



Celebration of Pedagogy. Symbolic Use of Space and Time in the Pedagogical Photos in 1960's Hungary

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Abstract. This study is based on the analysis of the visual corpus of Hungarian educational periodicals in the 1960s. The journals are: *Család és Iskola* (Family and School), *Gyermekünk* (Our Child), *Köznevelés* (Public Education), *Óvodai nevelés* (Nursing in the Kindergarten), *A Tanító* (Elementary School-Teacher), *A Tanító munkája* (Work of the Elementary School-Teacher) and *Úttörővezető* (Pioneer-Leader). The analysis needs an interdisciplinary approach and a mixing methodology of the traditional history of education, anthropology and iconography. I have made a database from the periodicals' visual sources, which contains about 4000 photographs. There are several images and narratives of children, schools and teachers in the corpus, with a complex relationship of the elements of worldviews in the background. In these images a dominant role was played by different stereotypes – the Hungarian educational research has not examined this field of pedagogy yet. The periodicals and photographs have different functions, related to many pedagogical discourses. One of the functions is to shape a group's identity by numerous visual representations, for example photos about the Teachers' Day. That day is a celebration and an important event to determine the self-concepts and outside images of the teachers. This day extends the borders of conventional pedagogy into a symbolic space and time. The teacher as a representative of the state is a formal role, a stereotype, connected with the building of the Parliament, the classroom and a specific celebration-time.

Keywords: history of education, iconography, anthropology, images of teachers, celebration

Introduction: theoretical background

There is a dynamic progress in the Hungarian educational sciences and the history of education, turning into the fields of anthropology. The representatives of the trend (for example Géczi 2006, 2007, 2008; Németh and Pukánszky 2004; Pukánszky 2001, 2006) consider the phenomena of schooling in a historic-sociological context, applying non-traditional methodology. The anthropological orientation is rooted in the Anglo-Saxon and the German pedagogy (to summarize, see: Kuklick 2008), with different methodologies and conceptions about society, science and culture. Naturally, every concept is strongly connected with variant notions of child, school and teacher – the latter is an important actor of the pedagogical world (Géczi 2004). This study is concerned with the visual imagery of teachers in 1960's Hungary.

Fieldwork, ethnography, local communities and cultural practice were the keywords in the foundation of American anthropology, which influenced the social sciences in France and in the UK. This kind of anthropology constructs binary opposites, like 'us' and 'they', to reflect and interpret the western civilization. Researchers create unique and special meanings by analyzing the activities of individuals and groups, which leads to a universal image of the human. In opposition to this, German anthropology draws the general *conditio humana*, with a strong philosophical and historical interest. The theoretical mentality is disposed to abstraction, and describes the development and genealogy of human thought and ideas (Wulf 1997).

In this essay, I would like to harmonize these two directions: I interpret the Teachers' Day symbolic space and time dimensions in a concrete historical-sociological and cultural context. We get multiple interpretations this way to select, organize and construct everyday life cultural meanings. Some of the researchers (like Wulf 2011) suggest this method too: we should elaborate the cultural-symbolic signs by empirical-sociological approaches.

Internal and physical images are very important in the history of educational anthropology: our knowledge about us, others and the world is constructed and transmitted by pictures, graphics, photographs, etc. Conception of the worldview includes mental imagery, expressive symbols, signs and practice, producing a network of cultural meanings grounded on the mutual linkage of images and its consumers (Wulf and Zirfas 2005). Western culture was established upon verbalism, we have not got so much experience about dealing with pictures and visual literacy (see Collier and Collier 1986). Up to now, several directions have been developed by studying images anthropologically (Pink 2009), some of these are useful tools for the history of education (Mietzner and Pilarczyk 2010). Teachers' Day as a celebration of a profession gives an opportunity to understand the figure of the formal educator deeper, with the anthropological ideas of space, time and feast. After this, I outline the historical reality of the educational policy in 1960's Hungary and the roles and stereotypes of the printed media.

