ He thought that “there is nothing in the mind that was not in the senses before²¹, and that is why *we should (...) teach wisdom not from books but from heaven, earth, oak and beech trees*²². He advocated using the senses in the greatest possible range, e.g. listening combined with looking, and the work of the tongue combined with the work of the hands. It would also be a good idea to present the contents in the form of shortened texts, pictures or symbols on the walls of the classroom to *enable the students to exercise their senses, memory and mind every day*.²³ According to Comenius, real knowledge is based on three sources of wisdom: the senses, the mind and the epiphany. He emphasized that children’s eagerness to learn and gain knowledge should be stimulated in all possible ways. One of such ways is the teaching methods. They should reduce the toil of learning to avoid discouragement and giving up learning, stimulate the eagerness to learn, and attract the senses. Comenius suggests using the method which he calls the natural method. It amounts to copying the nature *as anything which is natural develops spontaneously*.

Comenius did not only mean increasing the students’ positive motivation for learning, but also activating them during the lesson. For this purpose, he suggested eight ways to arouse and maintain the students’ attention during the lesson.²⁴ Some of them are as follows: to transmit knowledge which is funny and useful; to use attractive introductions referring to what the students have already learnt or going further to what they are only going to learn; to transmit knowledge by involving the senses (as far as possible). These practical methodological instructions are not only still valid nowadays, but it is only at the beginning of the 21st century that they have a chance to be fully accomplished. Comenius’ whole practical educational activity as well as theoretical analyses of the “art of teaching” were inspired by the idea of finding a method which would enable *teachers to teach less and students to learn more*. It is the main aim of modern school teachers and educationists. It is true for all levels of teaching, including higher education.

In this new depiction, in new times, in new conditions, totally different from those in which Comenius lived, it is essential to approach the demonstrative method in a different way, based on new theoretical foundations. The demonstrative method in Comenius’ view, where objects have an illustrative function towards the conceptual knowledge they create, is part of classic and traditional current of didactics (the theory of teaching). That is why, due to new currents in this field, we should think about its present meaning and ways of interpretation. It is also worth asking a question about the point of formulating it in modern didactics textbooks. Its depictions which have appeared so far seem to be anachronistic

¹⁹ J. A. Comenius, *Wielka dydaktyka*, Ossolineum 1956, p. 145

²⁰ More about this subject: B. Sitarska, *Zasada poglądowości w edukacji bez granic*, In: *Edukacja bez granic- mimo barier*, edited by P. Bury, D. Czajkowska-Ziobrowska, WSB University, Poznań 2008, pp. 347-356

See also: B. Sitarska: *The role of media in the learning process at a higher education institution on the 350 th anniversary of Comenius’ collection of works “Opera didactica omnia”*, In: *Odkaz Jana Amose Komenského kultuře vzdělávání*, John Amos Comenius Pedagogical Museum, edited by Svatova Chocholová, Markéta Pánková, Martin Steiner, Academia, Prague 2009, pp. 744-751

²¹ J. A. Comenius, *Wielka dydaktyka*, op. cit., p. 114

²² Ibidem, p. 161

²³ Ibidem, p. 187

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 180

and do not correspond with today's understanding of man's cognitive relationship with the world of objects.

The theoretical foundations of this method should be verified as its understanding in latest *didactics* textbooks is the same as in Comenius', who stated that the order of consecutive stages of the cognitive act should be constantly connected with going from the external sensual impressions to the mental cognition. Demonstrativeness may have a direct dimension when it is based on the student's own observations (research, experience, experiment), or an indirect dimension through the means that replace natural specimens - then a teaching resource is a material replacement of reality: it can be a specimen, a model, a picture, a scheme, an illustration, an instrument, as well as a verbal means.²⁵ Therefore, the meaning of the demonstrative method in the theory of didactics still amounts to "illustrating", "copying", and creating images. It is true both about the so-called static and dynamic demonstrativeness (passive and operational copying). At present, this rule is accomplished within the so-called education technology, with the main focus on the effectiveness and efficiency (expressed by the following phrases: modernity, optimization, integration, scholarship, recurrence, programming, systematic use of didactic means, scientific organization, quality control and evaluation).

At present, the demonstrative method is connected with the media and multimedia education. A model of such education is multisensory, it has many methods and audiovisual techniques. Multimedia education is "multicode" education, which means that it activates many tracks of information transmission. The primary function of this method is preserved, with its technological context serving as additional reinforcement, which proves the idea of representation. At present, one of the main didactic rules needs to be reconstructed.

In Comenius' times, the character of education was different. It was mainly due to the different conditions, different development of civilization, different systems of values and approaches towards personal development. Didactics was still the art of educational teaching, and science had a pansophic character. However, Comenius thought all the time how to make it both effective and attractive. As I have already mentioned, he looked for the solution in the natural teaching methods, mainly focusing on students' activity, and in the educational rules of: demonstrativeness (to make the contents less abstract and encyclopedic), availability, systematicity, and difficulty graduation, which we still base upon nowadays.

In Comenius' times, education could undoubtedly be called education without limits for those times. However, everything was much less complicated than it is today.

At present, the accomplishment of the demonstrative method in education/permanent self-education looks completely different, as making the contents demonstrative takes place by means of frequently used modern media, where different theoretical foundations of the demonstrative method are required (the justification has been presented before).

The motto of my present analysis is Cempel's idea: **Knowledge in any place and at any time.**²⁶ The system imperative for the people and societies of the 21st century is creativity – thanks to modern media and information technologies. The development of information and Internet technologies, both in the range of technical possibilities and economy, presents education with great challenges of improving internal effectiveness and present organizational solutions in education, as well as using groundbreaking innovations and innovative use of network solutions and the Internet.²⁷

²⁵ Nalaskowski, S., *Problemy nauczania i uczenia się w ujęciu dydaktyki epistemologicznej*, Mikołaj Kopernik University, Toruń 1982, pp. 86 and on

²⁶ C. Cempel: *Nowoczesne zagadnienia metodologii i filozofii badań*, Exploitation Technology Institute, Radom 2005

²⁷ A. Straszak: *Człowiek w pierwszym stuleciu trzeciego tysiąclecia w perspektywie nauk cybernetycznych, informatycznych i systemowych*, In: M. Plopa (ed.): *Człowiek u progu trzeciego tysiąclecia. Zagrożenia i wyzwania*, Vol. 2, Elbląg University of Humanities and Economics, Elbląg 2007, pp. 44, 47

Returning to the demonstrative technique nowadays, in the age of modern media and “education without limits” understood in a different way than in Comenius’ times and until now, the postulated change of the theoretical foundations of this method may not be enough. It may be worth thinking about another rule, adequate to the modern educational situation. However, it is going to be the subject of another more detailed analysis from this cycle and range.

