

Socio-Utopical Viewpoints toward Pedagogy and Educational Institutions at the End of 17th Century up to the First Half of 20th Century

Jani Sota

Prof.Assoc.Ph.D., "Aleksandër Moisiu" University, Durrës
Email: jani_sota@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Philosophy of socio-utopists belongs to the end of the 17th up to the first half of XIX century (1950). This is firstly related with the development of ideas for education and schooling problems of the time and in the developed european countries . The main contributors of this school are: Robert Owen and Charles Fouries, whose their "philosophical recarnation" toward the moral principles obtained due to their productive pedagogical analyses approaching more and more to the socialist pedagogical issues. Next, the fans of the socio-utopist thought or mindset tried to shape the bases of pedagogy and didactics criticizing roughly the bourgeoisie and capitalists society being totally uninfluenced from relegion. Their viewpoints consists in an innovation to the development of ideas on education and schooling of that time.

Keywords: *Philosphy , school, pedagogy, educational plan, methodology, moral education, society.*

1. Introduction

A special pedagogic observation for some of the terms and social dilemma has made the dreamers of the heavenly tales known as social utopian. In contrary to the wrong belief that the education is the main tool with which can be improved and changed the capitalist society, the social utopian gave a few great examples of the practical and educational ideas giving an important historical impetus to a few of the pedagogical ideas in the period of XVIII-XIX centuries.

It was the time when a few of the great scholars in the field of education had built their pedagogy in the critics of the society and feudal pedagogy, whilst the followers of socio-utopia had started their activities with the ideas for education and society and harsh critics for the capitalist society and bourgeoisie society. This was a serious threat in the development of the pedagogical opinions, and also a novice at that time.

It is important for them to criticize above all by moral positions and in the contrary of the old opinions, they introduced the new type of education. The Classics of the bourgeoisie pedagogy fought against feudal exploitation not against the capitalist one.

For this reason their greatest contribution for the development of the pedagogic opinion is mainly in didactics. An important contribution to the development of the opinions over the education and school in the stage of after foundation of the history of the schools and ideas of education as science have given a few outstanding socio-utopian philosophers that confirmed the development of progressive point of view for the moral education, offering many pedagogical point of view in these issues. We would distinguish Robert Owen and Charles Fourier whom "the philosophical enlighten" on the education gained thanks to the interesting analysis on pedagogy and educational problems.

2. Robert Owen (1771-1858)

Robert Owen was the son of a craftsman and above all he gained merchant education. He tried to become a producer and soon he had the position of the director in a cotton mill in Manchester where more than 500 workers worked¹. He started to introduce the first socialist reforms which were supposed to improve the relationships of work and life. He was acquainted with the works of French materialists, of Ruso and Loku, and with the pedagogic plans of Bela and Lancaster. In 1800 he was in charge of the textile mill in New Lanamark in Scotland and became one of the owners².

¹ Jean-François Braunstein; Bernard Phan, *Manuali i kulturës së përgjithshme, përktheu: Bajram Muça, Tiranë: "Iliria", 2008, f. 327.*

² *Ibid.*

In his fight for the improvement of the situation of the workers he was influenced by the idea that he got from the French materialist philosophers that stressed the fact that the individuals are depended by the surroundings not by the origin. For this reason he tried in every possible way to improve the condition for life and work. Also it was his merit to help in passing the law for banning the children under age of 9 to work in mills (he required less than 12) and settled that the children up to 12 years to work only 12 hours, and also tried to organise a better life for his workers too³.

The mill of textile in New Lanark that he ran became the place of his life experience. It was necessary to show the fact that in a different surrounding the man changes himself. The practical idea of Owen caused a great interest in the world.

Owen set a new rule in his factory and in the life of the workers those changes were made: shorted the working hour, the children under the age of ten were not hired in his plant, build houses for them, organised the education of the little children and adults etc.

Owen became famous in the whole Europe. His mills were visited from people to be acquainted with his work. Amongst them were many outstanding people of that time. He also became renowned in the philanthropist and lectors society. This popularity was also increased by his writing of 1813 "a new overview on the society or Essays on the character formation"⁴ in his work Owen shows his point of view over the society and more or less describes his work in New Lanark.

