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## Tradition of Socratism in philosophical educational reflection

Having Socrates before our eyes is one of the essential premises of our philosophising.

K. Jaspers

The life of Socrates was in all respect an original philosophical work which still instructs us about an invincible fortitude and might of an ethically developed man.

A. Krokiewicz

In the following text an attempt has been made to sum up the contemporary philosophical educational reflection related to the ideas of Socrates. The tradition of education connected with this figure is of such a rich character that it completely deserves being called a didactic intellectual formation<sup>1</sup>. Numerous summaries referring to this figure have been written<sup>2</sup>. The figure and beliefs of Socrates have a specific place in the didactics of philosophical science. The Socratic skill of dialogue can be treated as a kind of birth of one among the basic

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<sup>1</sup> Important for this tradition is the pattern of wisdom alone which is placed close to the function of a teacher. Compare the comment of Socrates in defence of the theses of Protagoras: “[...] I call a wise man the one who can change the wrong ideas, if any of us has them, and make us have good ideas [...]”, based on: A. Krokiewicz, *Zarys filozofii greckiej (od Talesa do Platona)*, Pax, Warszawa 1971, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. in the research: T. Kasachkoff (ed.), *In the Socratic Tradition*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham 1998 an analysis was taken up of didactic mistakes and ways of avoiding them, an analysis of kinds of texts and syllabuses, activities stimulating critical thinking and improvement of the conducted philosophical reasoning – referring to this figure. Compare: P. Walczak, *Metoda rozmowy sokratejskiej: założenie, przebieg, praktyka*, [http://pzf.polsl.pl/r/4774/dydaktyka\\_filozofii.pdf](http://pzf.polsl.pl/r/4774/dydaktyka_filozofii.pdf) (15.08.2012).

standards in the teaching of philosophy. Socrates is treated as one of the main teachers in the whole philosophical culture and the author of original pedagogical ideas. In search for such fundamental patterns, philosophy is stated to need both the Socratic and the Platonic tradition<sup>3</sup>. Treating philosophy as critique originates from the Socratic attitude, however in the Platonic tradition it is treated as vision. Critique without vision can lead to nihilism, however vision without critique can lead to dogmatism. Both attitudes, the one of ignorance and irony together with the one of myth and metaphysics should complement each other despite the basic differences between them. It has also been noticed that the attitude of the Socratic searching expresses well enough the situation of philosophy and the philosophers who significantly argue about the subject of their research (so called *Socratic function of philosophy*)<sup>4</sup>.

In more original interpretations it is stated that Socrates can be a link between the European culture and the civilisation of the Far East. Wayne A. Borody has compared the position of Arjuna and Socrates in philosophical tradition<sup>5</sup>. Although the cultural contexts of functioning of these figures are fundamentally different, their axiological attitude, concepts of teaching and attitude towards physicality (materiality) are similar. Arjuna standing before Krishna is compared to the conversation of the sitting Socrates with his beloved friend Critias on the day of the execution. Referring to the philosophical experience of mankind, which goes beyond culture, is extremely important – especially in the educational dimension. In another interpretation Socrates and Thomas Moore are mentioned as the creators of pedagogical philosophy with a significant importance for feminism<sup>6</sup>.

To begin with, it is good to be reminded of the conditions arising from the Socratic didactic tradition. First of all arising of a new intellectual culture with practical features negating the patterns of the sports and soldier culture should be rated here<sup>7</sup>. One of its main elements was the skill of persuading – rhetoric. An inquiry for the demands and limits of the attitude of a teacher became crucial<sup>8</sup>. It led to analyses referring to the differences between the moral and intellectual education. It is worth mentioning that Socrates had already come across the new

<sup>3</sup> M. Westphal, *Philosophy as Critique and as Vision*, [in:] T.P. Kasulis (ed.), *The Recovery of Philosophy in America: Essays in Honor of John Edwin Smith*, SUNY Press, Albany 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Ch. Frankel, *The Philosopher as Teacher*, "Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association" 1973, 47, p. 1–11.

<sup>5</sup> W.A. Borody, *The Trials' of Arjuna and Socrates: Physical Bodies, Violence and Sexuality*, "Asian Philosophy" 1997, 7(3), p. 221–233.

<sup>6</sup> J. O'Dea, *Integrity and the Feminist Teacher*, "Journal of Philosophy of Education" 1997, 31(2), p. 267–282.

<sup>7</sup> Compare: I. Krońska, *Sokrates*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1983, p. 26; the definition "completing these patterns" seems possible as well.

<sup>8</sup> J.H. Blits, *Socratic Teaching and Justice: Plato's "Clitophon"*, "Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy" 1985, 13, p. 321–334.

conception of man as well as the vision of philosophical activity based on rational principles and scientific justifications included especially by the sophists<sup>9</sup>. The focus of the philosophical issues on the man also took place due to the sophists<sup>10</sup>. Remote sources of the teaching theories of Socrates were searched for even in Gorgias in an attempt of telling the difference between the Socratic educational process and both common standards of teaching and rhetoric (beside the positive attitude the negative element of unteaching bad habits, pointless interpretations and false opinions are also important)<sup>11</sup>. It is crucial that gaining ethical virtues in the first place and only then learning rhetoric was important already for Gorgias<sup>12</sup>. Understanding of *arete* was a subject of big discussions among the sophists<sup>13</sup>. The pattern of ethical-political virtue had been already moulded before Socrates<sup>14</sup>. Among the issues supporting the didactic philosophical convention of Socrates, the following should be noted: treating logic as a condition necessary for ethics, assuming that ethical knowledge leads to achieving goodness, focusing on a method as the way to achieve knowledge.

Literature dedicated to the analysis of the influence of Socrates on philosophical education is quite extensive. In almost all textbooks having the character of introduction to philosophy his name is mentioned together with such culturally important, influential and didactically meaningful figures as St Thomas<sup>15</sup> or M. Heidegger<sup>16</sup>. The Socratic model of self-analysis was treated as one of the metaphors used for presenting the model of liberal education – discussed during the analysis of Wittgenstein's philosophy<sup>17</sup>. In Poland, together with introducing the educational way of philosophy, the figure of Socrates is referred to already in

<sup>9</sup> Compare: J. Gajda, *Sofiści*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1989, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>11</sup> J. King, *Nonteaching and its Significance for Education*, "Educational Theory" 1976, 26, p. 223–230.

<sup>12</sup> Compare: J. Gajda, *Sofiści...*, p. 116.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>14</sup> In the epilogue of Gorgias' *Defence of Palamedes* there is such a fragment: "If you execute an unjust death sentence on me [...] all of you will be openly guilty of a crime, you yourselves, not the prosecutor. Since you bear the responsibility for justice. [...] Since having sentenced me unjustly you will commit a crime not only against me and my house but you will knowingly commit a dreadful, blasphemous, dishonest and unfair deed against yourselves as well [...]". In: *Obrona Palamedesa*, (Diels, *FVS*, *Gorgias* B 11a) § 22, 24. Translated by: J. Gajda, retranslated freely. Based on: J. Gajda, *Sofiści...*, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> In St Thomas were even suspected elements of the Socratic teacher attitude. Compare: J. Pieper, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas*, Notre Dame University Press, 1987.