Space, time and feast

Space and time provide the background of every feast – that is an axiomatic sentence. Without these coordinates we cannot visualize any human event or people. The ideas of space and time seem to be self-evident, but these are actually cultural constructions. “What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him, who asks, I don’t know” (Augustine 1995, 175). The famous quotation of Saint Augustine reflects to the problem of time, which we can expand to the idea of space, too. Since Kant, space and time have lost their self-evidence, and were transformed into subjective ideas with different meanings to us (Zerubavel 1976; zur Lippe 1997). Space and time are inseparable ideas – Bakhtin’s (1976) term of *chronotope* (first used in the relativity theory by Einstein) phrases this coherence. None of them exists on its own, categorization and separation are helping tools for orientation and partition of things. By the 21st century, many educational researches have been born to draw attention to the importance of these ideas – see the spatial turn, influenced by the architecture of schools, organization of spaces and the psychology of environment, or the consumption of time in sociological, economical and institutional dimensions (Bocsi 2009; Dúll 2009; Hercz and Sántha 2009; Kemnitz 2003; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Meleg 2005; Németh 2010).

The meaningful, existing space and time are simultaneously unique and repetitive, linear and circular. In the world of everyday life and activities there is an important role of the periodical cycling feast, which recalls men their origin. A feast is a primarily sacral event, which is tied to a definitive location and date (for Kerényi’s terminology of feast, see Bircsák 2007). Since 1952, the profession has celebrated Teacher’s Day on the first Sunday of June in Hungary (see Cabinet Council’s registers, edited by Vass 2006, 113). The feast has some old elements of traditional worldviews too – despite the declared socialist ideology. This Sunday actualizes and retains the imagery, renews and fixes the individual and collective cultural memory. Images of teachers in the photographs have dual meanings: they represent the persistent attributes of the universal teacher and reflect the contemporary reality in a given period.

Educational policy in 1960’s Hungary

The period’s starting and finishing dates signify symbolic events: from the Educational Act in 1961, to the 5th Pedagogical Congress in 1970. The decade can be characterized by various reforms, started from 1958, when the Hungarian Communist Party, called Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt, made a decision to reshape the educational system (see *MSZMP’s General Principles of Cultural Policy*, July 25, 1958; Vass and Ságvári 1973, 243–272). The government stated

a Curriculum Committee then to work out proposals for the reform processes (Sáska 2007, 180). The results manifested specific dichotomy: first of all, the Committee stressed the importance of the ideological struggle and training, secondly, the educational control wanted to undertake the tasks of modernization of the society and to configure the next generation's multi-faceted, up-to-date literacy. Progressive reform-attitude, professionalism on the one hand, central Party-direction and ideology on the other, were the reasons why Kelemen (2003) named the outcoming Educational Act a "pseudo" or "fake-reform". In other words: a utopia came into existence, such as voluntarism, foredoomed to failure. The law was prepared by the secretarial leadership of Valéria Benke (1958–1961), but when the Parliament passed the proposals on October 12, 1961, the minister had already been Pál Ilku (1961–1973) (Mann 2002, 95–96).

After 1961, secondary education became common and compulsory, school age raised up to the age of 16 and the school-system got differentiated – secondary grammar, trade, technical and 3-years vocational schools. The educational expansion was connected with the growth of the population, which was increased by approximately 361.000 people from 1960 to 1970 (Klinger 1992, 3). Conceived goals of the jurisdiction defined to bring the worlds of work and education together (see polytechnic, a.k.a. 5+1 training: five days of learning, one day of working, weekly), to underline the moral and socialist education. The achievements did not meet the requirements, so the policy corrected the Educational Law in 1965, in the fields of 5+1 training and secondary vocational schools, for example. Pál Bakonyi (quoted by Sáska 2007, 196), participant expert in these processes said in his retrospectives that in a broader context, the law fitted in a reform-tendency in the Eastern-Block, as Khrushchev said: "bring the school closer to life!"

