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CHAPTER 3

EDUCATION WITHOUT A FACE IN THE AGE OF EXISTENTIAL DEFICIT: HOW GLOBALIZATION, POST-TRUTH, AND THE POLITICS OF MEANINGLESSNESS DEHUMANIZE PEDAGOGY

ABSTRACT

This chapter investigates the existential crisis of contemporary education, emphasizing how globalization, the culture of post-truth, and technocratic discourse contribute to the erosion of human dignity and subjectivity in pedagogy. Despite declarations of placing "the human at the center", education increasingly reduces the learner to a set of functions, competencies, or indicators, resulting in alienation and loss of authentic presence. Drawing on philosophical perspectives from Byung-Chul Han, Martha Nussbaum, Levinas, Foucault, Ricoeur, Buber, and others, the text critically analyzes how managerial language, global rankings, and efficiency-driven reforms depersonalize both teachers and students. The chapter introduces the concepts of "trauma of misrecognition" and "pedagogy of disconnection", highlighting the psychological and ethical consequences of systemic neglect of the individual. As a response, it proposes a linguistic and ethical reconstruction of pedagogy through a "culture of dignity", where words regain their humanizing power, and education is redefined as a space of recognition, presence, and dialogical trust. Ultimately, the chapter argues that restoring language, dignity, and listening as central elements of education is essential for countering existential fragmentation and reclaiming the face of pedagogy.

KEYWORDS

Education, pedagogy, globalization, post-truth, dignity, technocratic discourse, recognition, alienation.

3.1 DIAGNOSIS OF LOSS

INTRODUCTION: EDUCATION THAT HAS LOST ITS HUMAN TOUCH

We live in a time when education has found itself at the epicentre of global change — not only technological, economic or political, but above all anthropological. It still functions, reforms,

digitises, reports – but at the same time loses its ability to see the human being, hear their requests, respond to their existential challenges. In an era of radical civilisational upheavals – war, climate change, pandemics, algorithmisation of thinking – education, instead of being a response to anxiety and fragmentation, is increasingly becoming yet another tool for managing instability.

This sense of loss begins at the level of language. Educational discourse is saturated with terms such as "human capital", "resource provision", "staff efficiency", "knowledge platform", and "education quality management". These formulas are not just stylistic conveniences, but linguistic markers of the loss of a humanistic perspective. A language that thinks of education as a market, people as carriers of competencies, and learning as a certification process excludes the subject of dignity from the pedagogical space [1].

Under the slogans of reform, innovation, and digital transformation, we see not an update of the content of education, but a gradual reduction of the human being to an indicator function. They must "meet requirements", "show results", and "adapt to change". But where is the freedom to think in this? Where is the place for doubt, silence, ethical search, affect? As B.-C. Han notes, in modern productivity culture, "fatigue of being oneself" prevails, and education is increasingly becoming not a space of liberation, but an institution of loss of subjectivity [2].

Against this backdrop, a new anomaly is emerging: a person is physically present in education but ontologically absent. They may have access to knowledge but lose their sense of meaning; they may receive grades but not experience dignity as recognition. This gives rise to the phenomenon of cognitive simulation: learning continues, but without internal growth. All this creates a new pedagogical reality, which would be more accurately called post-education – that is, one that has lost the ability to keep the person at the centre.

This process has clear political dynamics. Despite its promise of equality, solidarity and progress, the globalisation of education often turns out to be an architecture of depersonalisation. International rankings, the unification of standards, the managerial logic of universities and ministries – all this produces a model where local ethical contexts, vulnerability and identity are marginalised. Reform becomes a self-sufficient goal, not always taking into account the kind of person it shapes. As a result, educational policy loses its ethical texture, becoming mechanical, fragmented, and devoid of empathy [3].

No less dangerous is the influence of post-truth culture on the educational ecosystem. Today, it is increasingly difficult to maintain a space for critical conversation if it is not administratively or ideologically beneficial. Education that is incapable of telling the truth – about inequality, psychological exhaustion, value disorientation – turns into a simulation of thinking. In an era when truth itself has become the subject of political bargaining, the educational process risks becoming not an intellectual encounter, but a ritual of formal presence without moral weight [4].

But the key challenge lies even deeper than that. It lies in the existential deficit that has become a structural feature of educational existence. Young people who have lived through a pandemic, war, and information collapse are living with the experience of a cancelled future. When the horizon is uncertain, when planetary threats seem insurmountable, when technology is advancing

faster than ethics, there is a demand not for competence, but for existential support. And this is where education is often powerless: it does not offer answers, does not provide a meaningful framework, does not support people in their moments of anxiety. And that is why dignity becomes not a metaphor, but a practical answer [5].

As M. Nussbaum points out, a democratic society cannot exist without education that fosters emotional literacy, ethical sensitivity, empathy and critical thinking. Education without dignity is education without democracy. Conversely, education in which dignity is not a slogan but a structure of interaction is a space in which freedom is born [6].

This section is not just a critical caveat. It is a manifesto for the return of the human being to the educational perspective. We will show how *the logic of globalisation, the language of instrumentalism, the culture of post-truth and existential fragmentation* have led to a profound loss of the subject in education. At the same time, we will show how the methodology of the culture of dignity can become the architecture of the ethical reconstruction of education, where every word, every gesture, every structure returns the main content of the educational space – the human being.

We no longer live in an era where pedagogy is simply the transmission of knowledge. We live in an era when the question "Why teach?" is increasingly left unanswered. The point of disappearance of meaning is not in the lack of technology, but in the deficit of presence, reciprocity and the meaning of the common "we". It is this existential vacuum that is the main challenge of modern education.

We are trying to reform forms, forgetting the fundamental: we have lost the language that is capable of recognising the other. As a result, we have lost our identity: as students, teachers, and as a system. Words have become an interface rather than an address. Rules have become a function rather than an agreement. Trust has become a product rather than a relationship. We do not speak – we function.

In this study, we do not just criticise. We are mapping the way back: from depersonalisation to vision, from linguistic amnesia to words that recognise, from institutional automatism to human presence. We will talk about the physicality of dignity, the language of silence, the neuropsychology of trust, the teacher as a bearer of vulnerability and strength at the same time. This text is an attempt not to reform education, but to bring it back to life.