<sup>16</sup> M. Pinholster, *Making it Matter: Socrates, Heidegger, and Introductory Philosophy*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1998, 21(1), p. 1–14; compare also: B.L. Haines, *Teaching Plato as an Introduction to Philosophy*, "Metaphilosophy" 1993, 24(4), p. 407–414.

<sup>17</sup> A. Neiman, *Wittgenstein, Liberal Education, Philosophy*, "Studies in Philosophy and Education" 1995, 14(2–3), p. 201–215.

the first grade of gymnasium – in all the textbooks concerning it<sup>18</sup>, which must be admitted to be a big didactic novelty. The Socratic method is mentioned as one of the first elementary forms of philosophy lessons<sup>19</sup>. It is hard to show any syllabus of philosophy teaching in which this figure would not be referred to – in both academic, secondary school and other textbooks and in those which especially concern moral issues. The turn for moral education at school (within the subject called religion/ethics – ethics is the first subject of philosophy teaching) also causes an increase of interest in Socrates. Actually, the beliefs of Socrates are essential for every stage of education.

In the analysis of the influence of Socrates on education his historical figure is less important in its own rights<sup>20</sup> than its cultural image which affects education the most. This image is going to be the main topic of the reflections presented here. Both the elements of this image and its functions in culture are important. With reference to the historical interpretation of the figure of Socrates, a question was even asked to what extent it can be considered faithful towards the concept of the Socratic teacher which is present in tradition<sup>21</sup>. It is important that there are also stances in which the information about Socrates testified by Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle are rejected<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> K. Starczewska, M. Ługowska, E. Korulska i in., *Świat starożytny. Materiały. Świat człowieka. Klasa I, cz. I*, Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, Warszawa 1999, p. 308–310, 327–328; compare also: M. Woźniczka, *Obrona Sokratesa - pytanie o radykalność sprzeciwu wobec złej tradycji*, in: M. Topczewska (ed.), *Scenariusze lekcji do podręcznika dla klasy I gimnazjum "Świat starożytny"*, Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, Warszawa 2000, p. 46–47; A. Jędynak, T. Walentowicz, *Filozofia. Podręcznik dla gimnazjum do edukacji filozoficznej*, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 2000, p. 168–169; A. Aduszkiewicz, P. Marciszuk, R. Piłat, *Edukacja filozoficzna dla klasy I gimnazjum*, Stentor, Warszawa 2001, p. 114–116; J. Pilikowski, *Filozofia w gimnazjum. Ścieżka edukacyjna*, Wyd. „Zamiast Korepetycji”, Kraków 2000, p. 21–22, 115 and numerous texts selections.

<sup>19</sup> Compare: A. Jędynak, *Filozofia w gimnazjum. Poradnik dla nauczycieli*, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 2001, p. 41; socratic method in the teaching of philosophy (to stimulate the critical thinking): R. Reich, *The Socratic Method: What it is and How to Use it in the Classroom*, [http://www.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/cgi-bin/docs/newsletter/socratic\\_method.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/cgi-bin/docs/newsletter/socratic_method.pdf) (15.08.2012); E. Nahmias, *Practical Suggestions for Teaching Small Philosophy Classes*, [http://www2.gsu.edu/~phlean/papers/Practical\\_Suggestions\\_Teaching\\_Philosophy.pdf](http://www2.gsu.edu/~phlean/papers/Practical_Suggestions_Teaching_Philosophy.pdf) (15.08.2012).

<sup>20</sup> Especially as arguments of the historians of philosophy are important here (Aristophanes' Socrates, Plato's Socrates, Xenophon's Socrates, testimonies of Anthistenes, Aristotle and numerous attempts to scientifically describe the sources: E. Zeller, A. Labriola, Schleiermacher, A. Krokiewicz, A. Döring, H. Maier, E. Dupréel, O. Gigon – compare: I. Krońska, *Sokrates...*, p. 8–18). However, A. Krokiewicz negates the suggestion of treating the figure of Socrates as mere "literary fiction"; compare: by the same author, *Zarys filozofii greckiej...*, p. 275.

<sup>21</sup> D.T. Hansen, *Was Socrates a "Socratic Teacher"?*, "Educational Theory" 1988, 38, p. 213–224.

<sup>22</sup> They are mentioned by J. Gajda as crucial to interpret the meaning of sophistry in the transformations of the Greek philosophical thought; in: J. Gajda, *Sofiści...*, p. 10.

Analysis of the Socratic attitude can also lead to some more general reflections about the philosophy of education<sup>23</sup>. Padrig Hogan observed that education in the Western civilisation is entangled in controlling structures protecting some elements of faith and beliefs<sup>24</sup>. The assumption of having certain rights placed above the needs and emotionality of students met with criticism and suggestions of reforms. Beside the conceptual perception, the factor of human experience is essential for execution in educational practice. This experience is inevitable no matter if it limited us or set us free but it would be characteristic of the Socratic attitude. This element seems to be underestimated in contemporary educational practice.

In the contemporary didactic reflection many elements and functions related to the image of this figure are noticed and mentioned. Among the main ones which influence the contemporary concept of philosophical education the most, we should rate the following:

**1. Moralism in the concept of education: education is supposed to lead to virtue understood as the basis of wisdom; the attitude of moral absolutism contrary not only to the sophists but also the stoics and the cynics**

It is probably the strongest didactic motif. It is perceived the most seriously at the lower stages of education in which the educational influence has an important meaning. It fully corresponds with the targets of education<sup>25</sup> and the tasks of school<sup>26</sup>, mentioned already at primary school, gymnasium<sup>27</sup> and lyceum<sup>28</sup>. To-

<sup>23</sup> Compare: M. Woźniczka, *Philosophy of education versus the basic of philosophy teaching*, in: B. Kozuh, A. Kozłowska, A. Itati (ed.) *The Relationship between Theory and Method in Educational Research*, Buenos Aires – Częstochowa 2003, p. 130–139; M. Woźniczka, *Metafilozofia a dydaktyka filozofii (Metaphilosophy versus philosophy teaching)*, [in:] M. Woźniczka (ed.), *Metafilozofia – nieporozumienie czy szansa filozofii? (Metaphilosophy – a Misunderstanding or a Chance of Philosophy?)*, Scriptum, Kraków 2011, p. 253–293.

<sup>24</sup> P. Hogan, *The Practice of Education and the Courtship of Youthful Sensibility*, “Journal of Philosophy of Education” 1993, 27(1), p. 5–15.

<sup>25</sup> Compare: “Teaching of existing in culture, first of all in its symbolic and axiologic dimension in order to make it inner and personal property of a child”, [in:] *Dziennik Ustaw RP*, Nr 14, Warszawa 23.02.1999, p. 588; “Becoming familiar with the values which are an important motif of the public and individual activity in Poland, Europe and the World”, do., p. 590; and within ethics: “Moulding a reflective attitude towards man, his nature, moral duties [...] Preparation for recognising basic values and arranging them in the correct hierarchy”, do., p. 597.