Although the goals were not realized in their original forms, they affected many aspects of education positively – such as teacher-training (Ladányi 2008), selection and organization of curriculum, new syllabuses in 1963 and 1965 (Ballér 1994). New subjects emerged and supported the central purposes, like "Világnézetünk alapjai" ("Basis of our ideology") and "Honvédelmi ismeretek" ("National defence"). Professionalism influenced Hungarian pedagogy at that time: new associations were organized with less direct governmental leading, like Országos Pedagógiai Intézet (National Pedagogic Institute, 1962). Magyar Pedagógiai Társaság was reconstructed (Hungarian Association of Education, 1967), many scientific scopes flourished, for instance psychology (Szokolszky 2009), didactics, behaviourism, technology of teaching and programmed learning (Falus 1980). After 1965, elaborating a new educational policy began, covered with experts, but the propaganda of the Communist party repressed the interests of the profession (Pukánszky and Németh 1996). A symbolic event closed up the decade: the 5th Pedagogical Congress in 1970, for the first time after 1948, the year

of change into communism (Kelemen 2007). This year another important event happened: MSZMP (the Communist party) planned its annual, 10th Congress.

The decade starts with an Educational Act, in 1961, and it ends with a Congress, in 1970 – from this historical outline, we can draw the decade's liberal atmosphere in education, compared to the 1950's Hungary. Reform-experiments followed restitutions, with the fixed maintenance of the central direction and ideology. The interpretation of the images should take notice of the political context and the journals' publication mechanisms.

Media and stereotypes

Visual information was mediated mainly by the printed media at this time in Hungary – from Köpeczi's synthesis (1977, 28) we can find out that 8% of the farmer households had television in 1965, this percentage was 46% in the working, and 59% in the intellectual professions. It may be hypothesized that the most relevant mass media were radio and press at this time (80–100% of households were supplied by radio in 1965). Only the journals carried and spread visual contents widely, under the control of the State and the Communist Party (Kókay, Buzinkay and Murányi 1994, 216–217). The analyzed educational periodicals were managed by the Művelődésügyi Minisztérium (Ministry of Culture).

There were six educational journals with image-publications in this period, which can be subject of an anthropologic-iconographic study: *Gyermekünk* (Our Child, 1968–1970), *Köznevelés* (Public Education, 1960–1970), *Óvodai nevelés* (Nursing in the Kindergarten, 1960–1970), *A Tanító* (Elementary School-Teacher, 1963–1967), *A Tanító Munkája* (Work of the Elementary School-Teacher, 1968–1970) and *Úttörővezető* (Pioneer-Leader, 1960–1970). Some of them existed only for a few years; some had longer terms, as we can see from the dates. The full historical description of Hungarian journals is still lacking – this analysis will have to be interdisciplinary, adapting to the circumstances of the sources (Bernáth, Cserhalmi, Elek, Farkas, Földes, Horvát and Szigethy 2008, 29). The journals differed on the basis of audience, editing mechanism, concept of the photographs' applications and possible roles.

Család és Iskola (Family and School) and *Gyermekünk* (Our Child) were similar to a magazine, a paper with a lot of images, pictures and reports – the latter was published as an illustrated appendix of *Család és Iskola* (Family and School), from 1968 only *Gyermekünk* (Our Child) existed. Photographs had a primary role in the journal, which is shown by the number of the pictures, their central place, denomination of the photographers and pictures (names and titles). The relation between text and photos is just the opposite of the traditional one – usually the pictures have been only illustrations, but in these papers images

occupied central positions. The rest of the journals are more conventional: the images have additional, illustrative role, they supplement and explain the written words. The secondary education teachers' press, *Köznevelés* (Public Education) mediated particularly ministerial information to the broader public. The image-selection mechanism and editing practice of *Köznevelés* were inconstant and inconsequent during the period, in the middle of the decade there were only a few photos in the columns, but in opposition to this, at the beginning and at the end there were many. Changes in the editorial staff were a reason for this, but the question needs a wider study to explore. In the name of *Óvodai nevelés* (Nursing in Kindergarten) the editorship assigned the main topic of the journal, and the circle of the possible readers. Numerous pictures were published, without exact data – it was a routine that all authors of the images in a number were marked by 3–4 names, as a collective work. Titles are often absent as well. The next two periodicals (*A Tanító – The Elementary School-Teacher* and *A Tanító munkája – Work of the Elementary School-Teacher*) were based on the same principals; the first one was published from 1963 to 1968, the second one from 1968. Issues helped elementary school teachers regarding didactics and methodology, usually with an accurate image-selection and publication (names, titles included). *Úttörővezető* (Pioneer-Leader) represented the movement; it had the fewest photos, with only limited information about the photographers.