EDUCATION WITHOUT FACES: HOW GLOBALISATION HAS ERASED THE HUMAN BEING FROM PEDAGOGY

There is an alarming paradox: at a time when the global educational community declares "the human being at the centre", the human being itself is absent as a living presence in educational policy, pedagogical language, and the structure of educational experience. It has been displaced, delegitimised, replaced by functionality, roles, and indicators. Pedagogy is ceasing to be the art of shaping consciousness and increasingly resembles the logistics of servicing productive bodies, where the subject loses their voice and thinking loses its right to doubt.

This is not a coincidence or linguistic inaccuracy – it is a symptom of globalised logic, which transforms education in the image of the market. The unification of standards, dependence on international ratings, the dominance of English-language formats and bureaucratic hyper-control – all this leaves no room for anything else, for anything untranslatable, for anything affective. And if education is subordinated to global economies, then humanity in it becomes a surplus that cannot be monetised or ranked [7]. Instead of a student, there is a client. Instead of a teacher, there is a provider. Instead of knowledge, there is an educational product. These transformations of language are not neutral.

They recode the very essence of the pedagogical experience, reducing it to instruction and transaction. But there is an even subtler disappearance, less noticeable but more destructive. This is the linguistic blindness of education. We no longer know what to call those we teach. Between "pupil", "student", "user", and "client", the face is lost – not just an image, but an ontological identity. Once language loses its ability to address, it loses its ability to recognise. And then pedagogy turns into a system of neutral detachment, in which no one sees anyone anymore – only processes, products, data.

In this sense, depersonalisation is not only a political effect but also a semiotic defeat. A system that has no language to denote dignity becomes a system that reproduces its absence. That is why it is important not only to criticise the reform but also to reformulate its discourse, to give it words capable of saying: I see you.

As W. Welsh notes, the language of education has become technological, and pedagogy itself has become "post-anthropic" [7]. We no longer ask "What is a dignified person?", we ask "Does he or she meet market expectations?"

This shift has profound psychological consequences. Students deprived of the right to make mistakes, to search, to feel anxiety, lose the ability to form an authentic inner "I". Instead, they construct an adaptive "I-competitor", shaped by the logic of external verification. As a result, we do not form a subject, we cultivate a cognitively functional shell that has nothing to do with empathy, dignity or responsibility for the future [8].

At a deeper level, this forms a pedagogy of alienation. Between the student and the teacher there is a contract, between thinking and the programme there is a template, between dialogue and the system there is a protocol. Education becomes silent not because it does not speak, but because it no longer listens. And this is the moment when the face disappears. As Levinas emphasises, true ethics begins when I encounter the face of another [9]. But how can I encounter what the system has learned not to see?

No less destructive is the influence of administrative metalanguage, which substitutes meanings: "load" instead of "interaction", "contingent" instead of "community", "quality" as a digital abstraction without questions of dignity or freedom. The language of educational documents has become the grammar of objectification, in which the subject is transformed into an articulated code. This is no longer just functionalism – it is the semiotic erasure of humanity [10].

Such language not only reproduces structures of power – it constructs alienation as the norm. The teacher does not think about trust, he thinks about documentation. The student does

not talk about anxiety because there is no word in the system with which to articulate it. And this is where language loses its humanistic function – it is no longer recognition, it is control, verification, alienation.

It is also important to pay attention to the affective disorientation produced by such an educational structure. When students do not see that their experience is valuable, when teachers are no longer a presence but merely a duty, an affective void arises that absorbs all motivation. People no longer want to learn – not because of laziness, but because they are not heard as subjects of pain and hope [11].

Globalisation, therefore, has not only erased cultural specificity – it has unified silence. What was once the ethical face of education – care, attentiveness, dialogue – has now been replaced by format, deadlines, and electronic chains of control. And that is why there is a need for not a cosmetic but an ontological reform of pedagogy: not about tools, but about encounter. Not about competence, but about dignity. Not about management, but about presence.

As S. Krymsky writes, education without a sense of spiritual continuity, without a common horizon, without a language of coexistence, becomes a means of shaping a person without tradition, without a face, without a heart [12]. And so we must ask ourselves: what do we lose when we are no longer able to say to a student, "*I see you*"? And what will we gain if we dare to say it, despite all the institutional inertia?

But perhaps the deepest loss we have experienced is the loss of the word that recognises. Not the word that informs, not the word that evaluates, but the word that addresses. Because pedagogy begins not with reform, but with speech in which the other feels: "you are". And if we really want to turn our faces back to education, we must begin by restoring dignity to speech.

More on this later. About words that do not command, but listen. About silence that is not emptiness, but trust. About language that is capable of saying: I see you.

POST-TRUTH AND THE PEDAGOGY OF DISCONNECTION

"To think does not mean to have thoughts. It means to be accountable to yourself and the world for what you believe to be true." (S. Krymsky).

We live in an age when truth itself has become vulnerable. Post-truth is not just a political or media strategy, it is an ontological event in which trust, context and responsibility are disintegrating. In the field of education, this collapse takes on a particularly dangerous form – the pedagogy of disconnection, where knowledge loses its ethical quality and teachers lose their ability to be conduits of unifying truth.

Education in the post-truth era does not directly deny truth – it dissolves it into an infinity of opinions, impressions and subjective positions. Everything has a right to exist, but nothing has power. In this situation, instead of seeking truth, students seek convenient interpretations, and teachers, in order not to be accused of "forcing truth", hide their intellectual position behind

neutrality. This creates a new form of disconnection: a gap between knowledge and value, between words and reality, between education and life [13].

In such conditions, silence becomes the pedagogical norm. Not silence as depth, but silence as avoidance. The teacher does not dare to call war war, contempt humiliation, populism lies. And the student does not demand the truth because he no longer believes that truth is possible at all. This gives rise to affective amnesia – an emotional habit of not seeing reality in order not to suffer, not to take risks, not to be weak. Thus, the educational space is filled with forms without meaning, identities without subjectivity, and speech without responsibility [14].

In this world, lies encounter no resistance – they are quietly co-opted by the language of education, replacing complex questions with simple frames: "be tolerant", "remain neutral", "appreciate all positions". But such pseudo-pluralistic language does not liberate, it paralyses, because it gives no name to evil, good, strength or weakness. Education becomes a space of total cautious compromise – packaged consent to epistemological emptiness.

As M. Nussbaum writes, democracy cannot survive without the ability to speak the truth – not as an objective formula, but as ethical fidelity to human experience [6]. Education that is silent about pain, injustice or distortion is not neutral – it is a participant in alienation. And this is where we encounter what Krymsky called "the loss of truth as the dominant force in culture". Post-truth is not an era without truth. It is an era where teachers are afraid to be truthful and students do not expect to hear the answer.