John Amos Comenius’ concept of education and teaching developed simultaneously on the basis of his philosophically theological concept of the human being. Firstly, it should be clearly emphasized that it is difficult to find a direct definition of education in his writings, but from the reconstruction of his understanding it is possible to notice that for education he distinguished two complementary aspects: of amendment and of restoration (*restitutio*), restoring the state of grace, re-enabling the human being (*institutio*). In this depiction, it is possible to notice an element connected with elimination of lacks and another one, concerning enrichment and enablement to reach an individual’s own specific aims. Doing so, Comenius wanted to show the necessity as well as the possibility and ease of education, a process he wanted to encourage people to undertake, and which he perceived as a chance of man’s renewal.

In his pedagogical concept, with the help of the triad of Greek words *pantes*, *panta*, *pantōs*, respectively *omnes*, *omnia*, *omnino* in Latin, Comenius works out and expresses the essence of his concept: 1/ *omnes* – in this concept he expresses the idea of comenian democracy. Education should concern everyone on the basis of human nature, despite social and economical differences between people, whatever their sex, age or individual abilities and predispositions; 2/ *omnia* evokes an element of encyclopaedism and suggests that a man should be first of all interested in knowing and mastering everything, but in a subjective rather than objective way, or should know anything that is associated with his nature; 3/ *omnino* means thorough education leading to the truth, overcoming superficiality, for which all possibilities, institutions and tools should be set in motion. It is here that he also assigns an important role and tasks to teachers, who would give their students confidence, make them understand things more easily and let them make their own decisions and choices quickly. Although in general Comenius seems to attribute a greater role to the genetics and a student’s own activity than to the teacher, he perceives the teacher’s role first of all as being a role model to the student. The role model, in turn, would support the student in becoming like him, as well as like other role models, and in doing everything in the likeness of others, copying them, also in becoming like the teachers.

3. The teacher and students in the educational process in Comenius’ view

To a limited extent, Comenius also pays some attention to teachers, who he perceives to be another environment, apart from students, for using his educational rules. The problem of teachers and their role in education cites especially the theoretical model which in the theoretical depictions discussed above appears as the element referred to as “omnino”. Teaching is connected with leading and directing (*Docere ducere est*). It is **the teacher who should play the part of the leader and fulfill the tasks of a guide**, especially a guide of the Holy Books, where God is the first and foremost teacher (just like for St. Augustine), then - things, and finally - the parents and teachers, as their replacement.

Pointing out the virtues and abilities that should characterize every teacher, both mentally and morally, Comenius emphasizes especially the necessity of the efforts to get to know the students and reestablish positive relationships with them, which should undergo metamorphosis in their development as well: from purely didactic relationships to those more and more inspired with authentic love. Having considered this, we can understand why in this case (analogically to other similar activities, for instance to *pansophia*) Comenius spoke of *pandidascalia*, whose rules as well as the role of the teacher he presented, among others, in his work *Fortius redivivus*. As we can see, not only did Comenius deal with teachers, but he also emphasized and defined their function, which he perceived as possible to be fulfilled, as well as necessary for the student. At the same time, he presented methodological recommendations about didactic preparation of teachers and suggestions concerning their functioning in institutions.

In a way, it is possible to assign an attitude of pedagogical pessimism to Comenius, as far as the possibilities of influencing the student's approach are concerned, or even of influencing an approach of a person in general (as opposed to the attitude of pedagogical optimism, which asserts that education is greatly effective). The attitude of pedagogical pessimism, in turn, typical of the early Protestantism, including the unity Comenius belonged to and was a bishop of, does not credit education with much importance, claiming that a teacher cannot give much to his student as far as his attitude is concerned, but he can only teach him, or transmit knowledge and culture to him. Such an attitude was even clearly expressed and frequently emphasized by Comenius: *A teacher cannot add anything to what his student already has*, or even stated: *It is not necessary to provide the student with anything from the outside, but he should only be able to extract what is deposited in it, and show it in detail.*²⁸

This lack of certainty about the effectiveness of educational activity in the environment of reformed religious unities led, in turn, to attaching less importance to immediate relationships between the teacher and the student, shaping the student's attitude, and to a greater emphasis on the role of knowledge transmission and influence on the student's intellectual sphere by the fact of education itself. Therefore, Comenius also clearly criticizes such individualized, fragmented and isolated educational relationships, well known in the educational tradition of the Catholic Church, as well as present, for instance, in the educational practice of Eastern Church religious formations. Instead of such individualized relationships, common in the practice of education in the Middle Ages, Comenius suggests teaching in the class-lesson system.²⁹

In class teaching, as we can find out in Chapter 19 of *Didactica Magna*, all the students should learn simultaneously, taught by a single teacher, who *spreads his rays over everyone like the sun.*³⁰

For pedagogy, a new branch of science which emerged later – it was one of the basic conditions of its constitution as an autonomic discipline to accept the specific thesis of *possibilities of man's education* as a starting point.

Transporting these remarks into the very clear and valuable overview of functions and roles to be fulfilled by the teacher in the teacher-student relationship presented by S. Kunowski³¹, responding to the student's developmental needs with such stages of human development as biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, and spiritual, we can formulate an idea of the teacher appearing in Comenius' writings as particularly related to the psychological layer and the "edocere" function, concerning both the need to provide a valuable cognitive material due to the student's awakening abilities and rationality, and stimulating the development of his thinking. The role and function of the teacher understood in this way, as universal mental (intellectual) education, should make the student desire aspiration of the ultimate values with the *truth* being the most essential for this sphere³², through teaching, informing, scientific cognition, arousing interests and cognitive curiosity. Therefore, it should be introducing the student into a relationship to the truth, which presents itself to Comenius as the ultimate value: personal God.