When he saw that the work with the new socialist reforms was not very efficacious and it was not possible without the help of ideas of the existing society; when in the year 1817 he objected all the religious beliefs and announced all his leftist plans, the opposition of that time started to stand against him. Also the fact that England of that time was not in a very favourable and stable political-economical situation, because they encountered the riots of the workers due to first economical crisis and the influence of the French revolution. In his point of views on the harmonisation of the communist society, Owen introduced them in his work "The book of the new moral world".

Engels featured the importance of this development of Owen. "Passing in communism means a turn in the life of Owen, until his simple philanthropist activity could give him prosperity, merits, honour and fame. At that time he was one of the most popular people in Europe, until he introduced his communist theory, he was expelled by the official society, ignored by the press, impoverished by his constant unsuccessful attempts in America that devoured all his wealth.

Owen attacked viciously the private property and religious belief as the main cause of all the evil deeds in the society. In 1825 Owen founded in the North America the (New Harmony) colony wanting to explain his opinions. But this colony was not successful because it was destroyed in 1828. Later he participated in the British popular movement. He died in 1858⁵.

Even though his vision and attempts for the socialist society was utopia, Owen above all was committed in the implementation of his important pedagogical opinions such as: the general education, scientific and educational education, socialisation of education etc. He was the first to object the wars and political confusion, because he was a utopian socialist. He always praised the influence of the development of personality, without taking into consideration that "His institution for the formation of personality" was something else from the "New Harmony" but after 1817, Owen was even more convinced that the education was the best tool for the construction of the socialist society⁶.

2.1 The organisation of education

In the middle of the colony of his plant in New Lanark, Owen built "The institution for the formation of personality" where he focused all his educational work. The children from two to three years old went to nursery school, from three to five years old in the kindergarten and from five to ten years old went to school and later they went to work in the mill and attended the night schools (up to 14 years old)⁷.

Youths between 17 and 25 spent their free time according to a plan determined in the Institution where they learned, entertained, and sang⁸. He coordinated the work in the mill with education. He wanted the government to be in

³ Leon Zhlebnik, *Histori e përgjithshme e shkollave dhe e ideve pedagogjike (më tej: Histori e përgjithshme ...), botim i Entit për Botimin e Teksteve i Republikës Socialiste të Serbisë, Beograd, 1961, f. 129.*

⁴ Arthur Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950, second edition, 1970, p. 317.*

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 130.

⁶ Sunaj Raimi, *Sociologjia, botim i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tetovës, Tetovë, 2009, f. 55.*

⁷ L. Zhlebnik, *Histori e përgjithshme ...*, f. 130.

⁸ *Ibid*.

charge for the situation of the schools, and for the education and training of the teachers.

Owen asked the creation of the state institution for education. We should take into consideration that at that time in England no compulsory school existed and the children of the workers could not go in any cultural institution, but to private and religious school. This request of Owen is not contradictory with his opinion about the communist education as a social obligation.

2.2 The content of the education

Along all his educational work Owen aimed: the harmony between the benefits of human and society, and latter he raised to the idea of communist regulation in the shape of communist communes; the general formation of human with which he criticized the capitalist society that couldn't make possible such advancing. Regarding educational content must be stressed the idea that in the centre of pre-elementary education were games, intuitive education, the development of valuable moral qualities, games military training for both gender, better education older children helping younger children etc.

From the sixth year up to tenth year the purpose of the education and education itself was relied in these subjects: reading and writing, geography, new history, dancing, moral religious education, learning the work in agriculture, domestic education, military training and all of these were free of charge⁹.

In the tenth year of the school was the work in economy and the night school. It is pretty certain that Marx in his concepts was urged by the educational system of Owen in New Lanark, because in his pedagogical work in that place he wrote: "by the system of factory as it can be seen in detail by Robert Owen the thread of the future education, which for all the children in a time will interweave the productive work with education and gymnasium and this will help not only in the increasing of the production but is the only method for the creation of developed people in every aspect. ("Capital")¹⁰.