The pedagogy of disconnection is not only something that breaks the relationship between teacher and student. It is something that disconnects a person from their inner moral compass. Knowledge is no longer born as a discovery – it is delivered as a commodity, neutral, safe, sterile.

This approach excludes trauma – but it also excludes transformation. And without trauma and truth, there is no becoming. There is only a simulation of learning, in which no one believes anyone else, but everyone politely follows instructions.

However, it is precisely at the moment of disconnection that a chance for a new connection arises – not based on sameness, but on trust. Trust is not consensus or tolerance. It is a willingness to be vulnerable to others without demanding guarantees. And this is where education can once again become a space of hope: where truth is not imposed but witnessed; where the teacher does not "have the answers" but shows the courage to be in the question.

A return to truth is not a restoration of old authoritarian thinking. It is the discovery of a new pedagogy: ethical, linguistic, trusting. As S. Krymsky wrote, truth is not only what corresponds to facts, but what is internally binding. And this is the kind of education we strive for: not perfect, but honest within the limits of human imperfection.

PEDAGOGY THAT DOES NOT SEE: THE TRAUMA OF NON-RECOGNITION

"When the other ceases to be an event, I become a wall to myself." (S. Krymsky).

CHAPTER 3

In modern education, it is not overt violence that is becoming more common, but silent violence. Not through humiliation, but through a lack of recognition. The student listens, but feels that they are not being heard. The teacher speaks, but does not believe that they are being seen. The classroom, the university lecture hall, even the Zoom lecture become a space of mutual absence, where everyone is physically present, but no one is truly there.

This is not just psychological discomfort. It is a pedagogical pathology that A. Honneth described as the trauma of non-recognition: a situation in which the subject does not receive confirmation of their value, existence, or right to be [13]. In such conditions, learning ceases to be an interaction and becomes a procedure. The teacher becomes a speaker without an audience. The student becomes an audience without a listener. And both accumulate a deep anxiety: *Is there any point in being here if no one sees me as a living person?*

Paradoxically, the external activity of the system is increasing: new standards, digitalisation, certifications, grants, inclusion policies. But inside, there is a lack of connection. We increasingly describe the student as a "multifaceted subject of the educational process" — and ask less and less: *How do they feel today? Do they trust me? Can I call them by name without documentation?*

This disconnect between form and presence creates a void — affective, identity-related, ethical. We have learned to measure success, but not to see fatigue. We can calculate attendance rates, but we cannot answer the silent question: am I important to anyone here?

And this is where trauma begins. It has no external manifestation. It spreads internally — as an experience of invisibility, as a slow loss of hope that someone will recognise your presence. The trauma of non-recognition is not a one-time act. It is a structural habit of the system to ignore a person as another universe.

As neuropsychology shows, recognition activates the same areas of the brain as physical safety [14]. Lack of recognition is an alarm signal that the body and mind interpret as danger. In other words, we are not just dealing with a pedagogical mistake, but with neuropsychological destabilisation that undermines trust in the learning process itself.

In this context, it is extremely important to refer to S. Krymsky, who wrote: *"A person can endure pain, but cannot endure prolonged indifference. Because indifference is a silent expulsion from culture"*. And this is exactly what we have in education today: a silent expulsion of dignity through the indifferent norm of not noticing.

But there is a way out. And it starts with the simplest thing — the act of pedagogical gaze. From the moment when the teacher does not just read a lecture, but *meets someone with their eyes*. When the student does not just listen — but *feels that someone is looking to see, not to evaluate*. This moment is not a technology or a skill. It is the ethics of presence, which cannot be simulated.

Pedagogy that recognises this does not guarantee success. But it creates conditions in which a person dares to be themselves. And this is the highest form of education. Because dignity cannot be instilled. But it can be recognised. And this is already the beginning of a different kind of education.

3.2 THE LINGUISTIC EVENT OF DIGNITY

LANGUAGE THAT BETRAYS: TECHNOCRACY IN EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE

Technocratic discourse as a betrayal of the humanistic essence of education.

Contemporary educational discourse is increasingly taking on the characteristics of technocratic newspeak — a language of numbers, indicators and bureaucratic euphemisms that hide the living essence of pedagogy behind cold terms. This language seems to betray education, replacing its human dimension with the language of managers and administrators. Educational policy operates with categories such as KPI, "contingent", "educational service", "efficiency", "quality" and "subsidy" — concepts borrowed from business and public administration. At first glance, these are neutral, instrumental words. However, their dominance in the educational space has profound anthropological and ethical consequences. Technocratic discourse, while claiming to be "objective" and "rational", actually shapes power over minds, standardises thinking, and depersonalises participants in the educational process.

As M. Foucault notes, discourse is a vehicle of power: through language, institutions establish what is considered truth and which subjects must obey this "truth". In the field of education, this means that technocratic newspeak imposes its own "regime of truth": only that which can be quantitatively measured, standardised and controlled is considered true. Everything else — individual experiences, creativity, the ethical dimension of learning — is declared secondary or invisible. It is no coincidence that Foucault compared schools to factories and prisons, where the goal is to "define, classify, control and standardise people" [15]. The technocratic language of education serves the same purpose: through seemingly neutral terms, it establishes disciplinary power over students and teachers, turning them into objects of management. Such a "language of domination" reproduces hierarchy: the subject of speech (administrative authority) pronounces normative truth, and the speakers of the language of education (students, teachers) must comply with it.

However, language is not only an instrument of power, but also an ethical space for communication. P. Ricoeur noted that speech is always an action for which we are responsible [16]. When education leaders refer to students as a "contingent" or "human capital", they are performing a linguistic act that has ethical weight: such words reduce a unique personality to a statistical unit or resource. According to P. Ricœur, language creates the reality of relationships, and the speaker bears moral responsibility for the meaning created. Thus, technocratic rhetoric in education is not just a style, but an act of linguistic objectification that influences people's self-perception. Instead, according to P. Ricœur, a humanistic approach would require language rooted in the ideas of mutual recognition and responsibility. By calling a student a "person in development" instead of "capital", we act ethically, recognising their subjectivity and uniqueness.

