TALKS ON EDUCATION, ART, AND PHILOSOPHY

Editors

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Vernon Series in Education



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Editorial

When science is the subject matter, what image comes to your minds? Probably such written documents as books, journals, theses, reports... However, images could be on the top when considered in specific to social sciences. So be it, is it possible to consider conducting a research in social sciences only by reading and writing? Actually, it is quite obvious that the phenomenon what is called as social science, and even the philosophy, which sets the ground for many sciences, is not just a reading and writing action; indeed, it has a further and deeper meaning.

One of the scholars that could come to minds of individuals who are interested in philosophy is Socrates. Well then, does Socrates have a written book? As is known, Socrates considers philosophy as an oral action which is later called as maieutic. If Plato did not put down Socrates' ideas on paper, would you hear about Socrates? Without any doubt, oral discussions in academic environments are of great importance for science to advance and enrich. Hence, it is rather fundamental to put such oral discussions in writing for transferring the knowledge, increasing its accessibility, and providing the reproduction process. In this sense, through this current book, it is aimed to put in writing the oral discussions on the subjects of philosophy, education, arts, and science at 2nd International Symposium on Philosophy, Education, Arts and History of Science, and hereby enable many scholars to gain access to these discussions.

The main theme of the 2nd International Symposium on Philosophy, Education, Arts and History of Science is "unity of knowledge and humanity." This current theme both lays emphasis on the accumulation of knowledge of the past and intends to create a platform for today's people so that they would be able to discuss their problems in a scientific background. Based on this point of view, many studies from various disciplines were gathered in the same academic platform. In this way, it was aimed to create a free environment which could contribute to eliminate scientific alienation and prejudices towards different disciplines.

Undoubtedly, individuals who can reach and participate in a symposium could benefit from its contributions at the uttermost. What is more, encountering with different ideas during such scholarly meetings might have a role in changing your opinions. Unfortunately, it is not possible for every single scholar interested in such events to take part in such events. Therefore, post-

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conference publications like abstract books or proceedings books are as much important as conferences in terms of the accumulation of knowledge and reproduction process. In this regard, the main purpose of this current book is to enable some of the studies presented in the symposium to be reached by scholars interested in the related subjects taking place within the scope of the book.

In the very first chapter, *Kursad Yilmaz* discusses teaching profession with regards to professionalism and sacredness. Based on some international indicators, the author states that excessively centralized structure of Turkish Education system is an obstacle for teacher autonomy. He concludes that the attribution of sacredness to teaching has a negative influence on the professionalism of teaching profession.

The second chapter by *Necdet Aykac, Selcuk Atik, Hilal Bilgin* and *Gulsen Ozturk Yurtseven* focuses on foreign experts' opinions about Turkish Education system. Foreign experts' opinions are examined through four categories which are elementary education, vocational education, higher education, and lastly teacher training. According to the authors, foreign experts' opinions about Turkish education system are associated with problems related to the structure of the system and different stages of schooling. However, it is claimed by the authors that some suggestions by foreign experts have been put into practice whereas some of them have not been utilized properly, which has given rise to serious problems for Turkish education system.

Vural Hosgorur, in the third chapter, deals with the repercussions of Turkish education policies. It is stated by the author that recent education policies in Turkey have created some improvements in education and training, but some goals have been ignored. It is concluded that the policies of the government do increase the inequalities among different schools and regions.

In the fourth chapter of our book, we have given place to a current debate on the philosophy of science. Focusing on the discussion by Larry Laudan and Jarrett Leplin, *Pakize Arikan Sandikcioglu* has provoked a provocative debate on the underestimation of scientific theories by emphasizing the concept of scientific reality. It is not possible to claim that as well as all the problems discussed in the field of philosophy, the problem of underestimation of scientific theories has been finally solved. As a result, Arikan's work indicates that if the arguments of Laudan and Leplin cannot be applied to total or global theories, then the missing determination will be important as a current field of discussion in the philosophical scene.