2.3 Educational plan for the "New Harmony" colony

Owen developed a richer program that in the meantime was replaced only partially. About the education of the children between the fifth and the tenth year Owen says for example: "They will gain their knowledge mainly through their personal contact with the objects and through friendly conversations with those that are more experienced... those children within two years will become volunteers and participants in the house works... (Book of the new moral education)¹¹. Children from the tenth year up to twelve year will help the children of a lower scale in their work and entertainment and from the twelve to fiftieth year shall be engaged in gaining knowledge in craftsmanship valuable for the life, knowledge that will make possible in the production of larger quantities of goods in less possible time. In this job they will spent every day just enough time as it is required.

Pre elementary education. Above all it is important that Owen was the first to implement the idea of pre elementary education, which theoretically was elaborated by Frebly. The child's imagination needs to be extended, the school needs to wake and educate friendly feelings to him to form moral collective qualities. The school need to teach to the children writing, reading, and later it needs to teach the basis of geometry, grammar, history, geography and teaching the mechanics.

Girls need to learn sewing, cooking, and then later joined the school of house maids. At school they never leave behind the body education, also they exercised at military education games, in songs and various manifestations.

At the night school which Owen paid a great importance for the education of the adults. They organised free speeches, they had their reading room and also took care for the rest and entertainment. Very frequently were organised concerts with old Scottish songs, where many people may attend.

It is interesting what Engels said about the work of Owen "The residents of New Lanark around 2500 were of various type; the majority of them were destroyed morally¹². These residents were transformed by Owen in an exemplary colony, where the drinks, police, courts, were unknown and unnecessary. Here Owen arrived only by creating the workers right conditions for human dignity and especially taking care for the good education of the new generation"

⁹ *Education, Work and Social Capital*, London: Routledge, 2000, p. 316.

¹⁰ *Thomas Botomor, Sociology: a Guide to Problems and Literature*, Allene & Unvin, England, 1970, p. 152.

¹¹ *John F. C. Harrison. Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America: Quest for the New Moral World (hereinafter: Robert Owen and ...)*, New York, 1969, p. 51.

¹² *Fridrih Engels, Zhvillimi i socializmit nga utopia në shkencë, Prishtinë: "Rilindja", 1988, f. 72.*

2.4 Methodology

Since Owen was decided against the mechanical education, he demanded that the teacher could wake to the children the interest and the activity. For this reason he evaluated very much the intuition in learning the knowledge of nature (students went to excursion in open nature, at the institution there was also the natural museum, for the geography they had the big geographical map of the world, in trade big tables etc)¹³.

The general educational principles. From the practical educational attempts of Owen and furthermore from the pedagogical point of view that were introduced in writings was understood some principles and fundamental aims of the pedagogic transformation of the world.

Along with the opinion of the human development Owen stressed especially the importance of the mental education and the importance of the knowledge. However Owen did not praise the knowledge without connecting it with the productive work and the body education. This joint of knowledge and work will be completely possible especially in the communist order¹⁴. Owen praised science especially mathematics, physics and chemistry that were necessary especially in agriculture and industry¹⁵. The youth in its communist commune had to get acquainted with agriculture and industry.

2.5 Moral Education

According to understanding of Owen good is the human who in all its deeds put the fate of the community ahead of its own personal fate. The individual finds his own fate if he contributes to the general happiness of the community. The education as a part of this circle where such perfect moral people are developed influences in the development of a good personality. For this reason the moral education in the educative system of Owen take the first place, and also this education should be without soft, without punishments and rewards¹⁶.

In the moral education that he praised so much, Owen on the contrary of the bourgeoisie individuality, as a value stressed the collective cooperation. This value that was so dominant in his work was a part that gave the utopia socialism the pedagogical meaning and it was so strongly connected with the working class. Also the idea of collectivism introduced by the utopian socialism and supported in prospective was a very good idea. From the ethical point of view this was higher than the "human" ideal proclaimed by the bourgeoisie scholars of that time, and even though these ideals were found then in many things¹⁷. The idea of collective education and the moral of the collective cooperation were founded by Marx and Engels.