<sup>26</sup> Por.: “Supporting students in search of values. Showing to students the necessity of self-improvement. Showing the sense of rights and duties, rules and principles, orders and prohibitions functioning in social life”, [in:] *Dziennik Ustaw RP*, Nr 14, ..., p. 597, translated freely.

<sup>27</sup> Por.: “Introducing to reflection and logical thinking. Moulding moral sensitivity. Encouraging to closer and more profound knowing of oneself”, [in:] *Dziennik Ustaw RP*, Nr 14, ..., p. 615, translated freely. As a matter of fact, to many records of this act should be quoted here.

<sup>28</sup> Por.: “Distinguishing values and their hierarchy in literary works; pointing at [...] the values approved of by oneself. Telling the difference between spontaneous and personal literary expe-

gether with the developmental periods of a child, an increase in the complexity of the presented material and formulated didactic tasks can be observed. It can even be said that there is a certain didactic evolution connected with this figure – at higher stages of education, logical and methodological elements appear beside moral refection.

In the literature on the subject, various contexts related to the attitude of moralism are noticed. Alexander Nehamas observed that on a neutral, methodological ground it is difficult to tell the difference between Socrates and the sophists<sup>29</sup>. The difference becomes clear if he appears as the teacher of virtue. And also Plato is close to the attitude of believing that he can teach that what virtue is. In *Republic* Plato tried to distinguish philosophy from sophistry on a methodological ground. However, this distinction can be dubious. Tucker Landy took note of the conflict between the protection of the theoretical activity of philosophy presented by Socrates and objecting especially to the pragmatic attitude of the sophists<sup>30</sup>. This argument has not lost its meaning even in educational contexts.

A big discussion was aroused by the possibility of using the concepts of Socrates for suggesting political education. Mark J. Lutz pointed to the meaning of virtue in the political life proposed by Socrates<sup>31</sup>. In his opinion these stresses are especially distinct in the Platonic image of Socrates (and especially in such works as: *Symposium*, *Alcibiades*, *Republic*). It is particularly important to understand the Socratic desire for nobleness and to believe that the attempt of successful dealing with this longing gives the biggest satisfaction in the search of wisdom. The Socratic scheme of a conversation enabled acquisition, widening and strengthening the knowledge about love and virtue. According to the author this was a strong and non-dogmatic answer of Plato to the ancient critique of philosophy presented for example by Aristophanes and at the same time this is the answer to the contemporary critique of classical rationalism taken up by such philosophers as Nietzsche or Rorty. Moreover, the Socratic education to virtue teaches that a philosopher must always have respect, a due distance and study proportions of the choice between nobleness and perfection. Gerald M. Mara observed that in political education there is a problem connected with the interpre-

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riences and over-individual, established in tradition and critique codes of reception”, [in:] *Dziennik Ustaw RP*, Nr 14, ..., p. 622. In optional philosophy classes in lyceum contents referring to the ability of asking questions, defining, classifying and argumentation, discussion are already mentioned. do., p. 645, translated freely.

<sup>29</sup> A. Nehamas, *Eristic, Antilogic, Sophistic, Dialectic: Plato's Demarcation of Philosophy from Sophistry*, “History of Philosophy Quarterly” 1990, p. 3–16.

<sup>30</sup> T. Landy, *Philosophy, Statesmanship, and Pragmatism in Plato's "Euthydemus"*, “Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy” 1998, 25(2), p. 181–200.

<sup>31</sup> M.J. Lutz, *Socrates' Education to Virtue: Learning the Love of the Noble*, SUNY Press, Albany, 1998.



tation of the hostile to tolerance attitude of Plato<sup>32</sup>. Such a didactic attitude can strengthen the dogmatic elements in the process of teaching. However, Socrates took a different stand and accepted a certain kind of tolerance, interpreting the search of wisdom and virtue as a process undergoing constant transformations of a positive character. Thomas L. Pangle pointed to the concept of the meaning and tasks of political sciences worked out by Socrates<sup>33</sup>. Socrates should be treated as a model teacher of political education, avoiding the perils connected with the Platonic concepts. Walter Nicgorski observed that in the thought of Cicero there already is a reference to the political educational tradition of Socrates<sup>34</sup>. According to Daniel W. Conway this it was only Nietzsche who presented an alternative to the traditional Socratic model of political activity<sup>35</sup>. Nietzsche perceived an inner incoherence in those political theories which assume a possibility to improve the mankind. Since in them there is an inherent constant assumption of the influence of the teacher of virtue based only on assuming of moral transgressions of man. As an alternative to the Socratic model Nietzsche suggested such a model of political activities in which there are neither any moral defects in man nor any possibility of functioning of the moral authority of the teacher of virtue. Anthony Weston criticised the possibility to use the Socratic attitude towards the socially conditioned philosophy<sup>36</sup>. As an alternative he presented the model of Dewey. Too abstract orientation towards values distinct in Socrates, hinders the pragmatic approach which is more connected with experience and more involving.

A high correlation between the professional teaching of philosophy and being a philosopher was crucial for the Socratic attitude. The sharper version of this question is: can the social career of a philosophy teacher be ethically justified?<sup>37</sup> To what extent does the teaching of philosophy require a high moral standard from the teacher?

<sup>32</sup> G.M. Mara, *Socrates and Liberal Toleration*, "Political Theory: An International Journal of Political Philosophy" 1988, 16, p. 468–495.

<sup>33</sup> T.L. Pangle, *Socrates on the Problem of Political Science Education*, "Political Theory: An International Journal of Political Philosophy" 1985, 13, p. 112–137.

<sup>34</sup> W. Nicgorski, *Cicero's Paradoxes and His Idea of Utility*, "Political Theory: An International Journal of Political Philosophy" 1984, 12, p. 557–578; compare also: R.F. Hathaway, *Cicero's Socratic View of History*, "Journal of the History of Ideas" 1968, 29, p. 3–12.

<sup>35</sup> D.W. Conway, *Solving the Problem of Socrates: Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" as Political Irony*, "Political Theory: An International Journal of Political Philosophy" 1988, 16, p. 257–280.

<sup>36</sup> A. Weston, *The Socratic Philosopher – Citizen: Some Reservations*, "Metaphilosophy" 1986, 17, p. 371–378.

<sup>37</sup> Compare: J. Marks, *Teaching Philosophy, Being a Philosopher*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1993, 16(2), p. 99–104.

## 2. The basis for the conception of teaching ethics (models, the nature of virtue, the essence of the moral attitude)

In the common opinion of the historians of philosophy Socrates is believed to be the actual creator of ethics. This is Socrates from whom treating the elements of morality as the proper subject of ethics starts in culture. Socrates' univocal support for the model of moral absolutism became an important inspiration for the further development of ethics. For the practice of education it is important that "The ethics of Socrates does not have physical or metaphysical bases but it has deep psychological bases"<sup>38</sup>, as it gives a possibility for such moral education which is distanced from a more serious philosophical surrounding (what is important at the lower stages of education).