Similarly, M. Buber, in his dialogical philosophy, showed the gap between the I—You and I—It relationships. Technocratic language inclines educators towards the I—It relationship: the student appears as "input data", "product of educational services" or "unit of funding" — an object that is

treated according to a scheme. Instead, a culture of dignity requires the restoration of the I–You relationship, where the teacher and student interact as equal bearers of human dignity. If a university administrator thought in terms of I–You, they would not use the word "contingent" — instead, they would speak of an "academic community" where each student is a unique "You" rather than an impersonal number. Buber's approach adds an ironic humanistic accent: when we refer to people in accounting terms, we not only demean them, we impoverish ourselves, losing the true encounter with the Other. The irony is that a system that prides itself on the "quality of education" risks losing the highest quality of all: the humanity of relationships.

TRANSVERSALITY VERSUS ONE-DIMENSIONAL THINKING

The one-sidedness of technocratic discourse has been well criticised by contemporary philosophers of rationality. W. Welsch introduces the concept of transversal intelligence — the ability of the mind to cross different dimensions of meaning and rationality without getting stuck in one narrow discourse [17]. Classical technocracy relies on one-dimensional instrumental intelligence, which reduces everything to quantitative indicators and standards. W. Welsch emphasises that true intelligence differentiates and combines different types of rationality — scientific-quantitative, ethical, and aesthetic. Education, by its very nature, is a field where these diverse dimensions intersect: it is the transfer of knowledge (cognitive rationality), the cultivation of values (moral rationality), and a space for inspiration and creativity (aesthetic dimension). Technocratic language, on the other hand, narrows the horizon to a single dimension — efficiency, measured in numbers. This leads to a sharp narrowing of the culture of thinking: from a polyphony, it turns into the monotonous voice of statistics. Welsh's approach requires a transversal shift: in order to overcome the crisis of meaning, educational discourse must learn to switch between different languages — the language of numbers and the language of meanings, the language of facts and the language of values — and seek connections between them. The irony is that true "quality of education" is born not from an obsession with monotonous KPIs, but from the plasticity of thinking, capable of accommodating STEM, humanities, and existential dimensions. One-dimensional language deprives education of this flexibility, turning it into a caricature of itself — a school for robots, not for people.

THE LOSS OF "AURA" AND THE LOGIC OF PRESENCE

Another consequence of technocratic domination is *the "disenchantment" of* educational language, the loss of its atmosphere, or aura in W. Benjamin's terms. Benjamin introduced the concept of aura when describing the unique "presence of the distant" — the unique soul of a work of art that disappears with mass reproduction. A parallel can be drawn: the traditional language of

education — a *"heart-to-heart"* appeal, rich in metaphors, stories, and personal intonations — had an aura of uniqueness. By speaking in a lively language, the teacher created a certain charm around knowledge, a meaningful aura that illuminated the path for the student. Instead, the bureaucratic language of educational standards and reports kills this aura. When lectures are replaced by *"content on the platform"* and students are referred to as *"contingent units",* language loses the magic of presence and turns into a dry code for transmitting information.

H. U. Gumbrecht contrasts two modes of culture — representation (constant interpretation, symbolic mediation) and presence (direct existential experience). Technocratic educational language almost entirely gravitates towards the mode of representation: knowledge is presented as something that must be *represented, documented, placed in a table or presentation.* But what happens to presence? Gumbrecht warns that a culture that eliminates the dimension of presence loses empathy and is capable of treating people as numbers. Educational discourse, stripped of presence, also risks reducing living students to rows in Excel. H. U. Gumbrecht, referring to the lessons of W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, actually speaks of the danger of total objectification: if there is no place in educational culture for real presence — lively dialogue, empathy in the classroom, charismatic teaching — then this culture can reach the extreme expression of depersonalisation (a horrific historical example is a number tattooed on a person's arm instead of their name).

Of course, a university is not a concentration camp, but the tendency to "depersonalise in order to control" is evident. Lectures are increasingly formatted as *"content",* students become *"consumers of educational services"*, and teachers become *"providers of knowledge"*. In this sterile space, everyone seems to be comfortable except for meaning: the aura of presence disappears, and with it, inspiration and trust. As the students themselves wittily remark, *"the most valuable moments of learning do not fit into any KPI"*. The loss of the aura of language is also evident in the fact that education is no longer perceived as an event, but increasingly as a service. Meanwhile, it is precisely in the eventfulness of the "teacher–student" encounter that a space is created where words come to life, where knowledge is transmitted through presence and charisma, rather than through PDFs and tests.

LANGUAGE AS A SPACE FOR CULTURAL MEMORY

Ukrainian philosopher S. Krymsky, who called language *a space of cultural memory*, was particularly sensitive to the degradation of the language of education. Every word carries layers of historical meanings, values, and memories of the people. S. Krymsky emphasised that culture exists not only in artefacts or institutions, but above all in the linguistic universe, where the spiritual experience of generations lives on. Therefore, the words of educational discourse are not trivial, but *"containers of memory".* When we replace traditional concepts ("upbringing", "teacher's calling", "studenthood") with corporate euphemisms ("human capital management", "educational service", "acquisition of competencies"), we are in fact committing linguistic amnesia. The cultural memory

is losing its ideas about teachers as mentors, learning as a spiritual path, and universities as *alma maters.* Instead, simplified ideas are taking root: teachers are service providers, learning is the purchase of a certificate, and universities are markets for educational transactions. Such linguistic substitution impoverishes cultural memory, making it flat.

S. Krymsky warned that the dehumanisation of language is a harbinger of the dehumanisation of society: the meanings that make us human are being erased from language, and thus risk being erased in reality. Education is based on cultural memory, on unwritten knowledge about its mission — to nurture humanity. Therefore, the struggle to return *"living"* vocabulary to education is a struggle to preserve cultural continuity. This is particularly noticeable in the Ukrainian context: after decades of totalitarian newspeak and attempts to turn language into a tool of ideology, there was a need to rehabilitate the language of dignity. It is no coincidence that the Revolution of Dignity began with words about honour, freedom, and rights — words filled with the memory of centuries-old aspirations for dignity. The educational sphere also needs its own *"revolution of dignity"* at the level of language — the return of words filled with the aura of culture, words that appeal to the individual rather than to function.

DECONSTRUCTION OF SOME TECHNOCRATIC TERMS

Let us consider more specifically several established terms of educational policy to see how they erase the face of the individual. This brief deconstruction will help to understand the hidden action of linguistic practices:

1. KPI (Key Performance Indicator). In a business context, KPI measures success by quantitative indicators. In education, however, the use of KPI reduces the multidimensional development of a student to a few numbers — average score, percentage of learning, etc. Behind the facade of "objectivity" of KPI lies a value judgement: only what can be counted is important. Everything else — empathy, creativity, moral growth — is left out of sight. KPI involuntarily instils in all participants *a rating mentality,* where a person is a score or a percentage.