Educational press is an institution (Carvalho 2003) which disseminates a special knowledge and legitimates experts. It produces a group's identity (for example the teachers' identity) and the borders of the profession – this knowledge is a topic of this study. Education and pedagogy have got organized lately in the system of disciplines (Németh 2004), so the self-reflection and knowledge of this field gained much importance. Academic sciences always have professional communication and journals, which form the scholar community (Géczi 2005, 83–84). Different worldviews and anthropologies can be figured out from the writings and visual sources of these papers, behind the surface of the images (Géczi and Darvai 2010), by interpreting photographs. Recently the roles, meanings and existence of images have been questioned (for example, Ross and Lester 2011), their relations to narratives, group-symbols and different signs have been recognized. Messages with images are more powerful and direct for the perception than words or texts – but interpreting the former one is a verbal problem, with multiple, pluralistic semantics. Visual communicators (publishers, editors) often use stereotypes to transmit their messages, they clarify and simplify their intentions – these generalizations and expectations influence images of teachers as well. Visual thinking and communication (Moore and Dwyer 1994) utilize prejudices, self-concepts and outside images to create discourses about teachers and a collective mental imagery. Teachers' Day, the celebration got some visual conventions, references, symbolic meanings, therefore we called them stereotypes.

Celebration of pedagogy – education and society

The first photo stands for a typical situation: kindergarten teachers who won awards on the occasion of the feast can be seen in front of the Hungarian Parliament. Suits, flowers and location implicate the event's significance at the same time; these things are the recurring elements of a festivity. There are two different readings of this image, existing simultaneously. Before any explanation, it is necessary to make a previous remark. Worlds of education and pedagogy, dimensions of space and time have been checked only in formal-institutional frames yet, which is a comfortable way to analyze. The forthcoming pictures mean an extension, conversion from a formal to a non-formal sphere, into an outside educational environment. We can hardly find any photos like these in the corpus, teachers in civil roles are much more extraordinary. Teachers' identification on a picture needs some requisites (like blackboards, uniforms or teacher's desks) mainly referred to the formal educational classroom.



Photo 1. Óvodai nevelés, 1961/6, Cover I. (Unknown author)

State, power and authorities dominate the meanings of this picture. Behind the educators the building of the Hungarian Parliament rises, an important aspect which calls our attention to the fact that pedagogy appeared here in a political field. The three kindergarten teachers arrived to take over the medals on Teachers' Day ('Prominent Educators'), this is a concrete interpretation. It is obvious that the photograph does not only show this particular event – the composition of the image allows for two hypotheses (mentioned above).

According to a traditional idea, teachers have been the representatives of the government. Socialism centralized and submitted the profession to an ideological-political will and transmitted the ordinance to the local circumstances. All kinds of teachers (in kindergarten, elementary, secondary schools and colleges, universities) received their reputation and prestige from an underlying abstraction, the abstraction of the state. Their appreciated status manifested itself in the Education Law in 1961: “28. § The state receives the highest honours to the highly responsible working educators, for their results in the cultural revolution, in youth-education, in the framing of the future socialist generation” (Fragment from the III. Law in 1961. The Education System of People’s Republic of Hungary).

We can evaluate the cover from an opposite view as a proof of teachers’ emerging independence. I emphasize here the extension of the educational place – the educators occurred in this case in the public scene, a considerable factor of the society. The profession of the teachers could assert their interests more and more (Kelemen 2007). Dynamics of power, the pressure of the dominant ideology established a monolith system, but inside the system the actors had little or more freedom for their actions. The symbolic extension of the pedagogical space ended at the 5th Pedagogy Conference in 1970, when teachers sat on the benches of the Parliament, instead of the Members of Parliament (see Photo 2).