Robert E. Carter stated that contemporary discussions between absolutism and moral relativism have their sources in the Socratic reflection<sup>39</sup>. The bases of the Socratic method of teaching are connected with the necessity of relating to intellectual short-sightedness, lack of knowledge but also to the need of perfection. Mark Gilbertson presented a stance according to which wisdom (not only knowledge) interpreted according to the spirit of Socrates can be taught<sup>40</sup>. Among the elements of this wisdom he rated: reflexiveness, pronouncing right judgements, having a broad perspective, an ability to recognise one's place in the world and being aware of the limitations of language and knowledge. Teaching of wisdom has the character of a process and undergoes gradation. This teaching should be carried out according to the model of liberal education with a stress on its practical character and integration of individual fields of science. Marie-Jeanne Borel stated that the question about the possibility of transferring values within a dialogue can have a negative answer<sup>41</sup>. In order to challenge it one should aim at such an idea of dialogue in which the speaker presenting his statement is heard and interpreted, and he reveals the things which can be received. This revealing of a transfer should be seen as a symbolical structure of ethos – a process which is noticed even in the rhetoric of Aristotle. Robert Zaslavsky observed that Plato's stance as for the possibility of teaching virtue, is not definite<sup>42</sup>. In the dialogue *Protagoras* appears a comparison of the process of learning to a punishment, connected with putting on pressure. In the assumption of treating virtue as knowledge it would be supposed to be impossible to teach (the transfer of information rather than the process of forming of spirit). Similar

<sup>38</sup> A. Krokiewicz, *Zarys filozofii greckiej...*, p. 279.

<sup>39</sup> R.E. Carter, *Dimensions of Moral Education*, Toronto University of Toronto Press, 1984.

<sup>40</sup> M. Gilbertson, *Can Wisdom Be Taught?*, "Southwest Philosophical Studies" 1991, p. 23–32.

<sup>41</sup> M.-J. Borel, *Argumentation and Values*, "Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie" 1991, p. 159–179.

<sup>42</sup> R. Zaslavsky, *The Platonic Godfather: a Note on the "Protagoras" Myth*, "The Journal of Value Inquiry" 1982, 16, p. 79–82.



difficulties were taken note of by Daniel T. Devereux<sup>43</sup>. In a controversial fragment of *Menon* Socrates states that virtue cannot be taught. This stance is in an obvious conflict with the whole message of Socrates, saying that virtue is a form of knowledge. In many interpretations there is an argument that the stance of Socrates in *Menon* should not be treated seriously. However, according to the author it is important to take note of the way in which it is formulated and which is not conflicted with the whole message. It is also important that the Socratic theory of perception is related to the concept of teaching whereas these are the teaching concepts of the sophists and Socrates which are actually opposite. Brian Donohue stated that Plato used the figure of *Cephalus* to symbolise the opposition against the Socratic analysis of virtue<sup>44</sup>. It is most visible while making comparison between the last, third book of *Menon* with the opening pages of *Republic*. It can lead to discussing the state of justice for all the three classes in *Republic*.

Discussions concerning the nature of virtue can include various aspects. Catherine H. Zuckert pointed at a certain adequacy between difficulties in the Socratic teaching about concepts (ideas?) and difficulties in the doctrine of Eleatics<sup>45</sup>. According to her in Plato they are related to the problem of transition from feeling things to creating comprehensible concepts. Roslyn Weiss took note of incoherences concerning relations between virtue and wisdom<sup>46</sup>. Separating courage from wisdom means that the possibility of teaching virtue can be limited. Virtues connected with character can be fundamentally different from virtues connected with mind. Difficulties of a similar kind in the relation between compassion and scientific competence were observed by Gregory E. Pence<sup>47</sup>.

It is worth stressing that also technical solutions of organising are based on the Socratic concept of education, e.g. there was a seminar on teaching of philosophy devoted to the problem of being a better philosophy teacher<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> D.T. Devereux, *Nature and Teaching in Plato's "Meno"*, "Phronesis: A Journal of Ancient Philosophy" 1978, 23, p. 118–126; compare also: R.S. Brumbaugh, *Plato's "Meno" as Form and as Content of Secondary School Philosophy*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1975, 1, p. 107–115; M. Brown, *Comments on Brumbaugh's "Meno" for Secondary Schools*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1975, 1, p. 115–118.

<sup>44</sup> B. Donohue, *The Dramatic Significance of Cephalus in Plato's "Republic"*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1997, 20(3), p. 239–249.

<sup>45</sup> C.H. Zuckert, *Plato's "Parmenides": A Dramatic Reading*, "The Review of Metaphysics" 1998, 51(4), p. 875–906.

<sup>46</sup> R. Weiss, *Courage, Confidence, and Wisdom in the "Protagoras"*, "Ancient Philosophy" 1985 5, p. 11–24; compare also: K.R. Seeskin, *Courage and Knowledge: a Perspective on the Socratic Paradox*, "The Southern Journal of Philosophy" 1976, 14, p. 511–521.

<sup>47</sup> G.E. Pence, *Can Compassion be Taught?*, "Journal of Medical Ethics" 1983, 9, p. 189–191.

<sup>48</sup> M. Benjamin, *A Seminar on Teaching Philosophy*, [in:] T. Kasachkoff (ed.), *In the Socratic Tradition*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham 1998.

### 3. Presentation of the public vision of educational philosophy (contrary to the „private” visions of i.e. Descartes or Kierkegaard)

There is a long tradition of dispute about the educational character of philosophy. On one hand an orientation towards a personal attitude, which strengthens the individual philosophical experience, is important. On the other hand the over-individualistic perception of philosophical issues, which determines the experience of culture, is fundamental. It seems important that both attitudes should complement each other in educational practice giving the complete spectrum of possibilities to self-describe the subject and to interpret its place in the reality which it is given. Various attempts to analyse this relation have been made.

Thomas G. Miller contrasted the Socratic public model of education with the Cartesian private model of philosophical experience<sup>49</sup>. In the Socratic model there is included a proposition of achieving the skills of interpretation by a publicly monitored practice. In the development of philosophical abilities some literary skills are needed (concerning thinking, reading, writing, listening and speaking). The discussion of these skills is fundamental for achieving philosophical abilities. J.A. Mason observed that there are many obstacles in philosophical education concerning relations between the private and social space<sup>50</sup>. They are related to the Cartesian practice of creating philosophy (making private thoughts clearer and noting them down) and the strategy of the Socratic conversation (questions formulated in a group). An active dialogue between teachers and students, aiming at the improvement of verbal communication and achieving a better ability to philosophise, can be helpful in removing these obstacles. B.S. Llamzon contrasted the Socratic way of searching for the truth by creating an individual judgement with the way symbolised by Athena – the way of accepting social truths, avoiding individual searches and – what is important in educational pragmatics – guaranteeing a didactic order<sup>51</sup>.

According to A. Naess it was Kierkegaard who pointed at the educational crisis of the present day, connected with the development of technical civilisation<sup>52</sup>. The development of humanity should head towards its more serious cognition and experience rather than concern mainly the need of bigger technical adaptation. As one of the ways, he suggested a possibility to use the Socratic method of building personal relations between the teacher and an active student.