In modern intellectual education, attention is paid to such human characteristics as: openness to knowledge, scientific inquisitiveness, pursuing the truth, persistence, but also the ability to select knowledge and evaluate the incoming information critically (...). Intellectual education is an attempt to

²⁸ See: F. Nowak – G. Blomeyer – Ch. Michel – R. Vörg, *Pädagogik. Probleme – Theorien – Anwendung*, Augsburg, Hueber-Holzmann, 1982, p. 49.

²⁹ See: H. Gudjons, *Pädagogisches Grundwissen*, Bad Heilbrunn, Verlag Julius Klinkhardt, 1993, pp. 72-73.

³⁰ J.A. Komenský, *Didactica magna uniuersale omnes omnia*, 1633-1638, Polish translation *Wielka dydaktyka*, Wrocław, 1935, Chapter 19.

³¹ See: S. Kunowski, *Podstawy współczesnej pedagogiki*, pp. 271-283.

³² M. Nowak, *Rola nauczyciela w procesie dydaktycznym w ujęciu Jana Amosa Komeńskiego*, op. cit., p. 53 For more see: M. Gogacz., *Podstawy wychowania*, Niepokalanów, Franciscans Publishers, 1993, pp. 91 and on

discover the students' abilities, arouse interests, exercise the will, motivation, enthusiasm, and imagination in a way that will make knowledge, science, truth become an essential element of their lives, a habit, a pleasure, an aim.³³

Intellectual education shapes and develops these emotional and volitional dispositions in the student's personality which support the mental activity and stimulate the intellectual development (...).³⁴

Intellectual education consists of activities to shape and develop the system of cognitive values, abilities and interests, positive attitudes towards knowledge, and intellectual activity in the student's personality, as well as to arouse the cognitive motivation. In contemporary intellectual education much attention is paid to arousing the students' cognitive inquisitiveness (seeking the truth).³⁵

The idea of intellectual education in teaching theory goes back to John Amos Comenius' times (next Pestalozzi's and Herbart's). He was the first one to integrate education and teaching (it was an "art of teaching and education").

In the teaching/learning process, one of the most important aims is to arouse eagerness to learn. Comenius makes the subjects of education: the parents, the teachers, and the school responsible for accomplishing this aim, as well as the system of contents of particular subjects, the teaching methods and the outside order in the school, and the participation of the school authorities. Comenius wished to introduce the students into studying and analyzing phenomena in their developmental dynamics and objective truth, and into permanent improvement. Generally speaking, it can be stated that the core of John Amos Comenius' pedagogical thought was every individual's integral development in the whole of his life path, till its end. The nature and the order of matters created by God were an example for the integral development. The link between the particular states is lifelong learning.³⁶

4. John Amos Comenius' idea of permanent education³⁷ and the essence of contemporary lifelong learning

For Comenius, the basic area of educational activity seems to be education and teaching. Although it always influences the man's attitude, there is always a chance of observing certain priorities that a research paper attributes to a particular author's idea. In this case, I can observe this priority in Comenius as related to education – namely education throughout a man's life, which clearly makes him a forerunner of the idea of education for one's whole life, or permanent education, which is nowadays remarkably accompanied by the idea of self-education.

John Amos Comenius considers man as part of the world, an integral link of society governed by all its laws rather than an isolated individual. One of the benchmarks of a man's education is the scholarly person, i.e. involved in gaining knowledge, understanding the world and society, developing the linguistic culture, socially engaged. Human life is a way to universal knowledge.³⁸ Even this general aim of education suggests that man's integrality was the main focus of Comenius' pedagogical thought. The author of *Pampaedia* fits in the current of the idea of pedagogical optimism, concerning a man's ability to develop continuously. In *Pampaedia* he comes to the conclusion that a human being is able to develop permanently "from cradle to grave". A man's priority aim is learning, as *every age is*

³³ See works by K. Sośnicki, S. Hessen, J. Dewey, T. Gadacz, H. Muszyński, W. Okoń, Cz. Kupisiewicz, B. Suchodolski, M. Śnieżyński, W. Pomykało .

See also: M. Myszowska- Litwa, *Wychowanie intelektualne w teorii dydaktycznej i praktyce edukacyjnej*, "Impuls" Publishers, Cracow 2007, pp. 9, 39

³⁴ See: H. Muszyński, *Zarys teorii wychowania*, PWN, Warsaw 1977, p. 211

³⁵ M. Myszowska- Litwa, *Wychowanie intelektualne...*, op. cit., pp. 54, 55

³⁶ K. Chałas, *Nauczanie i uczenie się w myśli pedagogicznej J. A. Komeńskiego w perspektywie integralnego rozwoju ucznia (zarys zagadnienia)*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mnich (eds): *Jan Amos Komeński a kultura epoki baroku*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, Vol. 1, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2007, p. 45

³⁷ More on the idea of life-long education: B. Sitarska, *Jan Amos Komeński prekursorem idei edukacji całościowej*, ibidem, pp. 71-82

³⁸ J. A. Komeński, *Pampaedia*, Wrocław 1973, p. 70

good for learning, and human life has no other aim than learning.³⁹ From the philosophical point of view of human life as a way to universal knowledge, guided by the thesis: **whole life is school**, Comenius deduces some theoretical pedagogical premises of his own development and social development, as well as premises for the organization of education and school. He makes the orderly world an example and basis of a man's harmony and integrality and organization of social life. And just like *all things are in order towards one another and interrelated with eternal rules of the truth, let people themselves make use of the light, order and truth of the world of things, with each of them being led to similar harmony in himself, and towards each other.*⁴⁰