Participation in public affairs and the ruling of the country was a single section in the law: “Contribution of the society in the pedagogical work. 30. § Execution of the law’s aims is the task of the whole society: workers of the educational institutions, assigned ministries, factories, mass organizations and parent-teacher associations have to work together” (Fragment from the III. Law in 1961. The Education System of People’s Republic of Hungary).



Photo 2. A Tanító, 1970/10, page 3. (Unknown author)

The dual-approach of the teachers (employee of the state and professional, competent worker) expresses the theory of plural (or multiple) identities: our self-understanding always depends on the adequate situation and activities (Kahane 2009). We can produce other narratives from the corpus, beyond the narrative of the power. The reasons for this are: first, narration, as a tradition, is inevitable in the history of education, second, the visual research is based on several interpretations of the same facts (Rury 2006; White 1973). Meanings of pictures are necessarily multi-layered, because we can only translate them from the direction of our present and our questions, which is the starting position of Gadamerian hermeneutics, as well. If we question the relations of photographs and reality, we might not achieve our aims, because the pictures do not reflect or map directly the world of entities. It is much more interesting to inquire the images' functions, modes of their reception and usage. The education is a human activity which is constituted by everyday life stories, situations, and these narratives are linked to politics, economy and culture (Levinson 2000). One of the typical narratives reflects the connections of power and identity. The parliament is a symbolic space, where the individuals are integrated in a collective sameness: the nation. There are only few examples in the photographs, which operate national or direct ideological symbols – the images usually stress the universal elements of education. School acts as an integrative function, like the Parliament, as the Law stated: "School is based on the socialist worldview and morals. It has to train real patriots, ethical citizens, who love the country and the people of the country from their heart; who serve the cases of socialism, peace, and brotherhood of people; who construct and protect People's Republic" (Fragment from the III. Law in 1961. The Education System of People's Republic of Hungary).



Photo 3. Óvodai nevelés, 1967/6–7, page 207. (Unknown author)

Another important original function of teachers and schools is nation-building by mass education. This idea was conjugated with ideological internationalism in the socialist era: the Nation and the Soviet Block were in dialectical connection, but the internationalist attitude often oppressed the patriotism. There are other examples of the individual and collective identity put together in a figure: the profession of pedagogy and the honoured, representative kindergarten teachers. It is very rare to find the name of a given teacher in the educational journals in the 1960s – except the reports about Teachers' Days. The pageant was the canonized version to show the prize-winner educators (see Photo 3).

The status and location are substantial – as the titles (supervisor, senior kindergarten teacher, and head of postgraduate courses) and names of institutions (all over the country) showed. The homogenous clothing symbolizes the unity and power of the profession – an opposite trend besides individualization, at the same time. The figures stand for themselves and every teacher (the duality of presentation and representation), which underlines the situation's scenical character. Deep inside, the image includes a festive ritual which was repeated for a long time, its composition and order stabilized and supported the education system (Wulf 2004). Culture theory speaks in the same sense about "everyday life's stages" (Niedermüller 1994): the teacher has lived through this performance day by day, but the stage act is more conscious and reflective on the images. The feasts are constant and trustworthy – my last example shows a classic type of Teachers' Day-pictures.

Celebration of pedagogy – teacher and child

We can see a trivial scene here, children give flowers to their female teacher – acknowledgement is a familiar image in the history of schooling. The picture contains an axiomatic, tacit knowledge, which determines the attendants' possible types of behaviour, words, overall the whole situation, and discredits the non-accepted cultural practices (Anderson-Levitt 2006). Every viewer and participant knew this pragmatical epistemology, a non-discursive knowledge – how to give and take a gift, how to dress on this occasion, etc. Bourdieu (quoted by Stafford 2002, 272) called it *habitat* (or *habitus*), which is a result of an experimental, senseless learning. Anthropology interprets everyday images from a distant position, outside the situation, utilizing the researchers' own experiences (Pink 2009). Due to this attitude, the idea of culture has expanded and it consists of various fields, several modes of working, communication and lifestyle, or the traditionally analyzed arts (Wulf 2011).

Many similarities and differences can be found between the cover of *Köznevelés* (Public Education) and the former ones. The context – visual presentation of Teachers' Day – creates the basis on which we are able to compare the images.