It seems that attractiveness of Socrates' propositions lies in skilful joining of the moral spaces: the private one and the social one. Concentrating attention on a written statement (which was decidedly avoided by Socrates) could lead to

<sup>49</sup> T.G. Miller, *Developing Philosophical Literacy*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1995, 18(1), p. 39–58.

<sup>50</sup> J.A. Mason, *Talking Philosophy*, "Aitia: Philosophy-Humanities Magazine" 1980, 8, p. 3–9.

<sup>51</sup> B.S. Llamzon, *Philosophy in the University: Athena or Socrates?*, "The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review" 1976, 40, p. 635–664.

<sup>52</sup> A. Naess, *Kierkegaard and the Educational Crisis*, "Danish Yearbook of Philosophy" 1971, 8, p. 65–93.

weakening of the form of a verbal dialogue and thereby lowering its educational influence<sup>53</sup>. It could probably weaken the psychological values of the dialogue as well: directness and liveliness of contact, necessity of full engagement of the participants, permission for deep penetration of the bases of beliefs and judgments.

**4. Basing on the rational method of education (rational teaching paradigm) described as the Socratic method with emphasising the meaning of verbal communication and question-and-answer function which stimulates thinking; the basis for the analytical concepts of education**

Among the unquestioned elements of dialectics introduced by Socrates there are the method of elenchus (of critique), the protreptic method (of incentive) and the maieutic method (helping in “realised talking-thinking” and defining ethical ideas). In the contemporary methodology of philosophy teaching the method of heuresis is used with wide recognition. In the method of elenchus the Socratic feeling for specific needs of the interlocutor<sup>54</sup>. Socrates’ methods are based on a strong rational attitude. However the answer to the question of the interpretation of this rationalism is not univocal. Adam Krokiewicz stated plainly that “Socrates did not practise «ethical intellectualism» but it was him who fought against it. His ethical knowledge was fundamentally different from the purely eruditional knowledge which consists in memorising various information[...]”<sup>55</sup>. This is an especially important didactic motif: achieving higher moral qualifications lies in “co-operation of the mind with the obedient emotionality and will”. Achieving “knowledge” which is understood this way can never have an ultimate character, it is a process which each intelligent man is inevitably sentenced for. Thus, paradoxically, despite all the concern with conceptual knowledge, a man is left with only this that “he knows that he knows nothing” – a definition of humility towards own knowledge. Amelie O. Rorty stated that although Socrates is treated as an intellectual who gives virtue the character of knowledge, it is doubtful that he accepted the rational theory of learning or rational theory of knowledge<sup>56</sup>. In her opinion it is rather a certain kind of disposition, character which is an important factor in achieving virtue and knowledge. In such an interpretation possessing knowledge is appropriate when it defines the possibilities of using it. Janice Moulton stated that philosophy, similarly to knowledge, func-

<sup>53</sup> The report of the reasons why Socrates limited himself to oral teaching was presented by A. Krokiewicz; compare: A. Krokiewicz, *Zarys filozofii greckiej...*, p. 273.

<sup>54</sup> W.T. Schmid, *Socrates’ Practice of Elenchus in the “Charmides”*, “Ancient Philosophy” 1981, 1, p. 141–147.

<sup>55</sup> A. Krokiewicz, *Zarys filozofii greckiej...*, p. 280.

<sup>56</sup> A.O. Rorty, *Commentary – the Limits of Socratic Intellectualism: did Socrates Teach “Arete”?*, “Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy” 1986, 2, p. 317–330.

tions within certain paradigms<sup>57</sup>. She took up a critique of one of them, treating philosophy as a debate between opponents. This paradigm of a dialogue assuming distinct opponents of discussion, does not provide big objectivity of this what is supposed to be thought. It rather wants the opponents to obtain an agreement. This paradigm can be detrimental to teaching, change the view on history – wrongly interpret the Socratic method and falsely present the nature of reasoning. Joseph Lombardo observed that in Husserl's phenomenology there are premises related to practical techniques of philosophy teaching<sup>58</sup>. They refer to the Socratic method in which the educational experience can be compared to the philosophical experiencing of an idea in the Platonic concept. In the educational experience it is advisable to pass from facts to abstraction, from a detailed example to a general rule and from personal references to human generality (*ir-relevance*).

Peter Abbs stated that these are means rather than aims which are discussed in the philosophical education<sup>59</sup>. Such a stance weakens the sense of aim and identifies education with training and giving diplomas. In the positive concept of education critical questions are necessary as well as a personal ability to learn – often similar and sometimes related to art or artistic activities. A pattern of such a tradition can be found in the didactic attitude of Socrates. Contemporary models of order and progress ought to be preceded by an analysis of the paradigm of an ability to learn. Creativity of an individual and creativity of culture must be combined with constant, precise and dynamic relations. Also Daniel Pekarsky pointed out the importance and attractiveness of the aims suggested in the Socratic method of teaching (which make it more lively, increase its effectiveness and determine ethical status of this strategy)<sup>60</sup>. This way it makes clear the sense of teacher's effort and his attending student's development conducting from the state of student's self-satisfaction to the state of humility and embarrassment. The process of asking questions is a superb method thanks to which, the student can identify his own system of beliefs and face its errors. Such a Socratic attitude to learning enables a critical analysis of various empirical and moral assumptions related to various situations and behaviours.

Michael J. Kerlin indicated that the Socratic method can be successfully used in teaching the ethics of business<sup>61</sup>. According to him, the procedure of the

<sup>57</sup> J. Moulton, *Duelism In Philosophy*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1980, 3, p. 419–433.

<sup>58</sup> J. Lombardo, *Husserl's Method in Phenomenology and the Socratic Method of Teaching*, "Aitia: Philosophy-Humanities Magazine" 1980, 8, p. 10–16.

<sup>59</sup> P. Abbs, *The Educational Imperative: A Defence of Socratic and Aesthetic Learning*, Falmer Press, Bristol 1994.

<sup>60</sup> D. Pekarsky, *Socratic Teaching: A Critical Assessment*, "Journal of Moral Education" 1994, 23(2), p. 119–134.

<sup>61</sup> M.J. Kerlin, *From Kerlin's Pizzeria to MJK Reynolds: A Socratic and Cartesian Approach to Business Ethics*, "Journal of Business Ethics" 1997, 16(3), p. 275–278.

social problem location applies not only to politics but to ethics as well. The key to understanding the most difficult moral problems lies in the relations with neighbours. Consequently in studying and teaching the ethics of business the problem of neighbourhood should be emphasised. This method is Socratic in the sense of taking into consideration the procedure of conversation and treating the mutual understanding of interlocutors as basic. The Cartesian aspect is crucial here: a mental way from analysing simple assumptions to the insight into the most complicated structures. P. Hogan observed that in *Republic* two kinds of dialogues can be distinguished<sup>62</sup>. In his opinion from the second book starts a shift from a real dialogue (action through conversation) to more manipulated kind of discussion (strategic action). The first is characteristic for the educational activity of the historical Socrates, the second, however, eclipsed it and tried to replace it, stressing especially the Platonic concept of learning leading to eminence (ascension). This differentiation is important for defining this kind of activity which better describes the experience of education and leads to raising of the state of culture.