The thesis *whole life is school* becomes a basis of the concept of man's social life, where the task of "universal education of all mankind" will be accomplished".⁴¹ Integral development becomes a lifelong task. It can be divided into the school period and the extra-school period, in which social life plays an important role. Comenius does not only consider man's integral development to be the aim, but he also seeks a way leading to this aim which lies in harmonious social life. Integral development is a task he sets to an individual to be directed at himself as well as expressed in mutual help for others. Comenius' perception of school in the perspective of human life is worth attention. It is a link of the life-long learning process. It is a view of school as a link of the lifelong education structure. A wise, experienced and scholarly man becomes the main aim of education. The synthesis of action leading to the accomplishment of the above triad is described by the author as *pansophia*. Pansophia, as knowledge for "everyone", "everything" and "completely", i.e. for the truth, comprised three parts: the study of existence, the study of society's historical development, and the theory of social development. The aim of integral development becomes the school's superior aim; the school can be described as "educating"; it is considered to be the most appropriate area of the world's amendment.⁴² He makes school education a basic condition for a man's development on three levels: intellectual, social-cultural, and religious. *Who has been accepted into school should stay there until he becomes an educated, decent, and religious man.*⁴³ These three areas are also a basis for the system of contents of school textbooks.

In permanent education, Comenius attached great attention to books, which he considered to be the most marvelous teaching instruments.⁴⁴ Here is how beautifully he spoke about books to the listeners in Sarospatak:

*The one who wants to gain knowledge must appreciate books more than gold and precious stones;
Hang on to them day and night;
pick the blossom of the superior sciences
and build up a stock of his own knowledge;
be able to use these treasures of wisdom gathered from far and wide in a beautiful way.*⁴⁵

*I will advise you to start reading authors (...) as soon as possible, in the name of God, but I only mean one thing: I want to light your fire of love to books now, on the threshold, leaving the details to the practice.*⁴⁶

According to Comenius, a man is a being who learns, speaks and acts, therefore his mind, tongue and hand should be educated. He is also an active being, which enables him to get to know the world on his own, which lets him create science and act, which in turn enables him to build and develop

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 5

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p.50

⁴¹ Ibidem

⁴² See: K. Chałas, *Nauczanie i uczenie się w myśli pedagogicznej J. A. Komeńskiego w perspektywie integralnego rozwoju ucznia (zarys zagadnienia)*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mních (eds): *Jan Amos Komeński a kultura epoki baroku*, op. cit., pp. 42-43

⁴³ See: J. A. Comenius: *Wielka dydaktyka*, Wrocław 1956, rule IX

⁴⁴ J. A. Comenius, *O sprawnym posługiwaniu się książkami, najprzedniejszym instrumentem kształcenia* (Comenius' speech to the listeners in Sarospatak)

⁴⁵ Ibidem, pp. 6-7

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 7

technology. A man learns how to get to know things and act thanks to learning and teaching, which accompany him throughout his life, from early childhood till death.⁴⁷

Comenius divides the school system into levels: level one (from birth till the age of six – *maternal school*); level two (*elementary school* of language, primary school identical for anyone from 6 to 12); level three (*secondary school* – for students from 12 to 18); level four (*academy* – from 18 to 24). These four levels made up the general plan of building a uniform school system, which consequently would comprise eight types of school institutions, including the school of old age (*schola senii*), and even the school of death (*schola mortis*).⁴⁸ In this way, continuous education would take place, involving moving on from prenatal school, through infancy school, the school of childhood, adolescence and maturity till the school of old age, and – finally – death.⁴⁹

His idea is an attempt to connect educational issues with the philosophy of life. It is completed by his views of the character of human nature. It is a direct consequence of the assumption that life is a continuous process of man's education. Life is not just situations and circumstances, but also, or even above all, behavior and activity in these circumstances. **It is the idea of upbringing as “universal education of all mankind”**, which consists in *transplanting wisdom into all people's minds, hearts and hands*.⁵⁰ Upbringing understood in this way is *educating all people in humanity*, which means leading them to the state that they can achieve by their nature if they take appropriate efforts.⁵¹ According to Comenius, educational tasks go beyond the matters related to direct preparation for life, beyond the horizon of social responsibilities, beyond individuals' egoistic interests; educational tasks are rooted in the metaphysics of human fate and expressed in the great program of shaping humanity in all people. *Teaching is not about simple transmitting knowledge, or the abilities of using things; it is about liberating man from the snares of ignorance, i.e. from the ties which do not let him become a human being*.⁵² All the ideas which connected education with the early period of human life have lost their meaning. **Comenius' idea goes beyond school education for children and youngsters and exceeds the concept of “school” for a man's whole life.** It leads to reshaping this concept and giving it completely new contents. The author of *Pampaedia* goes away from the traditionally understood school, using the term “school” in a symbolic rather than real way. Education, as a process of liberation and development of humanity, is a matter of a man's whole life, as it is equally necessary and important in all of its periods. In this way, Comenius comes to the idea of permanent education, lasting for a lifetime, which has become the basis of education in Europe and all over the world nowadays. *Just like all the world is school for the whole mankind, from prehistory till the end, individual people's lives are their school from cradle to death.* From this point of view, it should be stated: *Every age is suitable for learning, and human life has no other point than learning. That is why you should plan all your life skillfully, in order to learn the most appropriate things for every stage. It is very easy to obtain – as Comenius wrote – to make your whole life school*.⁵³

Comenius distinguishes eight age levels and eight related school situations (stages). For the first time in the history of pedagogy, the classification embraces all human life from conception till death. These are the educational levels described by the pedagogue in *Pampaedia*:

1. “School of birth” is supposed to give useful advice to parents about the first care of mankind as early as in the mother's womb.
2. “School of childhood” is to deal with *careful upbringing of children from birth till the age of six*. The pedagogue strongly emphasizes the importance of this period as he believes it is then

⁴⁷ Cz. Kupisiewicz, *Szkice z dziejów dydaktyki*, op. cit., p. 55

⁴⁸ See: H. Gudjons, *Pädagogisches Grundwissen*, op.cit., p. 73.

⁴⁹ See: B. Bellerate, *Komenský Jan Amos*, In: J. M. Prellezo (coord.), *Dizionario di scienze dell'educazione*, 1997, p. 583.