But in the moral education was added strongly the incapability and instability of the socio-utopian meaning of the society. If for a new and improved order of community should change the moral of the man and if the new man should be transformed by the education how can a new circle be created by a given circle? We are in the "magic circle"¹⁸. To escape from the old circle it is necessary to improve the working class and improve certain knowledge (natural and social) which in the genius generalisation of Marx and Engels showed the new way to humanity and education.

2.6 Importance

The socialist contribution of Utopian Owen in the history of pedagogy is so great that it cannot pass without being noticed. With his attempts that through education could change the humanity and community and with the deepest feelings and social rights that he expressed so enthusiastically and belief in his work he found some fundamental pedagogical necessities in the improvement of the community, in the birth of this new society and education.

In the middle of these new pedagogical attempts of Owen the ideas of communism education need to be brought up; about the general human development, over the religionless education, about the relation of education with the productive work, about the organisation and development of pre elementary education, about the good teaching and the methodical point of view, and especially the adults education. It is important his ideas about the moral education for the collectivism. It is also important his request for the general education and the care of the state about the organisation of education and learning. With his critics against bourgeoisie education he also discovered the great flows of that education

¹³ William Lucas Sargant, *Robert Owen and his social philosophy*, London, 1860, p. 236-237.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹⁶ Richard Tames. *Radicals, Railways & Reform*, London, B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1986, p. 193.

¹⁷ J. F. C. Harrison. *Robert Owen and*, p. 85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Owen was not a scholar-writer or theoretician, but as great warrior for the new world order he gave powerful pedagogical impetus, enriching further the socialist founders such as Marx and Engels in their socialist idea of pedagogy.

3. Charles Fuier (1772-1837)

Among utopian socialists that criticized the bourgeoisie order and bourgeoisie education was the French Utopian Charles Fuier who from his point of views is not as important as British utopian Owen. Fuier dreamt for a community where work could be an attraction and human lusts be in a good harmony¹⁹.

Amongst the problems that according to him were not sorted properly in the existing community was the educational issue. Fuire criticized the bourgeoisie education that did not take into consideration the interest and tendencies of the children and they harmed their health, they were overcharged mentally very frequently and this distracted them from the serious learning, because they did not take into consideration their will for change²⁰. Because of all of these the children could not develop properly and above all this system was based into punishment for children. The social order is such that even the children can tell the moral hypocrisy: in other words the reality is different from the words. The division of the words from the deeds cannot be a good basis for a fair and a healthy education

3.1 Education in the "harmonic order" should be different

All the youths should be educated and developed in harmony. Also the "body and soul" should be developed and also the natural inclinations of the children should be taken into account²¹. The education should be built according to the children will for work and his activity. They should be developed in education and work in contact with practice and artistic one²².

Fuire appraises the knowledge and science. He turns down the systematic educational work and believes that through the work should waken the interest in the children for the science²³. He praises the role of education in work and also underestimates the role of systematic learning. Fuire too believes that the education is an issue of the community.

3.2 Importance

The critic of Fuire against the bourgeoisie educational system is one of his merits. That system takes care firstly only for the education of the smallest and privileged youths. A positive role played his opinion for the attractive part of the work (Frebl) that was the main urge for the general development and especially for the natural inclination of the for the development of activities. It is important that a care should be taken for the psychic qualities of the children. Fuire too agreed with the idea that education with community work and the education has a social character, but he paid little attention the problem of systematic education and school.

The classics of Marxism over the utopian socialists. Marx and Engels praised very much the utopian socialists about their pedagogical problems. Utopian socialists gave to the Marxist pedagogy furthermore the necessity of the education of the new generation and the joint of the education learning and productive work. These two principles were used in "Communist manifest" clearly and in the way of qualitative development.

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¹⁹ Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier: the visionary and his world (hereinafter: Charles Fourier ...)*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, p. 24.

²⁰ Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996), p. 318.

²¹ J. Beecher, *Charles Fourier ...*, p. 62.

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