##### **5. Good concept of the propaedeutics of philosophy (i.e. the classical component of all the introductions to philosophy, using philosophical education of children in the Lipman model)**

In the educational concept of Socrates the propaedeutic aspect is important. The Socratic formula of dialogue is especially orientated on the attitude of the common sense type of thinking. This is this attitude which philosophising should be started from, correcting it and heading or gaining bigger knowledge and, in consequence, philosophical skills. This is important that in the Socratic concept of dialogue there is no division to a type of interlocutors using their common sense and professional philosophers. Reaching the essence of things is more important than concentrating on choosing the partner of discussion.

T.K. Lim pointed that one of the contemporary educational standards of philosophy teaching in secondary schools – M. Lipman's philosophy for children – is based on the Socratic tradition<sup>63</sup>. According to the guidelines of this curriculum the teacher is only supposed to make the process of philosophising easier. Reaching philosophy is done only by discussing suitably prepared contents (e.g. short stories specially written by Lipman). The teacher introduces discussion by analysing the contents. The children are encouraged to discuss, listen, explain and interpret. The experience of this project showed that it introduces a new dimension to education, seriously strengthening the function of thinking and cre-

<sup>62</sup> P. Hogan, *Communicative Action, the Lifeworlds of Learning and the Dialogue that We Aren't*, "International Journal of Philosophical Studies" 1996, 4(2), p. 252–272.

<sup>63</sup> T.K. Lim, *The Philosophy for Children Project in Singapore*, "Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children" 1994, 11(2), p. 33–37.

ates additional feedback in the teacher-students relationship. Kurt Baier presented a stance critical towards this suggestion and concerning the possibility of an educational reform based on philosophical practice<sup>64</sup>. There can be reservations about children's abilities of creating an involvement attitude, especially in ethics, instability connected with the ideal of rationality and finally the value of the Socratic method itself. It was not the only objection voiced against this method. Another suggestion of using the Socratic method towards the philosophical education of children was presented by John P. Portelli<sup>65</sup>. It requires paying a special attention to the role of teacher and the nature of philosophical question. In adapting this method such issues as "facts and discussions", "answers and discussions", "neutrality and involvement" and even "Socratic mistake" are stressed. In the educational practice at school a reference to myth as one of the sources of philosophy can also be important. Jeremiah P. Conway presented an interpretation of the mythical basis of Platonic *Critias*<sup>66</sup>. The legendary victory of Theseus over Minotaur can reveal the historical and philosophical background of the work, referring to the essential symbolic transmission of the presented contents.

Also the relationship between verbal and written statements aroused much interest. James A. Ogilvy even stated that Plato adjusted the Socratic method of verbal questions to written text<sup>67</sup>. As for the educational issue Mark Coppenger proposed a certain modification of the method of the Socratic dialogue, consisting of replacing the verbal statement with written text<sup>68</sup>. The teacher presents a problem and hands it out to the student in the written form. The student presents his views in the same way. This process can be repeated many times. The aim of this method is to develop the skill of philosophical written statement.

<sup>64</sup> K. Baier, *Response to Lipman's "Philosophical Practice and Educational Reform"*, "Journal of Thought" 1985, 20, p. 37–44.

<sup>65</sup> J.P. Portelli, *The Socratic Method and Philosophy for Children*, "Metaphilosophy" 1990, 21(1–2), p. 141–161.

<sup>66</sup> J.P. Conway, *Socrates and the Minotaur: Following the Thread of Myth in Plato's Dialogues*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1993, 16(3), p. 193–204.

<sup>67</sup> J.A. Ogilvy, *Socratic Method, Platonic Method, and Authority*, "Educational Theory" 1971, 21, p. 3–16.

<sup>68</sup> M. Coppenger, *Written Dialogue: an Alternative to the Term Paper*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1979, 3, p. 197–202.



**6. Strong combining of philosophical speculation with existential practice (not to say existential task of philosophy), stressing of personal element (subjectivisation and personalisation of reflection, the meaning of emotion and emotional experience, the meaning of humility and dignity), strengthening of existential experience on philosophy over the procedure of the understanding of philosophy**

The difference between treating philosophy as intensification of the existential experience and considering it to be the basis of scientific pragmatics certainly was not so big in the times of Socrates as it is nowadays. In the common, educational social expectation, philosophy should first of all fulfil existential aims. It should concern the issues related to the aim and sense of human life, the place of man in the surrounding reality, explain various moral aspects, for many it should intensify the religious and perhaps even the cognitive experience. In the Socratic educational concept all the issues of this kind find their place quite well. But also in this concept, the way to more professional philosophical experience is shown.

In the literature about this subject there were many studies concerning this type of philosophical reflection – inspired by the life and thought of Socrates – applying to the widely understood art of living<sup>69</sup>. The educational factor is taken note of – teaching of philosophy should be engaged in creating values. Joseph Biel stated that the method of Socratic dialogues can be well used if suitable contexts for them are taken into consideration<sup>70</sup>. The classic theory of rhetoric can be used here, providing definitions and terms useful for understanding and discussion. According to G. Leroux, Socrates started the discussion of the variety of models of living<sup>71</sup>. The aspect of the moral philosophy teaching was especially important, referring to many analyses related to the nature of virtue and the essence of goodness. The dialectic method should be one of the main techniques used in this process, reinforced with the protreptic aspect – an encouragement for an individual search.

Frederick Elliston pointed at the need of setting the traditional philosophical reflection beyond schools and universities<sup>72</sup>. In his opinion the more pragmatic orientation of philosophical reflection, orientated on the connection with the occupation, has been initiated by Socrates. Addressing philosophy to scientists, lawyers, engineers broadens the mind, gives a historical context to reflections,

<sup>69</sup> Compare: A. Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1998; M.L. McPherran, *The Religion of Socrates*, Pennsylvania University Press, University Park 1996.

<sup>70</sup> J. Biel, *Teaching in the Shadow of Socrates*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1994, 17(4), p. 345–350.

<sup>71</sup> G. Leroux, *Protreptique et Dialectique*, "Philosopher: Revue de l'enseignement de la philosophie au Québec" 1994, 16, p. 249–257.

<sup>72</sup> F. Elliston, *The Philosopher in the Workplace*, "Journal of Business Ethics" 1985, 4, p. 331–339.

provides cognitive tools and problem analysing techniques. Also in teaching ethics going beyond the seminar halls considerably increases the level of students' practical awareness: shows the mechanism of the conflict of values, sensitises moral reasoning, helps to identify moral truths.