⁵⁰ J. A. Comenius: *Pampaedia*, Ossolineum, PAN, Wrocław- Warsaw- Cracow- Gdańsk, 1973, translated by K. Remerowa, Introduction and comment by B. Suchodolski, p. 13

⁵¹ B. Suchodolski: *Komenský*, WP, Warsaw 1979, p. 29

⁵² J. A. Comenius: *Pampaedia*, op. cit., p. XV

⁵³ Ibidem, p. XVI

that fixed habits develop, that is why it would be *advisable to make first impressions comply with the rules of real wisdom, and first habits – with the ideals of virtues.*⁵⁴

3. "School of boyhood" – for children from six till twelve.
4. School of adolescence, or secondary school – devoted to learning *languages and skills, especially Latin and encyclopedias of scholarly arts, sciences, customs and devotion*. It is divided into six classes: of language, physics, mathematics, learning customs, dialectics, and rhetoric.
5. School of mature youngsters, or academy, *intended for gaining more perfect wisdom*. This level is supposed to lead to *mind perfection, which is clear understanding of the world of things, perfection of the will, letting you choose what is the best, and perfection of the acting ability, expressed in a perfect use of all things in practice*. The division of this school level is more complex. It starts with academy, which is divided into three classes: the first one is supposed to have *pansophic* tasks, the second one – pambiblical tasks, or is to teach how to use books, the third one is for practice and evaluation. It is followed by *apodemia*, or the school of travelling and journeys. This kind of "school" should involve all graduates, as *it is necessary to travel in order to air your thoughts and feelings, to gratify them as well as to enable the student to decide with more ease and confidence which profession to choose*. Moreover, travelling develops the ability of dealing with other people.
6. "Schools of young men" were not meant to have a school character, with their essence expressed in a recommendation of keeping diaries, which should contain: a description of life till the present, an outline of the completed academic studies, observations from the journeys, and "what has not been achieved yet and still needs to be done throughout the person's life". In this way, the school becomes an appeal for self-cognition, a reflection on one's life, a plan of one's life.
7. "School of men" – in this period of life it is not systematic student education that is the case. The case is – according to Comenius – that in the whole life, which is school, it is this *middle part of life* that is an especially important school, *characterized by full vital forces. It is this part that distinguishes this school above all, as the preceding periods of life and schools are only steps that lead you there*. In this period it is not already *sole preludes* that matter, *but it is serious operations*. Also in this "school", lack of progress simply means "regress" as there is still so "much to learn". As Comenius puts it, basic factors of education in this period are *serious treatment of things themselves and varied relationships with other people*. This school is divided into three levels: the first one embraces those who start their professional careers, the second one – those who follow their careers, and the third one – those who "finish their careers". Nevertheless, in all the three situations, the main area and aim of education is just life itself, that is why Comenius analyses its general characteristics and ways to face it in several theses.
8. "School of old age" – although it is the "decadent period" in human life, "old age is part of life, therefore it is part of school, so it is school. Consequently, it must have its teachers, its regulations, its aims and studies, and its discipline to make progress in elderly people's lives possible. *Old age is the weakest period of life, that is why it should not be neglected or devoid of help*.
9. School of death – Comenius hesitated to postulate this level, however, he came to the conclusion that the equivalent of the first level of school, the school of birth, should exist. Moreover, he thought that in this way full analogy between the structure of existence defined by pansophia and the school levels as the phenomena of life would be reached. Justifying the need of education at an old age, Comenius was a forerunner of geragogy (the pedagogy of growing old and old age).⁵⁵

*The idea of schools accompanying man from birth till death gives rise to an anthropologic concept which assumes man's flexibility, educability, ability to learn, processuality of development which lasts till death rather than till adulthood.*⁵⁶ *The vision of man's continuous development and change is Comenius' original idea.*⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Ibidem, pp. 157 and on

⁵⁵ See: A. Zych: *Comenius*, In: *Encyklopedia XXI wieku* edited by. T. Pilch, Vol. 1, "Żak" Publishers, p. 535

⁵⁶ S. Sztobryn, *Jan Amos Komeński (1592-1670) jako przedstawiciel nowożytnej filozofii wychowania*, In: B. Sitarska (ed.) *Jan Amos Komeński – jego pedagogika i filozofia*, "Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletin, pedagogy series", University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2015, p. 95

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 95

As far as the idea of educating women is concerned, in his concept of teaching Comenius postulated men's and women's equal rights to education. As he preached, elementary school, or the mother tongue school should be compulsory for all children, regardless of origin or sex, as it teaches the sciences that are necessary in life.

Comenius' work, presenting the idea of lifelong learning most fully, ends with a statement which expresses hope for common agreement about the fact that *universal education of minds will be useful for the world, that it can be obtained by the discussed means, that a way to use them has been found which will make it easy and pleasant, and consequently education will become an open paradise of delight for mankind*. Finally, he expresses the belief that *if every year, host of estimably educated people graduate from every school, one can rightfully expect the world to finally stop being dull, meaningless, senseless, secular, godless, harassed by disruptions and curse. And when the "evening of the world" comes, the "promised light" will appear at last*.

Nowadays the process of learning is integrated in the widely understood process of permanent (lifelong) education and self-education. Due to the key role that lifelong education plays in human life (makes it meaningful), the main task of modern school is to prepare the student for the kind of education whose key idea is to learn.

Permanent education is an important strategy for Europe, which will make it possible to create a learning European society, which in turn will give rise to a society of progress, able to ensure Europe's independence from economic, social and political superpowers of other continents, especially America, Japan and China. The efforts to develop permanent education in Europe may also influence Europe's future and define its position in the world.

Understanding permanent education as a characteristic or rule of continuous learning throughout a person's life has clear organizational consequences. **It requires rebuilding the whole education system into an integrated structure**, starting from pre-school education ending with adult education. **The aim of this education is involving people in a rational technology of intellectual work, a technique of completing and updating their education on their own, and accomplishing self-education rather than transmitting knowledge. An education system based on the permanent rule must enable education to stretch over time, so that it embraces all periods of human life:** childhood and youth as well as adulthood and old age. This rule also assumes accessibility of education, which is connected with breaking down educational barriers, arising from school discouragement from further learning among other things, and giving education such advantages as multiplicity and variety of forms, universal availability, vertical and horizontal patency, flexibility of organizational solutions, openness.