Undoubtedly, art can be regarded as an act on its own, but the discussion of art's social structure and its relation to institutions can also be considered as an inspirational scientific production process. The fifth chapter by *Emre Savut*

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and *Levent Yilmaz* examines the relationship between political power and state theatres in Turkey. The authors suggest that theater in Turkey has been a mechanism in which political power has demanded to keep under its control through many years. One of the remarkable conclusions of the study is that the power of the theater has been effectively utilized at the point of adoption of the new regime by the masses and the disappearance of the traces of the old regime.

The relationship between society and art which has been discussed through theater in the previous chapter has been examined in terms of the relationship between the individual and art in the sixth chapter. *Reva Boynukalin*'s work, which focuses on the Automatism movement, has led to a debate focusing on how art and psychology could be combined. *Boynukalin*, finding out the fascination of the art's evocation within the frame of automatism movement, demonstrates readers how art could be an exciting experience with metaphors.

The last chapter of the book by *Deniz Kundakci* intends to make a connection between meliorism and other conceptual themes like "optimism" and "messianism". The author also aims to identify the reflections of this concept on the contemporary debates. According to the author, being literally an explanatory and authentic part of the future vision of pragmatism, meliorism continues to exist as a provocative promise in social philosophy.

We hereby express our sincere thanks to all the authors for their invaluable contributions. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude and profound thanks to *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yahya Altinkurt* for his inestimable contributions. Hopefully, reading this work will be an inspirational experience for all readers.

Ilker Aysel, PhD Yilmaz Ilker Yorulmaz, MA Caglar Kaya, MA

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List of Acronyms

ANAP	Anavatan Partisi [Homeland Party]
CGP	Cumhuriyetci Guven Partisi [Republician Trust Party]
CHP	Cumhuriyetci Halk Partisi [Republican People's Party]
DSP	Demokratik Sol Parti [Democratic Left Party]
DTCF	Dil Tarih Cografya Fakultesi [Faculty of Language, History and Geography]
DYP	Dogruyol Partisi [True Path Party]
EARGED	Education Research and Development Department
FATIH	Firsatlari Artirma ve Teknolojiyi Iyilestirme Hareketi [Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MC	Milliyetci Cephe [Nationalist Front]
MEB	Milli Egitim Bakanligi [Ministry of National Education]
MEGEP	Mesleki Egitim ve Ogretim Sistemini Guclendirme Projesi [Project of Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System]
MHP	Milliyetci Hareket Partisi [Nationalist Movement Party]
MSP	Milli Selamet Partisi [National Salvation Party]
SHP	Sosyal Demokrat Halkci Parti [Social Democratic Populist Party]
TBMM	Turkiye Buyuk Millet Meclisi [Turkish Grand National Assembly]
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TOTSIS	Turkiye Opera Tiyatro ve Yardimci Iscileri Sendikasi [Turkish Opera Theater and Auxilary Workers' Union]
TUSAK	Turkiye Sanat Kurumu [Art Institution of Turkey]
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Chapter 1

Teaching: A Profession between Sacredness and Professionalism

Kursad Yilmaz¹

Introduction

Teaching has always been a profession which has been given a great deal of importance in Turkey due to its significance for the future of the individual, Turkish society and the country as a whole, and also for its role in perpetuating social change. Regarded as the most reputable profession in the world, teaching is a concept which has been produced from the common ground of such terms as learning, instruction, learner, and instructor. The profession, which began its historical development process with babysitting, was a job originally performed by slaves and in time transformed into a profession conducted by religious functionaries and then later by teachers. Despite experiencing various transformations since ancient times, teaching has been carrying on its existence as a professional field and has also maintained its importance (Yilmaz & Altinkurt, 2014).