2. "Contingent". This term is used by education administrators to refer to a group of students or pupils. The word comes from military and bureaucratic statistics, where *a contingent* is a mass of people suitable for certain actions. Using it in relation to students turns learners into objects of accounting. A "contingent" has no faces or stories — only a total number. This erases individuality: a group of young people with their dreams and talents is transformed into "educational raw material" in the eyes of the system. The term creates distance and coldness where there should be community.

3. "Educational service". This phrase is the brainchild of a market metaphor: knowledge is presented as a commodity, the student as a consumer, and the university as a supplier. On the one hand, the service metaphor emphasises a focus on the needs of the student, which seems positive. However, it profoundly changes the attitude: education is no longer a sacred space for the search

for truth, but a segment of the service sector. The teacher-student relationship is commercialised, and instead of *a vocation*, there is *a contract.* In such a discourse, it is easy to justify both the slogan "the customer is always right" in relation to the student and the requirement for the teacher to "maintain the level of service". Ultimately, "educational service" narrows the goals of education to short-term customer satisfaction rather than long-term personality development.

4. "Efficiency". In the technocratic jargon of education, efficiency is often understood as maximum results with minimum expenditure of time and resources. But education is not a factory where the main thing is machine productivity. An excessive emphasis on efficiency leads to haste, simplification of programmes, and "cramming" for tests. Such efficiency is deceptive: a student can quickly earn credits, but will they develop into a thinking personality? Paradoxically, some of the most effective educational processes appear to be "inefficient": conversations during consultations, mistakes and their joint discussion, additional time for reflection – from a bureaucrat's point of view, these are "wastes of time", but from a teacher's point of view, they are invaluable moments in a student's development. The term "efficiency" erases these nuances, dictating: *do it faster, simplify, standardise.* As a result, timing wins, but depth loses.

5. "Quality of education". In bureaucratic discourse, quality is measured through standardised indicators (accreditation scores, ranking, number of publications, etc.). However, the true quality of education is an existential concept that is difficult to reduce to metrics. It is motivation, inspiration, the atmosphere in the classroom, and critical thinking – a whole that cannot be broken down into parts. When talking about "improving quality" in narrow terms, it is easy to forget about the holistic value of education. Renowned educator G. Biesta distinguishes between the "output" of education and its true impact on life: sometimes a school with lower test scores contributes more to a child's future than an elite school with perfect scores. Therefore, the misuse of the word "quality" without its humanitarian content risks becoming *a linguistic screen* that hides the absence of real meaning.

6. "Subvention". The technocratic apparatus often talks about *a "subvention per student"* – a certain amount of money that "belongs" to each pupil or student from the state. On the one hand, this is a necessary financial mechanism. On the other hand, in the combination "student – subsidy", the student again appears not as a person, but as an accounting unit. Financial metaphors begin to dominate the rhetoric: *"the hryvnia follows the student", "educational investments",* etc. Of course, education requires funding, but when economic metaphors replace pedagogical ones, there is a danger that we will think in terms of return on investment rather than development. At the level of language, *subsidies* turn students into objects of funding rather than subjects of learning. An alternative would be to talk about "supporting the development of each student" – the meaning is the same, but the emphasis is on the person, not the money.

This analysis shows that the established terms of educational bureaucracy work like semantic viruses: once they enter the language, they imperceptibly transform our vision. People become functions, relationships become transactions, knowledge becomes a commodity. But if the diagnosis has been made, then we can look for a cure – a different language.

GLOSSARY OF DIGNITY: EXAMPLES OF LINGUISTIC ALTERNATIVES

The question arises: is another language of education possible – a language that supports rather than erases personality? The culture of dignity offers us to consciously introduce a new vocabulary: words that reflect humanistic values, putting people at the centre rather than procedures or indicators.

Below is the first version of such a glossary of alternative expressions. Each pair compares a technocratic term and its possible replacement in the spirit of dignity:

1. Instead of "human capital" – "personal dignity in growth". The first term sees a person as a resource for the economy; the second – as a bearer of dignity who develops and realises their potential.

2. Instead of "human resources" (referring to young professionals) – "community of talents". Instead of viewing people as interchangeable parts of a "human resources mechanism", they are seen as a creative community where everyone has talent and a voice.

3. Instead of "student contingent" – "academic community" or "community of learners". Emphasis on the fact that students are not a mass, but a community of individuals united by learning.

4. Instead of "educational service" – "educational partnership" or "vocation to learn". Such formulas reflect the duality and high mission of education, where both the teacher and the student are partners in the pursuit of truth, rather than seller and customer.

5. Instead of "learning efficiency" – "learning significance" or "learning depth". It is proposed to measure not speed and volume, but meaningful weight: what learning means for a student's life, how deeply they understand and can apply knowledge.

6. Instead of "quality of education" – "integrity of education" or "harmonious development". This shifts the emphasis from formal indicators to harmony between knowledge, skills and values, to the holistic development of the individual.

7. Instead of "subsidy (per student)" – "investment in the future of the individual". Here, the word *investment* is used metaphorically, with a positive connotation: the community or the state does not simply spend money, but invests in the development of the individual. However, it is possible to do without economic metaphors: "supporting everyone's educational path". This emphasises that society supports the individual, rather than maintaining a "unit".

Of course, the proposed expressions may seem less clear or longer than the usual technocratic clichés. However, they contain the main thing – the return of ethics and meaning to language. These alternatives serve as *semantic beacons*: they remind us that behind every process in education there is a living person.

Such a glossary of dignity should not be perceived as sentimentality or utopia. It is rather a form of resistance to *the "newspeak" that impoverishes our thinking.* Instead of the language of domination, there is a language of invitation to cooperation. Instead of depersonalisation, there is personalisation. Instead of an emphasis on control, there is an emphasis on trust and mutual growth.

Conclusion: putting people back at the centre of discourse.

The irony of the technocratic era is that, in its quest to improve education, it is gradually betraying its highest value: the formation of the Human Being. Language is not neutral in this process. As we have shown, from P.-M. Foucault and P. Ricœur to M. Buber, W. Welsh, W. Benjamin, H. U. Gumbrecht and S. Krymsky, various thinkers agree that language reflects our power, ethics, culture and even our memory of ourselves. Therefore, the struggle for the humanisation of educational discourse is a struggle for the soul of education.