The idea of lifelong learning is a key to the 21st century, overcoming the traditional division between primary and further education. It emphasizes the meaning of a learning society. Further education defined in this way must go far beyond traditional improving one's qualifications. Further education should comprise educational possibilities available to everyone, be a second or third chance of satisfying the needs of learning, self-evaluation, improving one's professional skills.⁵⁸

Lifelong education at the time of globalism has quite a different dimension and aims. To allow its accomplishment, it is necessary to develop global awareness in society.

5. John Amos Comenius' ideas and modern educational challenges in Pedagogy students' view

Qualitative research of Comenius was conducted by means of a survey among 280 Pedagogy students, including 1st-year, 3rd-year and 5th-year students. The 1st- and 3rd-year students of 1st grade studies, specializing in *early school and pre-school education, culture animation and management, and civil*

⁵⁸ See: J. Półturzycki: *Edukacja ustawiczna a rozwój i przemiany dydaktyki*, In: „Rocznik Andragogiczny”, Academic Andragogical Association, Exploitation Technology Institute, Radom 1999

defence training, had got familiar with Comenius as the author of the first great didactic system at a lecture about *Theoretical foundations of education* in the current academic year. The 5th-year students of uniform 5 years' studies, specializing in *integrated and pre-school education*, had got familiar with Comenius at the second year of their studies during the course of *Didactics*. The figure had also been referred to as a forerunner of the idea of permanent, lifelong education during the year 2010/2011 at the monographic lecture entitled *School education in the context of the teachers' permanent education*. On that occasion the students had remembered the great pedagogue's other ideas. I asked the students to list and describe those of Comenius' ideas which could be applied to contemporary educational challenges. I also asked them why John Amos Comenius was called a teacher of Europe, and even a teacher of the "nations".

The very first analyses of the results of the survey revealed that about 70 per cent of the surveyed students mentioned the idea of permanent education in the first place as a priority challenge of the contemporary times, where learning throughout your life is a basic process, *as the world is changing, society is changing, man is changing, the teacher is changing in a special way. He is the one to attract the students' attention, arouse their interest in knowledge, in constant gaining knowledge*. "Nowadays Third Age Universities help to fulfill this idea for elderly people who have retired. They allow their students' full development".

The students mentioned and described levels of lifelong education according to Comenius (consecutive schools from "school of birth" and "childhood" to "school of old age" and "death"). The 1st-year students, as the research proved, were especially interested in the school of mature youngsters or academy, *intended for gaining more perfect wisdom*. They emphasized that this level was supposed to lead to *perfection of mind, will and the acting ability*. However, they were fascinated with *apodemia* for academy graduates, or the school of travelling and journeys, as *it is necessary to travel in order to air your thoughts and feelings, to gratify them as well as to enable the student to decide with more ease and confidence which profession to choose*, they quoted Comenius. Nevertheless, they were most interested in the "schools" which had no school character, especially *schools of young men* – as a kind of continuation of academy and *apodemia*. They emphasized Comenius' recommendation of keeping diaries, where young people were to describe their life until the present, including their academic studies. It is there that they were to describe their observations from the journeys at *apodemia*. Finally, the young people were to describe their achievements so far (a reflection on their life) and wondered what else they were going to do throughout their life (a plan for the rest of their life). All the students describing permanent education emphasized that, according to Comenius, the first stage of education begins as early as in the mother's womb (care for *the already conceived offspring until it is born*).

All the surveyed students emphasized Comenius' idea of tolerance: *education should be available to everyone regardless of sex, nationality, race, creed, social origin, or economic position*, which they found quite amazing for a 17th-century man. He was for a class-lesson system, which had a social background, as the point was to *teach everyone everything about everything* – the students interpreted. Comenius developed this system theoretically, as it already functioned in the educational practice. They emphasized Comenius' contribution to the development of school didactics of that time as well as present, through bringing out some teaching rules in the educational process: demonstrativeness, availability (in teaching you should start with easy, simple things that are close to the child and follow with more distant, more complex and unknown), and systematicity, whose author he is commonly considered to be, as well as natural teaching methods, because *we should not only gain knowledge from books but from heaven, earth, oak and beech trees as well*, as the students wrote, quoting Comenius, who thought that "a student gains knowledge in a natural contact with the nature, with animals' and plants' habitats, through observation and experience, because it gives them a chance *to make their learning easy and pleasant*". In the same way contemporary teachers try to approach the educational process, however, they do not always succeed. "They take the children, mainly students of first forms of primary school, outside to the garden, park or forest, to let them see animals' and plants' habitats with their own eyes, see the changes that take place in the environment

every season, through direct contact with the nature” – the students try to incorporate Comenius’ ideas into contemporary education.

The students, regardless of their year of studies and specialization (50%), wrote about the idea of pansophia (universal knowledge), emphasizing the fact that “it is in knowledge that Comenius sought the light and wisdom as well as a chance for wisdom of the world/ nations/ every human being and a solution to their numerous problems”. “Thanks to permanent gaining knowledge a man develops in all fields, as a result of which changes occur inside him and, consequently, his perception of the world changes. His interactions with the environment are dynamic, as it is only then that a change takes place”. “Nowadays universal education is not only an enormous advantage, but above all it is a necessity”.

Taking into account Comenius’ ideas, the students also attempted to answer the question why he is called a teacher of Europe, or even a teacher of the nations. About 60 per cent of the surveyed pointed out that as early as the 17th century Comenius had observed the necessity of integration of the world’s nations and suggested starting this integration from Europe. First, however, it is necessary to get to know the nation’s culture and religion. This may be the reason why “he attached so much importance to learning foreign languages, as, travelling around Europe, he knew how important it was for the communication between representatives of different nations. He urged people to learn, gain knowledge, use books; to get educated throughout their lives; he lit their *fire of the light and wisdom*”. “He was very tolerant, and as I see it, he had learned it in Poland, which was his other homeland (this was due in large part to Leszno) – one of the students writes. “He proclaimed the right to learn for all children and people regardless of anything. He is a teacher of Europe because he saw the need of lifelong education, lasting all the time, lack of which could adversely affect the man’s development, his contacts with the world and with other people”.