In order to demonstrate the importance given to the teaching profession, some stereotypical expressions are utilized. These expressions include certain values and they are approved without thought among both the individuals who conduct the profession and those who benefit from the profession. The value attributed to the teaching profession in these stereotyped expressions is sacredness. In Turkey, the emphasis on the sacredness of the teaching profession has been employed for a long time. Depending on the historical background of Turkey, there have been various types of teachers at different times and teaching is a profession which is generally both respected and afforded a significant level of importance. While it was a profession conducted mostly by religious functionaries in the Seljuk and Ottoman Empire, the word "master" (the emphasis of masters' army in II. Constitutionalism) was used later. However, it can be stated that in the first years of the Republic of Turkey, the notion of the modern teacher, who would train the community and the rising generation in accordance with the purpose and principles of the newly

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established state arose; this lasted until the 1980's, after which the term idealist teacher was seen and later on a teacher model whose practical aspect has been increasing. No matter what the time period, the teacher has always been given a great deal of importance in Turkish society. Nevertheless, it is quite hard to predicate that the importance given to teachers is also attributed to the profession of teacher training.

It is agreed that, in Turkey, teacher training applications began with the founding of Darulmuallimin in 1848. Darulmuallimin was the boys' school of teaching which was active between 1848 and 1924. Additionally, there was also Dârulmuallimât, the girls' school of teaching, which was in operation from 1870 to 1924. In this sense, it can be asserted that Turkey has a rooted teacher training background. However, in spite of this background, an institutionalized teacher training system could not be constituted, hence over the course of time, many different and authentic models have been experienced. For instance, in the Village Institutes Model, which was an authentic model, it was aimed to modernize the rural villagers and teachers were trained with this aim. In the Village Institutes, teachers were trained as dedicated, selfsacrificing and skillful by imposing on them a specific mission. Their main purpose was to serve the country. Furthermore, the report prepared by John Dewey for the Turkish education system had a great influence on the foundation of the Village Institutes. As a matter of fact, it is possible to observe the direct reflections of this report on the foundation rationale and basis of the institutes (Altunya, 2000, 2005).

Afterwards, in Turkey many different applications regarding teacher training have been experienced. In 1982, faculties of education were founded and teacher training was brought into the higher education system. However, at the present time teachers are trained through faculties of education, pedagogical formation programs and also through schools of physical education and sports. Moreover, some regulations have been introduced and curriculums and courses updated for teacher training from time to time. After the regulation changes of 1997, the teaching profession has been dealt with as a mechanical-technical process. Even though Turkey has a quite rooted and established teacher training background, matters such as the quality of undergraduate programs in the faculties of education, application styles of pedagogical formation programs and religious culture and moral knowledge of teachers being trained in the faculties of theology have been consistently discussed. Although, at the national level, there are no scientific studies, researches or reports concerning qualified teachers not being able to be trained in Turkey, discussions concerning teacher training have always remained on the agenda. One of these discussions relates to the status and professionalization of teaching. In contemporary education systems, the

emphasis placed on the professionalism of teachers has been steadily increasing; however, in Turkey teaching is still considered to be aligned more with its sacredness. In this context, the teaching profession is regarded as a profession which is somewhere between sacredness and professionalism because there has always been this conflict between the notions of a "sacred profession," resulting from the meaning ascribed to the profession, and the expectation that the job must be carried out with professionalism.

In the modern education systems, so as to dispose teacher authority, sacredness is referred to teachers and this condition can be regarded as normal. In this way, an idealist and strong teacher type has been created. However, especially in recent years, the emphasis that teaching is a professional job has progressively increased. On the one hand, teachers are trained with the attribution of sacredness in the Turkish education system; but on the other hand, they are expected to perform their job in a professional way. If teaching is a specialized profession bearing on a specific education and fund of knowledge, then the question arises as to how it can be both sacred and professional? The aim of this current study, therefore, is to perform an analysis regarding this mixed perception.

Teaching as a Profession between Sacredness and Professionalism

Sacred can be defined as:

Arising or supposed to arise a strong religious esteem, holy, sainted; the one who is loved so much to be idolized or die on his way, holy, sainted, blessed; somebody or something that should not be degenerated, harmed or objected, the one to be coddled. (TDK Turkish Dictionary, 2016)

As can be deduced from the dictionary definition, sacredness is a concept that is more concerned with religion. Even though sacredness is a term related to religion, the teaching profession is usually associated with sacredness in Turkey. Especially, in conversations at formal ceremonies, it is often underlined as such. The following expressions are examples of this:

For forty years, I would be a slave of the one who taught me one letter [Hz. Ali].