A culture of dignity begins with words. If we want a pedagogy of coexistence, a pedagogy of trust and freedom, we must first learn to speak the language of freedom and trust. This requires courage – after all, it is easier to hide behind familiar bureaucratic formulations than to call things by their proper names. But it is precisely this linguistic courage that paves the way for real change. To paraphrase H.-G. Gadamer, understanding in education is not the transfer of information, but *coexistence in the linguistic horizon.* Therefore, by changing the linguistic horizon – cleansing it of the toxic fumes of technocracy and filling it with the oxygen of humanity – we will prepare the ground for a new educational reality.

An educational discourse that does not betray but protects the individual is possible. It will be ironically free from bureaucracy, yet deeply academic in content; conceptually strong, yet understandable to the heart. It is a language in which words regain their aura – because behind them lies respect for the individual. In this language*, the "contingent"* once again becomes a community of students, *"service"* becomes a calling, and *"capital"* becomes dignity. And then, perhaps, education will fulfil its mission: not only to impart knowledge, but also to preserve and multiply humanity in a world that desperately needs it.

RETURNING PEOPLE TO WORDS: THE LANGUAGE OF TRUST, RECIPROCITY, AND RECOGNITION

"Words are not just a means of communication. They are the presence of culture preserved in speech, which recognises the human being." (S. Krymsky).

How we lost our voice.

In modern education, words too often become a function. They perform, transmit, instruct – but rarely address. The shell of speech, once intended for encounter, is now increasingly used as a tool for conveying instructions, motivations, policies, and programmatic positions. In fact, 21st century education has learned to speak beautifully about values without addressing any individual. Somehow, words have become public but not intimate, and we know how to speak to the "seeker" – but not to *you*.

The real irony is that every time reforms try to "improve communication in the educational environment", we get another instruction – not an appeal. The education system speaks, but no longer hears itself. It speaks a lot, competently, KPI-approved – but lifelessly. And here we cannot help but recall M. Buber, who warned: language without relevance is pseudo-language, it is "I–It" rather than "I–You" [17].

P. Ricœur: Speech as an ethical act.

For P. Ricoeur, speech is not a channel of information, but an act of ethical responsibility. Speech always includes the Other: the one we address, the one we recognise, the one we respond to. And everyone who speaks bears moral responsibility for the reality they create. By calling someone a "contingent", we do not simply reduce them – we exclude them from the circle of moral vision [17].

A university that talks about "educational services" is not addressing individuals, but an administrative phantom with which it is comfortable to communicate only in the language of acts. And when such language becomes dominant, the very idea of personal address is devalued.

P. Ricœur would not be enthusiastic about modern educational brochures. But he would ask not "Where is the truth?" but "Who is speaking here? And to whom are they addressing themselves?"

M. Buber: The Word That Sees.

M. Buber built his philosophy around one simple but radical statement: only where there is "I–You" is human reality possible. In the "I–You" space, the word acquires the ability to touch. It is not a function, but a gesture, an intonation, a tremor of presence. A word spoken as "You" will never betray – because it does not describe, but encounters. This is the essence of pedagogical dignity: to see and be seen through language.

M. Buber would not be surprised that in the era of Zoom education we speak into emptiness. But he would remind us: sometimes silence in the classroom speaks louder than a sixteen-slide presentation.

S. Krymsky: The memory of culture in one sentence.

For S. Krymsky, words are not just a means of communication. They are a form of cultural memory in which the spirit of generations lives on. When we say *"student",* we mean not only a status, but also the image of someone called to learn, as a meaningful event of being. And if we replace this word with *"contingent"*, we are not just changing the vocabulary. We are depriving the educational space of memory, continuity, and depth. S. Krymsky emphasised: "Where the dignity of speech is lost, alienation begins as a style of culture".

When we say *"academic community"* instead of *"contingent",* it is already an act of resistance. A small linguistic liberation. A drop of return.

E. Illouz: Trust as affective sincerity.

E. Illouz, analysing contemporary culture, speaks of a crisis of sincerity. We are afraid to be authentic because the society of emotional capitalism demands controlled emotionality. In education, this manifests itself as professional detachment, pseudo-impartiality, and emotionally faceless "correctness". But true trust is not about sterility. It is about the risk of being in a word that guarantees nothing but means everything.

When a teacher addresses the audience not as a "group" but as individuals, they may make mistakes – but these will not be insincere. E. Illouz says that *emotional sincerity is not a weakness, but a condition of human truth*.

P. Palmer: Pedagogy that listens.

P. Palmer, in his pedagogy of wholeness, puts it simply: *"Teaching is not the transmission of information, but the presence before truths that are greater than ourselves"*.

This means that pedagogical speech should be open, listening, not completely controlled. The language of education should not sound like a Google calendar. It should be a little tremulous. A little alive. A little ours. P. Palmer says that *fear is the main barrier to dignified speech*. Because we are afraid of not knowing, of making mistakes, of saying something that is not protocol. But to acknowledge this fear – and still speak from the heart – is an act of pedagogical courage.

H.-G. Gadamer and H. U. Humbrecht: Language as co-existence.

In his hermeneutic project, H.-G. Gadamer argued that understanding is only possible in dialogue, when we are ready to listen as if the Other might be right. H. U. Gumbrecht adds: understanding is not just deciphering meanings, but being present.

Therefore, educational language that strives for dignity is not one that explains, but one that is present. It does not proclaim, but shares breath.

Glossary of linguistic return.

We already began this process in the previous section, and here we continue:

1. Bureaucratic expression – Linguistic alternative of the culture of dignity.
2. Contingent – Academic community.
3. Human capital – Personal dignity in development.
4. Effectiveness of learning – Meaningful depth of learning experience.
5. KPI – Dynamics of meaning and growth.
6. Quality of education – Harmonious personal growth.
7. Educational service – Call to joint learning.
8. Professional neutrality – Presence with recognition of others.

When speech returns, personality returns.

A language that recognises others does not need protocol. It is not rushed. It breathes.

A word that can say "you" already transforms learning into an encounter rather than a function. This is not pathos, not a metaphor – it is the deepest work of a culture of dignity, which begins with a phrase that sees. S. Krymsky wrote: *"There is no other way to a person except that which is paved with words, with an address that recognises"*. We must not simply bring people back to education. We must bring them back to sentences. To addresses. To language that does not betray. "Let me be inspired", said *education itself*, which finally took off its formal clothes, stood barefoot and asked, "Let me be alive again".