The students also point out that it is only in the contemporary world, in the 21st century that people have started to understand Comenius’ ideas, although he wrote for his contemporaries. Those, however, due to the original way of his thinking for those times, did not always understand him.

“Comenius preached his vision of education in many corners of Europe, and his knowledge and light of the mind became timeless. He believed that people should learn throughout their lives, and his division of life into periods became a *foundation* for differentiation of tasks that everyone performs in each of the life periods, which is school”. “John Amos Comenius can be called a teacher of Europe because his philosophy is very popular and contemporary all over Europe. Some of his ideas have a chance to come true in modern Europe”. “He wrote books throughout his life (*Great Didactics* and *Pampaedia* are the most widely-known), he created school textbooks, not only for learning Latin or foreign languages, he travelled all over the world, mainly over Europe, and wherever he was he helped organize education systems and create school textbooks. Although he was a great thinker and philosopher, it is practical activities that seem to have dominated his life and educational activity”. “A lot started with him, as far as didactics and education are concerned, and much of it has survived until the present. He was a very progressive man. He dreamt of all the churches’ reconciliation, which proves his great tolerance, and appealed for the world’s amendment, for constant peace in the world. And although there is a lot of contradiction in his philosophy and views, and his behavior was not always good for Poland, we appreciate him first of all as a pedagogue, a didactician, and learn from him all the time despite the time lapse”.

Thanks to his educational ideas, his views of education, life and the world, Comenius goes three centuries ahead of his own times. Nowadays it is us, people of the 21st century, that derive wisdom from them.

6. Conclusion

John Amos Comenius' contribution to constructing the foundations of didactics was enormous. He overcame the unilateral character of philosophical education, initiated the construction of a program of knowledge of the world and things, revealed the weak points of the verbal, deductive method, he emphasized sensual observation and action, in essence, he developed a system of didactics as an "art of teaching", which he hoped for, and outlined the main aim of education as a whole of actions focused on "people's common good". Therefore, it was no coincidence that the scholar deserved the honorable name of a "teacher of the nations".

According to Piaget, it is advisable, however, to be extremely cautious (...) *seeking the origins of recent or even contemporary currents in works by authors from 300 years ago. In this way, you could, for instance, acknowledge the author of "Great Didactics" to be a forerunner of evolutionism, genetic psychology, didactics based on the knowledge of the child, functional education and comparative pedagogy, or a metaphysician, who did not notice the necessity of experimental research in psychology, or even in pedagogy, and who replaced analysis of the facts with discussion of the ideas. These extreme judgments would in both cases be inappropriate.*⁵⁹

As Piaget states, as far as Comenius' ideas are concerned, they are difficult to extract from their entirety developed by the author of *Great Didactics*, which is full of ambiguity, or even contradiction. How could we explain, then, the fact that a theologian, a lover of metaphysics, deals with didactics and creates an "art of teaching" with "pansophia" as its core? There are more examples of similar ambiguity, but it is not them that predestinate Comenius' unique scientific achievements described above.⁶⁰

Bibliography

Alt, R. : *Der fortschrittliche Charakter der Pädagogik Komenskys*, Berlin 1953.

Bellerate, B. (ed all), *Filosofia e pedagogia. Profilo storico e analisi delle istituzioni educative*, Torino, SEI, 1982 .

Bellerate, B., *Komenský Jan Amos*, In: J. M. PELLEZZO (coord.), *Dizionario di scienze dell'educazione*, ELLE Di Ci-LAS – SEI, 1997

Bieńkowski, T., *Komeński dzisiaj – kilka refleksji własnych*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mnich (eds), *Jan Amos Komeński a Europa XVII wieku/ Jan Amos Komenský und Europa im XVII. Jahrhundert*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, Vol. 4, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2012, pp. 335-337.

Cempel, C. : *Nowoczesne zagadnienia metodologii i filozofii badań*, Exploitation Technology Institute, Radom 2005.

Chalas, K.: *Nauczanie i uczenie się w myśli pedagogicznej J. A. Komeńskiego w perspektywie integralnego rozwoju ucznia (zarys zagadnienia)*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mnich (eds): *Jan Amos Komeński a kultura epoki baroku*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, Vol. 1, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2007.

Gogacz, M., *Podstawy wychowania*, Niepokalanów, Franciscans Publishers, 1993.

Gudjons, H., *Pädagogisches Grundwissen*, Bad Heilbrunn, Verlag Julius Klinkhardt, 1993.

Komenský, J. A.: *O sprawnym posługiwaniu się książkami, najprzedniejszym instrumentem kształcenia* (Comenius' speech to the listeners in Sarospatak).