The problem of humility as virtue in the process of education aroused a discussion. William Hare stated that a stance is formulated according to which exposing the attitude of humility can undermine the teacher's authority and his sense of self-respect<sup>73</sup>. In such a simplified interpretation humility can be mistaken for scepticism, considerably narrowing down the attitude to the process of education. According to the author humility should be combined with two main features: respect for reasoning and evidence, and seriousness towards the interpretations of students. Both features are strongly connected with the Socratic concept of wisdom. Steven A.M. Burns pointed at the meaning of piety – as one of the elements of fairness referred to oneself – in the teaching of philosophy<sup>74</sup>. In his opinion that was Socrates who presented the pattern of showing reverence towards the spiritual sphere. Alexander Nehamas presented a defence of Socrates against one-sided interpretation of his intellectualism, also as means making it possible to achieve happiness and success<sup>75</sup>. In such an interpretation the emotional aspect of the learners' personalities are neglected<sup>76</sup>. The defence is based on the belief that Socrates was neither a teacher nor treated himself as a teacher of others as it is presented in the early dialogues of Plato. According to the author the Platonic concept of the mission of philosophy should be treated more seriously.

One of important features of the educational philosophical reflection of Socrates is its orientation on psychological issues. This task is supposed to be facilitated by the form of a verbal dialogue. Rational analysis of ideas is not an aim in itself but it is supposed to make it possible to reach the emotional and volitional factors. Irony is aimed not only at logical inconsistencies but also at the psyche of the receiver who, feeling mocked and ridiculed, must directly face his weaknesses: sense of vanity, self-satisfaction, putting on a mask. This meeting weakens the feeling of comfort but it is inevitable if it is supposed to lead to the de-

<sup>73</sup> W. Hare, *Humility as a Virtue in Teaching*, "Journal of Philosophy of Education" 1992, 26(2), p. 227–236.

<sup>74</sup> S.A.M. Burns, *Doing Business with the Gods*, "Canadian Journal of Philosophy" 1985, 15, p. 311–326.

<sup>75</sup> A. Nehamas, *What Did Socrates Teach and To Whom Did He Teach It?*, "The Review of Metaphysics" 1992, 46(2), s. 279–306; Compare also: by the same author, *Socratic Intellectualism*, "Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy" 1986, 2, p. 275–316.

<sup>76</sup> Compare: "These efforts [connected with creating definitions] joined the student's mind with his emotionality and will and thanks to them he was able to take possession of such ethical ideas which somehow demanded good and beautiful deeds and which at the same time protected him from committing bad and ugly deeds", in: A. Krokiewicz, *Zarys filozofii...*, p. 278, translated freely.

velopment of an individual. Referring to the need of creating higher self-awareness of the subject, especially in moral issues, has become one of the main elements of this development.

**7. An example of responsibility and pragmatism; multitude of didactic influence techniques (irony and provocation, inquiry and criticism, persuasion and ignorance, the method of elenchus and induction game)**

In the beliefs of Socrates we can perceive bases for the movement of critical thinking in which functioning of the Socratic method and his schemes of teaching can be seen<sup>77</sup>. Deron R. Boyles pointed at topicality of the dialectic attitude of Socrates, revealing the transgressions of sophistry<sup>78</sup>. According to him this attitude can be successfully used in contemporary schools. It should be also an important element of educational programmes for teachers. Daniel Fasko presented the results of the research on the influence of teachers' questions on students' thinking<sup>79</sup>. They showed that the majority of questions asked in the classroom concern such answers which demand only the giving of information. However, there are higher class questions, formulated in the spirit of the Socratic tradition, which really stimulate thinking. In the educational practice such factors should be taken into consideration as: awareness of the developmental differences of the asking, analysis of the aim of the asked questions, training of efficiency of the questions. For the execution of these factors it is necessary to be aware of the meaning of abstract questions in students' thinking and students' trust in the possibility of answering them. The possibility of the practical use of the Socratic method in the model of this type of education was also taken note of by G. Iseminger<sup>80</sup>.

Mark Glouberman stated that many works of Plato can be used by analytically oriented philosophy teachers as auxiliary materials in beginner courses of philosophy<sup>81</sup>. Especially the Socratic dialogue *Eutyphro* is suitable for treating as a self-sufficient text, fitting also for a half-year course of philosophy. Its exegesis makes it possible to teach the basic techniques of conceptual analysis, presenting the differences between philosophical ideas. In a more complex course it can be the basis for leading metaphysical reflections.

<sup>77</sup> R.W. Paul, *The Critical-Thinking Movement*, "National Forum" 1985, 65, p. 2–3.

<sup>78</sup> D.R. Boyles, *Sophistry, Dialectic, and Teacher Education: A Reinterpretation of Plato's "Meno"*, [in:] F. Margolis (ed.), *Philosophy of Education*, Philosophical Education Society, Urbana 1997.

<sup>79</sup> D. Fasko, *Questioning and Thinking*, "Inquiry (USA): Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines", 1994, 14(2), p. 43–47.

<sup>80</sup> G. Iseminger, *On Reading Philosophers and Doing Philosophy*, "Metaphilosophy" 1972, 3, p. 261–264.

<sup>81</sup> M. Glouberman, *"Euthyphro": A Guide for Analytic Instruction*, "Teaching Philosophy" 1992, 15(1), p. 33–49.

The pedagogical meaning of irony is not univocally interpreted. Mark T. Riley presented the reasons for which the Epicureans criticised Socrates<sup>82</sup>. They treated his irony as the refusal of help and hypocritical simulation of ignorance. David Roochnik in the work *Irony and Accessibility* took up the issue of superficial and profound level of communication in the Platonic dialogues<sup>83</sup>. During discussing one of the works of Peter Ahrens Dorf *The Death of Socrates and the Life of Philosophy* took note of the fact that the Platonic irony does not include the procedure of “*hidden teaching*” which is available for only few novices and that it is hidden under the prophylactic facade. Instead of this, the dialogues contain an exceptional availability. The structure of the dialogues is continuous and it can also lead to more advanced learning. Philip A. Pecorino was afraid that the Socratic method can encourage to various atypical pedagogical actions such as provocation, controlling or even trickery<sup>84</sup>. S. Schien suggested for teaching the basic ideas of the philosophy of education a certain induction game based on the Socratic method<sup>85</sup>. Using a standard pack of cards he presented a possibility of interpreting such questions as: discovering laws through induction, meaning of negative cases, assumption of the unity of nature and others.

## Conclusion

The Socratic way through reason to goodness, recognition of the universality of the moral goods over the others, recognition of only the subjectivised knowledge as genuine proved to be extremely attractive as far as education is concerned. The same feature is possessed by the Socratic attitude of aiming at truth connected with being aware that it is impossible to reach<sup>86</sup>.

The cultural figure of Socrates has several important educational functions. Among the basic ones we should rate: the function of creating and shaping of an authority, the function of the power of character related to the attitude of strong

<sup>82</sup> M.T. Riley, *The Epicurean Criticism of Socrates*, “Phoenix: The Journal of the Classical Association of Canada” 1980, 34, p. 55–68; compare also: B.A. Sichel, *Socratic Ignorance and Teaching*, “Philosophy of Education: Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society” 1975, 31, p. 75–89.

<sup>83</sup> D. Roochnik, *Irony and Accessibility*, “Political Theory: An International Journal of Political Philosophy” 1997, 25(6), p. 869–885.

<sup>84</sup> P.A. Pecorino, *The Midwife’s Trickery or on Teaching Philosophy: a Provocation*, “Aitia: Philosophy-Humanities Magazine” 1975, 3, p. 13–17.