Teachers: the new generation will be your devotion [M. Kemal Ataturk]. The ones who will save the nations are only the teachers [M. Kemal Ataturk].

Teacher is holy as a mother. Teacher is holy as a father [Ali Riza Binboga – The First Teacher Song].

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The assurance of our national unification and cooperation is teachers [Anonymous].

Such associations are not only used in Turkey, but also in many countries with different yet similar expressions:

Everything in the world can be valued, but the devotion of teacher cannot be appraised [Socrates].

I do not know anything on earth more honorable than teaching [Diogenes].

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops [Henry Adams].

Do not even step on the shadow of a teacher [South Korean proverb].

As can be inferred from these statements, the emotional aspect of the teaching profession is stressed by the attribution of sacredness. Therefore, it can be commonly asserted that teaching cannot be conducted without loving it and also that teachers should become role models. In contemporary education systems, the attribution of sacredness gives the notion that teachers are the masters of knowledge; guardians of the classroom, and by this way the authority of teachers is empowered. According to this opinion, teaching is a sacred profession and those performing it are required to set their hearts to their profession because all other occupational groups are in fact trained by teachers. Moreover, the progress and development of countries is substantially attached to training teachers satisfactorily. Even in recent years, the training of moral children has been devolved from families and the job assigned to teachers. Along with applications known as values education, teachers are expected to train children morally in a way to sustain their sacredness. Teaching is so sacred that it stands for wiping away a tiny child's tears and gathering around one's students like a parent. It also means sharing knowledge with students and guiding them properly. Indeed, teachers are the masters of knowledge. This point of view can be regarded as the perception of traditional professionalism and specialized field knowledge is stressed more here.

Teachers in Turkey have been provided with quite important roles in the contemporary education system, as constituted with the 1923 establishment of the Republic of Turkey. Teachers are responsible for training the community and the rising generation in accordance with the purpose and principles of the newly established state. Within this context, in the early years of the Republic, teachers were expected to be pioneers of a new alternation movement. As a result, an idealist and strong teacher type was created. However, in today's world this idealist teacher type has evolved into an operative teacher who prepares students for exams. Moreover, the ideal has given way to the

earning of more money and to have students correctly solve more test questions.

It is not possible to consider this alternation independently from worldwide neo-liberal educational policies. This situation has also reflected on the faculties of education, where not only the sacredness of teaching has been emphasized, but also pre-service teachers have been trained as operators who make students solve more questions. Especially the educational reforms of 1997 caused the technical aspects of teaching to be taken to fore. Teachers are trained in a way to operate more than they are to think. This condition is rather related to "New Perception of Professionalism." Teachers, who are formed in the basis of this new perception of professionalism, are directed to operating more than they are to thinking. The new teacher has based the experiences at school on teaching much more than learning. In this sense, teachers are motivated to attain competences and new abilities more than values and ethics (Maguire, 2002). Today, increasing teacher quality is regarded as one of the fundamental factors determining student achievement and many studies regarding the professionalization of teachers.

Teaching as a Professional Job

Professional is defined as "a person performing a job in order to derive a profit" (TDK, 2016). Besides, professionalism refers to how much individuals or groups consisting of individuals are compatible with the features expected from them due to their jobs (Lee, 1981). In a general sense, professionalism can be described as an individual's taking responsibility for his professional development and progress. Professional jobs have basically five characteristic features (Tobias & Baffert, 2010):

- 1. Field of specialization based on knowledge is obtained through academic study.
- 2. Standards of the professional application are determined by a professional organization.
- 3. In order to carry out the profession, testing, controlling the competence continuously and improvement is required.
- 4. Its social status and economic return is relatively high.
- 5. There is independence and autonomy to some extent in carrying out the profession.

As can be seen, professionalism brings forward a certain number of competences which teachers are required to possess. These competences of teachers are measured with standard tests applied to students especially in the recent years and accordingly students are classified, ranged or even labeled. Standardized and centralized examinations are the best instruments for this. In the application of these instruments, it can be observed that the emphasis on the

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