Time-frames are the same, but spatial circumstances are diverse: politics, society, public affairs, and classroom. Spatial organisations and contexts effect different teacher roles: representative of the government, lobbyist, and professionals; but here: preceptor in a community. The children's appearance creates the most important discrepancy: they are quiet observers of the scene. Interactions express subordination, the solemnity of the moment, and mutual respect. This photograph is full of emotion (first of all, love), which is not so typical in the other three photos.



Photo 4. Greetings to our Readers on the occasion of Teachers' Day.
Köznevelés, 1970/10, Cover IV. (Unknown author)

The problems of the gendered teacher (Cammack and Phillips 2002) and the debate about feminine professions should be an interesting research-field – my chosen examples are all females, too. The Teachers' Day-corpus contains thirty pictures, among which there are four portrays of male teachers, twelve of them present only female teachers, and the rest of the images are 'co-educated' and female-orientated. Status inconsistency in sociology is a very useful term in this aspect. It describes that between women's qualification and position (salary) a special bias has existed (Fényes 2010). Against the proclaimed equality, women have got less payment and less prestige than men in the same division. It is a widely known fact that women are over-represented in the professions of kindergarten and elementary teachers – because of this, these professions have got loss of prestige and autonomy. Old worldview elements incorporated in everyday practices – two examples: flowers are traditional presents for women; the end of the school year coincides with fruiting. In 1994, UNESCO established the date of Teachers' Day worldwide on the 5th of October, but the Hungarian Pedagogical custom observed the celebration in the early summer.

Conclusions

We create cultural meanings in our heads or during common activities, and sometimes these meanings are manifested in different material works – for instance, in a photograph (Anderson-Levitt 2006, 286–288). The interpretation of a photo depends on either the researcher's point of view, or the narratives constructed by us.

Hungarian history of education has been renewed since the 1990s, complemented by iconography and anthropology. Tibor Péter, Nagy (1991) assigned two new, interdisciplinary ways to investigations, beside the conventional historical-philosophical direction. The first one is the history of pedagogical thought, the second is educational policy in a broader sense – my analysis develops both of them. I agree with Tenorth's (2000, 27) statements that we should not write a linear, evolutionary story of education, or verify an ideology in the name of some wanted ideals. There are several possible goals of the history of education, instead of the progressive narrative and the voluntarist model: one is to reveal the socio-historical factors in the past, which determined the world of pedagogy and education. With this help, we can better understand the complex structures and processes, and their expressed forms, the images. The pattern of Teachers' Day is a good example for studying these questions, and for drawing the roles of stereotypes and worldviews in the identifying mechanisms.

On the grounds of my hypothesis, we can draw a specific worldview about the socialist pedagogy in Hungary. In this worldview there are several old and some new elements. Teachers' Day celebrations reproduce the traditional professorial roles and the new functions of the teachers in the public and political life. The educational expansion was a main tendency in the 1960s, underlined by the legislation and policy. The aspect of corporate being (guaranteed by pioneers, parent-teacher associations, camps, and so on) determinate the reflections about the children's upbringing, schooling and the profession of educationalists and teachers in this era. The socialist type of man lived in multiple communes, like local organizations, profession, nation and the most important: its class, which connected the person to the whole world, by the idea of internationalism.

There were other directions of the above mentioned expansion: history and profession pointed out these. Socialist pedagogy created its past, the progressive and Marxist development of the pedagogical thoughts. Teachers' Day was a symbolic event, it legitimized socialist pedagogy and its representatives. It provided prestige to the profession – the new associations, professional interests and scientific effects emphasized the importance of education and the central position of teachers in the new society. The shaping of socialism grounded on old elements of worldviews, too; think about the habit of giving presents, flowers, and the idea of motherhood, thanks to the domination of women

teachers in kindergartens and elementary schools. Old and new, universal and concrete characteristics of pedagogy and teachers require a complex approach and a broader context. The image of the teacher has been a mental and visual spectacle – this statement is valid to the pictures of schools, children and parents as well. Education has belonged to the anthropological dimensions of mankind in different social-historical circumstances. Analyzing this phenomenon is an important task of the history of education.

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