⁵⁹ J. Piaget, *Dokąd zmierza edukacja*, op. cit., p. 439

⁶⁰ Ibidem, p. 454

- Komenský, J. A.: *Didactica magna universale omnes omnia, 1633-1638*, Polish translation Wielka dydaktyka, Wrocław 1935, Chapter 19.
- Komeński, J. A.: *Wielka dydaktyka*, Introduction and comment by B. Suchodolski, Wrocław 1956.
- Komeński, J.A.: *Pampaedia*, Ossolineum, PAN, Wrocław- Warsaw- Cracow- Gdańsk, 1973, translated by K. Remerowa, Introduction and comment by B. Suchodolski.
- Korthaase, W.: *O twórczości Jana Amosa Komeńskiego w Polsce*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mních, Richter M. (eds): *Werner Korthaase- badacz Jana Amosa Komeńskiego*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, Vol. 2, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2009.
- Kunowski, S., *Podstawy współczesnej pedagogiki*, Warsaw 1993.
- Kupisiewicz, Cz., *Szkice z dziejów dydaktyki*, „Impuls” Publishers, Cracow 2010.
- Muszyński, H., *Zarys teorii wychowania*, PWN, Warsaw 1977.
- Myszkowska- Litwa, M., *Wychowanie intelektualne w teorii dydaktycznej i praktyce edukacyjnej*, „Impuls” Publishers, Cracow 2007.
- Nalaskowski, S., *Problemy nauczania i uczenia się w ujęciu dydaktyki epistemologicznej*, Mikołaj Kopernik University, Toruń 1982.
- Nawroczyński, B., *Zasady nauczania*, In: B. Nawroczyński: *Dzieła wybrane*, Vol. 2, 10th edition, Warsaw 1987.
- Niemierko, B., *Kształcenie szkolne. Podręcznik skutecznej dydaktyki*, Academic and Professional Publishers, Warsaw 2007.
- Nowak, F.– Blomeyer, G. –Michel, Ch. –Vörg, R., *Pädagogik. Probleme – Theorien – Anwendung*, Augsburg, Hueber-Holzmann, 1982.
- Nowak, M.: *Rola nauczyciela w procesie dydaktycznym w ujęciu Jana Amosa Komeńskiego*, In: B. Sitarska, Mních R.(eds): *Jan Amos Komeński a kultura epoki baroku*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, Vol. 1, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2007.
- Okoń, W., *Wprowadzenie do dydaktyki ogólnej*, PWN, Warsaw 1998.
- Okoń, W.: *Podstawy wykształcenia ogólnego*, NK, Warsaw 1967.
- Piaget, J.: *Dokąd zmierza edukacja*, Warsaw 1948.
- Pólturzycki, J.: *Edukacja ustawiczna a rozwój i przemiany dydaktyki*, In: "Rocznik Anragogiczny", Academic Andragogical Association, Exploitation Technology Institute, Radom 1999.
- Sitarska, B., *Dlaczego Jan Amos Komeński wciąż żyje wśród nas ?*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mních (eds); *Jan Amos Komeński w kontekście kultury i historii europejskiej XVII wieku*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, Vol. 3, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2010.
- Sitarska, B., *Wprowadzenie*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mních (eds); *Jan Amos Komeński w kontekście kultury i historii europejskiej XVII wieku*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, Vol. 3, Siedlce Academy, Siedlce 2010.
- Sitarska, B.: *The role of media in the learning process at a higher education institution on the 350th anniversary of Comenius' collection of works "Opera didactica omnia"*, In: *Odkaz Jana Amosa Komenského kultuře vzdělávání*, John Amos Comenius Pedagogical Museum, edited by Svatova Chocholová, Markěta Pánková, Martin Steiner, Academia, Prague 2009.
- Sitarska, B.: *Zasada poglądowości w edukacji bez granic*, In: *Edukacja bez granic- mimo barier*, edited by P. Bury, D. Czajkowska-Ziobrowska, WSB University, Poznań 2008.

Sitarska, B., *Jan Amos Komeński jako humanista wszech czasów*, In: B. Sitarska, R. Mnich (eds), *Jan Amos Komeński a Europa XVII wieku*, STUDIA COMENIANA SEDLCENSIA, Vol. 4, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, pp. 121-150.

Sitarska, B., *JOHN AMOS COMENIUS AND THE BEGINNINGS OF COMENIOLOGY*, In: "Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletins, PEDAGOGY series", Vol. 2, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2015, pp. 45-66.

B. Sitarska, *Droga człowieka do poznawania siebie w ujęciu Jana Amosa Komeńskiego*, "Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletins, PEDAGOGY series", Vol. 2, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2015, pp. 145 – 156.

Sitarska, B., *Freiheit, Verantwortung und Identität als Schlüsselkonzepte zum Verständnis des Lebens, der Arbeit und des Werkes des Johann Amos Comenius?!* Wolność, odpowiedzialność i tożsamość jako kluczowy projekt (zamysł) do zrozumienia życia, pracy i dzieła Komeńskiego, In: Goris, Vouter, Meyer, Meiner, t A., Urbánek, Vladimir (Hrsg.), *Gewalt sie ferne den Dingen! Contemporary Perspectives on the Works by John Amos Comenius*, Springer VS Publishers, Comenius Museum in Naarden, Holland, 2016; series no: ISBN 978-3-658-08261-1; pp. 93-105.

Sitarska, B., *Instead of an Introduction. Perception of John Amos Comenius by myself and by the authors of Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletins, Pedagogy series*, "Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletins, PEDAGOGY series", Vol. 4, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2017, pp. 43-56.

Sitarska, B., *Jan Amos Komeński w trzecim tysiącleciu*, "Siedlce Comeniological Research Bulletins, PEDAGOGY series", Vol. 5, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2018.

Straszak, A.: *Człowiek w pierwszym stuleciu trzeciego tysiąclecia w perspektywie nauk cybernetycznych, informatycznych i systemowych*, In: M. Plopa (ed.): *Człowiek u progu trzeciego tysiąclecia. Zagrożenia i wyzwania*, Vol. 2, Elbląg University of Humanities and Economics, Elbląg 2007.

Suchodolski, B.: *Komeński*, WP, Warsaw 1979.

Sztobryn Sławomir, *Polska komeniologia we współczesnych bibliotekach elektronicznych*, W: B. Sitarska, R. Mnich (eds.), *Jan Amos Komeński a Europa XVII wieku*, Studia Comeniana Sedlcensia, Vol IV, Uniwersytet Przyrodniczo-Humanistyczny w Siedlcach, Siedlce 2012, s. 255-262.

Sztobryn Sławomir, *Jan Amos Komeński (1592-1670) jako przedstawiciel nowożytnej filozofii wychowania*, In: B. Sitarska (ed.) *Jan Amos Komeński – jego pedagogika i filozofia*, „Siedleckie Zeszyty Komeniologiczne, seria pedagogika”, Vol 2, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2015, s. 91-100.

Sztobryn Sławomir, *Wprowadzenie do pansoficznych podstaw pedagogiki Jana Amosa Komeńskiego*, W: B. Sitarska (red.), *Jan Amos Komeński – współczesne interpretacje i reinterpretacje Jego twórczości*, „Siedleckie Zeszyty Komeniologiczne, seria pedagogika”, University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Siedlce 2016, s. 25-34.

Zych, A.: *Comenius*, In: *Encyklopedia XXI wieku* edited by. T. Pilch, Vol. 1, "Żak" Publishers, Warsaw 2003.