<sup>85</sup> S. Schien, *An Induction Game*, “Teaching Philosophy” 1975, 1, p. 47–48.

<sup>86</sup> Compare: “Although Socrates taught ethics, he did not give any “perfect” definitions of ethical concept and he did not do it probably because he knew that there are no such definitions since all of them are verbal and the ethical concepts cannot be adequately defined in words alike colours and sounds subject to the senses”, in: A. Krokiewicz, *Zarys filozofii greckiej...*, p. 278, translated freely.

spirituality and eventually the specific function of personal determination. The function of personal determination is a peculiar phenomenon. Uncompromisingness arouses admiration because it means resigning from a part of the goods which are made available by the attitude of compromise. In a way it is close to the attitude of honour and supererogation. The consequences of the Socratic educational thought may lead to fundamental questions: can wisdom be taught, can values be transferred in a philosophical discussion? Can at least the Socratic vision of the function of philosophy be treated as a discipline teaching a human to himself? What are the perspectives of further using the Socratic tradition in didactics?

Joseph Agassi observed that in the contemporary culture in which we already know the beliefs of such philosophers as Wittgenstein, Popper, Quine or Rorty there is a need of a renewed didactic discussion of the Socratic concept<sup>87</sup>. The interpretation of Wittgenstein, who undoubtedly supported the Socratic interest in human souls and the connected condemnation of the traditional philosophical doctrines as harmful to individual autonomy and self-improvement, is really important. However, satisfying of this cultural need requires further analyses and adequate educational actions.

## Summary

In the article an attempt was taken to summarise the contemporary philosophical reflection on education connected with the views of Socrates. It must be taken into consideration that the figure and beliefs of Socrates have a special place in the didactics of philosophical sciences. Socrates is treated as one of the main teachers in all the philosophical culture and a creator of original pedagogical ideas.

The figure of Socrates according to Xenofon (in the light of the sources this figure is the most connected with the educational attitude) was assumed as the base of interpretation. A number of elements connected with the views and beliefs of this figure are mentioned in the contemporary philosophical reflection. Among the main ones which form the fragments of the contemporary conceptions of philosophical education the following should be counted: 1. moralism in the conception of education: education is supposed to lead to virtue understood as the basis of wisdom; the attitude of moral absolutism contrary not only to the sophists but also the stoics and the cynics; 2. the basis for the conception of teaching ethics (models, the nature of virtue, the essence of the moral attitude); 3. presentation of the public vision of educative philosophy (contrary to the "private" visions of i.e. Descartes or Kierkegaard); 4. basing on rational method of education (rational teaching paradigm) described as Socratic method with emphasising the meaning of verbal communication and question-and-answer function which stimulates thinking; the basis for analytical conceptions of education; 5. good conception of propaedeutics of philosophy (i.e. the classical component of all the introductions to philosophy, using philosophical education of children in the Lipman model); 6. strong combining of philosophical speculation with existential practice (not to say existential task of philosophy), stressing of personal element (subjectivization and personaliza-

<sup>87</sup> J. Agassi, *Autonomy and the Philosopher*, "Methodology and Science: International Journal for the Empirical Study of the Foundations of Science and their Methodology" 1992, 25(1), p. 1–10.

tion of reflection, the meaning of emotion and emotional experience, the meaning of humility and dignity), strengthening of existential experience on philosophy over the procedure of understanding of philosophy; 7. an example of responsibility and pragmatism; multitude of didactic influence techniques (irony and provocation, inquiry and criticism, persuasion and ignorance, elenctic method and inductive game)

The consequences of the Socratic educational thought may lead to fundamental questions: can wisdom be taught, can values be transferred in philosophical discussion? Can at least the Socratic vision of the function of philosophy be treated as a discipline teaching a human to himself? What are the perspectives of further using the Socratic tradition in didactics?

**Key words:** didactics of philosophy, Socratic Education, Socratic Method.

## Streszczenie

### Tradycja sokratyzmu w filozoficznej refleksji edukacyjnej

W artykule podjęto próbę podsumowania współczesnej filozoficznej refleksji edukacyjnej, związanej z poglądami Sokratesa. Zwraca się uwagę, że postać i przekonania Sokratesa zajmują szczególnie miejsce w dydaktyce nauk filozoficznych. Sokrates traktowany jest jako jeden z głównych nauczycieli w całej kulturze filozoficznej i twórca oryginalnych idei pedagogicznych.

Jako podstawową do interpretacji przyjęto postać Sokratesa Ksenofontowego (wg źródeł najmniej związanej z postawą kształcenia). We współczesnej refleksji dydaktycznej wymienia się wiele elementów, związanych z poglądami i przekonaniami tej postaci. Do głównych, tworzących fragmenty współczesnych koncepcji kształcenia filozoficznego, należy zaliczyć: 1. moralizm w koncepcji kształcenia: edukacja prowadzić ma do cnoty, rozumianej jako podstawa mądrości; postawa absolutyzmu moralnego wbrew nie tylko sofistom, ale i stoikom, i cynikom; 2. podstawy dla koncepcji nauczania etyki (modele, natura cnoty, istota postawy moralnej); 3. prezentowanie publicznej wizji edukacyjnej filozofii (w przeciwieństwie do wizji „prywatnych” np. Kartezjusza czy Kierkegaarda); 4. oparcie na racjonalnej metodzie kształcenia (paradygmat racjonalnego nauczania), określanej jako metoda sokratejska, z podkreśleniem znaczenia komunikacji werbalnej i stymulującej myślenie funkcji stawiania pytań i formułowania odpowiedzi; podstawa dla analitycznych koncepcji edukacji; 5. dobra koncepcja propedeutyki filozofii (np. klasyczny składnik wszelkich wstępów i wprowadzeń do filozofii, wykorzystywanie w modelu Lipmana edukacji filozoficznej dzieci); 6. silne wiązanie spekulacji filozoficznej z praktyką egzystencjalną (wręcz egzystencjalne zadanie filozofii), akcentowanie składnika personalnego (upodmiotowienie i spersonalizowanie refleksji, znaczenie uczucia, przeżycia i doświadczenia emocjonalnego, znaczenie pokory i godności), ugruntowanie doświadczenia egzystencjalnego na filozofii ponad procedurą rozumienia filozofii; 7. przykład odpowiedzialności i pragmatyzmu; wielość technik oddziaływania dydaktycznego (ironia i prowokacja, dociekliwość i krytyka, perswazja i ignorancja, metoda elenktyczna i gra indukcyjna).

Konsekwencje myśli edukacyjnej Sokratesa mogą prowadzić do pytań fundamentalnych: czy mądrość może być nauczana, czy w dyskursie filozoficznym mogą być przenoszone wartości? Czy wreszcie można traktować Sokratejską wizję funkcji filozofii jako dyscypliny uczącej człowieka jego samego? Jakie są perspektywy dalszego wykorzystania w dydaktyce tradycji sokratejskiej?

**Słowa kluczowe:** dydaktyka filozofii, edukacja sokratejska, metoda sokratejska.