THE POETICS OF EDUCATION AS THE ETHICS OF LISTENING

"Culture begins with learning to hear not only ourselves." (S. Krymsky).

In an age when everyone speaks but no one listens, pedagogical listening becomes a radical act of humanity. It is not a communication skill or a soft skill. It is an ethical act, profound and

defenceless. The ability to listen in education is not a method, but a prerequisite for a dignified encounter in which the Other has the right not only to speak, but to exist in the word without having to fight for it.

Listening is a way of recognising the other as a source of truth, not as a backdrop for one's own expertise. Listening is a renunciation of the monopoly on meaning. And that is why true listening is always a little dangerous: it changes the listener.

H.-G. Gadamer: Dialogue in which truth lies between.

H.-G. Gadamer emphasised that understanding is never the act of a single subject. True understanding arises in dialogue, in the "fusion of horizons" – when my experience encounters yours, and we are both no longer the same as we were before [18].

To listen means to admit that the Other may be right. It does not mean to agree. It means *to open the door to a meaning that is not mine*. And when we transfer this to pedagogy, it becomes obvious: a teacher who does not listen does not teach – he reads a monologue against the backdrop of living beings.

Listening is a refusal to finalise meaning. Therefore, in an educational space dominated by control, protocols and standardised answers, listening seems suspicious. Because where there is listening, there is a chance for the unexpected. And that means freedom.

The irony is that many universities already offer courses in "critical thinking", but there are almost no courses in "critical listening". Because listening is not as prestigious as speaking.

H. U. Gumbrecht: A presence that cannot be measured.

H. U. Gumbrecht introduces a bold idea into pedagogy: not everything that is important can be represented. There is something that cannot be explained, translated into numbers or texts. This is presence. When we listen, we do not just perceive information. We are there, we share the silence, we create a space in which the Other is not afraid to appear.

H. U. Gumbrecht calls this "presence production" – an act in which we allow things to be around us without demanding meaning or productivity from them [18].

In the classroom, this means that a teacher who listens is not just a "tolerant" educator. They are someone who creates an environment in which students dare to speak truthfully. Not for evaluation. Not for approval. Simply to be heard.

P. Freire: Listen to those whom no one has heard.

P. Freire warned: *the silence of the oppressed is not the absence of a voice. It is the absence of a listener*. In the pedagogy of oppression, the teacher is the microphone of the system, not the ear of the person. But when we listen to the student not as imperfect, but as an equal partner in the search for truth, we open up a space for liberation.

Listening is the first step towards dignity. Because liberation does not begin with slogans, but with someone *daring to speak, knowing that they will not be interrupted.* Listening is a way to give space to trauma, experience, memory – without interpretation or correction. Sometimes the best pedagogical action is not to respond, but to leave a silence in which the word is still maturing.

CHAPTER 3

S. Krymsky: Silence that acknowledges.

S. Krymsky wrote: *"There is the silence of indifference and the silence of love. The first erases. The second acknowledges".* In pedagogy, silence is usually interpreted as a failure: the student did not answer, the teacher did not continue, time stopped. But in a culture of dignity, silence is a form of listening, of coexistence without pressure. It is not silence as the absence of sound, but silence as a space where one can be uncertain, weak, incomplete — and not be devalued.

The educational poetics of silence is when we listen not only to words, but also to the silence between them. In a classroom where there is such silence, a student can feel for the first time in their life that they are not being evaluated — they are being waited for.

Poetics as ethics: speech that does not interrupt.

Poetics in education is not decoration or style. It is a form of respect. When words do not cut, but *open*. When intonation does not dictate, but *invites*. When a phrase sounds not like a command, but like a gentle unfolding of space for the Other.

Poetics is not about "saying it beautifully". It is about saying it in such a way that the Other can be there. Poetic thinking is when you do not try to say everything at once. It is when you leave room in a phrase for the other to breathe. It is when a sentence does not close off meaning, but *opens the door to it*.

Glossary of listening:
1. Educational stamp — Alternative to the culture of dignity.
2. Conducting a class — Co-presence in the space of meaning.
3. Knowledge control — Supporting development.
4. Lecturer's monologue — Open search dialogue.
5. Activation of attention — Invitation to mutual listening.
6. Student response — Meaningful event of the meeting.
7. Speech methodology — Ethics of listening.

Afterword: to listen is to believe that the Other exists.

Listening in education is not a technique. It is an anthropological position. It is a statement: *I believe that you exist, even if you are still silent.* It is a willingness *to wait*, *not to rush*, *to let words happen*. The poetics of listening is when you don't just let the Other speak, but allow them to be. At a time when the language of education increasingly sounds like noise, listening becomes an ethic of resistance. And if we return this ethic to the heart of pedagogy, perhaps education will begin to speak with us again. And not just to us.

"There is silence that erases. But there is silence that embraces." (S. Krymsky).

SILENCE IN THE CLASSROOM: PRESENCE WITHOUT DOMINATION

Among all educational tools, the least understood remains… silence. It is either seen as a technical pause — "a moment for recording" — or as a symptom — "students are inactive". But in

a culture of dignity, silence is a place of presence where the teacher does not demonstrate, does not pressure, does not control, but simply is.

Silence does not always mean passivity. Sometimes it means a willingness not to destroy the Other with a ready-made answer.

H. U. Gumbrecht wrote about physical presence as *"the effect of resonating silence"* [19]. Educational silence is not a breakdown in communication, but an internal pause for the birth of meaning.

Not everything has to be said. Some things have to be endured. In such silence, the teacher ceases to be a source of knowledge and becomes a condition for the unfolding of the student's thinking. It is a silence that does not correct. It believes in the process of maturation. It is silence as a form of respect that sounds louder than any explanation.

S. Krymsky spoke of "ethical silence" as a space where words have not yet become dominant, but are already an invitation. Sometimes being silent nearby is saying, *"I am here. And I will not demand that you respond immediately"*.

Silence without coercion.

There is silence that oppresses – the silence of fear. And there is sacred pedagogical silence. This is where students do not "give the right answer" but listen to themselves for the first time. This is when the classroom becomes a place of internal dialogue – uninterrupted by the clicking of slides.

Paradox: the best questions come not when you ask them, but when you don't interfere with them coming.

A brief summary – not with your voice.

Being present does not always mean speaking. Sometimes it means being there without taking up space for the Other. Silence is not empty. Silence is full of trust.

3.3 DIGNITY AS A METHODOLOGY

DIGNITY: NOT A SLOGAN, BUT THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF COEXISTENCE

"Dignity is not something that is declared. It is how you treat the Other when no one is keeping score".

Dignity is a word with a public biography: it is displayed in manifestos, incorporated into codes of corporate ethics, and used to embellish reform strategies. But the louder it is proclaimed, the more often it loses its ability to look you in the eye. In pedagogy, dignity risks becoming a "label of humanism" which, in essence, often changes nothing in the structure of relationships.

We propose something else: to see dignity not as a slogan, but as a method of cognition, not as a declaration, but as an epistemology of coexistence. Because it is through dignity that we not only learn something about the Other – we never remain the same. We become someone new in the presence of the Other. This moment of transformation – subtle, not always noticeable, but deeply

human – is the beginning of dignity as a cognitive experience. It is in this change, in openness to influence, that a new epistemology is born: not instrumental, but relational. Not object-oriented, but encounter-oriented. Traditional educational epistemology is tied to rationality, objectivity, and controlled knowledge. It presupposes a subject that observes, interprets, and evaluates. But in interaction with a living person, knowledge rarely arises as control. It appears where there is trust, openness, and a shared moment.

Dignity is when I do not view you as an object of my certainty, but recognise your ability to be a source of meaning.

The formula of the epistemology of dignity does not sound like "I know more", but rather "we create knowledge together, even if it puts us in an awkward position". And therein lies the radical difference between dignified pedagogy and its authoritarian shadow. But the shadow fears openness. Dignified pedagogy, on the contrary, trusts vulnerability as a space for thinking. That is why, when we rethink intelligence in the paradigm of a culture of dignity, we move away from the image of the "winner of the discussion". Intelligence is no longer a means of domination, but a form of hospitality, a way of inviting the Other into one's space of mental effort without requiring them to prove their worth. It is in this context that P. Palmer speaks of "the integrity of teaching" as a willingness not only to know, but also to be vulnerable in knowledge, as the courage of a teacher to be unprotected by a scheme, but present in thought. *"A true teacher is one who risks being in knowledge rather than above knowledge"* [20].

Decent pedagogy does not ask "Are you worthy of being heard?", it asks "How can I listen so that your opinion is heard?". This is not the intellect of a winner, but the intellect of a guest. One that opens up space – rather than appropriating it for oneself.

COGNITION AS CO-EXISTENCE.

Knowledge in a culture of dignity is always an encounter, not a monologue. P. Ricoeur argued that any knowledge about the Other is already an act of ethical influence [21]. In the educational space, this means that the teacher does not simply formulate the truth, but influences who their student can be within the limits of this truth.

The epistemology of coexistence is when I think not about you, but with you. When I do not form an idea about you, I form an idea together with you. Here, knowledge is not transmitted – it matures in reciprocity. Not as an instruction, but as a mutual willingness not to have the last word.

Anti-slogan.

Dignity that really works never needs loud words. Its presence is felt not in manifestos, but in intonation, in the pause before answering, in the willingness to listen, even when it is uncomfortable. This is not a decoration of reform – it is an ethical mode of everyday life. Education in dignity is not about standards. It is about ensuring that no one is reduced to a standard. Dignity is not a bonus to a successful education policy. It is the point from which policy begins or falls apart.

An ironic postscript.

The irony is that today the word "dignity" often appears in missions, on websites, and in university branding. But branding does not save from humiliation. And if objectification, contempt or hierarchical deafness reign in the internal communication space, no text can cover up the silence in which a person is invisible. Because dignity does not begin with a formulation. It begins with a gaze that does not evaluate but recognises.

AFFECTIVE PEDAGOGY: PRESENCE, BODY, AND RESPONSIBILITY

"We teach not only the brain. We teach presence. And presence is always a body that feels something, even when it is silent".

Why are affects important in education?

Education has long tried to eradicate affect. It was built as if a person were only a mind, disconnected from the body. The less emotion, the more efficiency. The less body, the more objectivity. But the body does not disappear. It sits silently in classes, breathes in lecture halls, goes numb during exams, and gets tired when it is not heard. Affects are not the "emotional side of teaching". They are a fundamental condition of human interaction that either ignites thinking or blocks it.

M. Nussbaum convincingly argues in her book *"Political Emotions"* that *emotions are not subjective noise, but the ethical compass of democratic culture* [22]. In pedagogy, it is the same: emotions do not interfere, they indicate whether there is a connection. If a student does not trust, they do not think, they defend themselves.

The body in the classroom: presence without permission.

M. Merleau-Ponty argued: *"I am my body. I perceive, therefore I am physically present"* [23]. The body is not just a "brain carrier". It is a subject of perception that constantly feels: safety, threat, pressure, silence, support or control. Pedagogy that ignores the body is pedagogy that misses the person. A student's body does not read the content of slides, but rather the tone of the teacher's voice, their fatigue, sincerity, presence or absence. The body is the first audience to react even before the brain has formulated "understood".

Affective resonance: why it affects us.

H. Rosa speaks of "resonance" as an existential criterion of authenticity: if an event does not affect you, you are not in a relationship with it. In pedagogy, this means that learning without affect is not a relationship, but a transfer of data. Affects are the echoes of truth in the body. When something bothers, moves, or irritates you, it is a signal: meaning has entered the zone of your living presence. And pedagogy that does not create resonance creates indifference. Indifference is the real loss of pedagogical connection.

Responsibility is not control, but openness.

P. Ricoeur interpreted responsibility as a response to the invitation of the Other [21]. In pedagogy, this means not "managing a group" but being in sensitive coexistence with it.

The teacher should not control emotions. They should be open to their presence, recognising that in every pair there are not only notes, but also experiences of loss, anxiety, shame, inspiration – and that this is precisely what constitutes the content of the learning process.

Control is fear of life. Responsibility is trust in life, even in its unpredictability.

Modesty of presence.

S. Krymsky wrote: *"A teacher is not a demonstrator of knowledge. It is a person who has the courage to be present where others seek protection in patterns"*. [24] Presence does not mean being perfect. It means being human, embodied, tangible. Saying "I don't know" is not a weakness, but an example. Hearing a student's emotion is not emotional vulnerability, but ethical action.

In a culture of dignity, emotions are not forbidden territory. They are a source of depth. The body is not a shadow of thought. It is a form of thought. And responsibility is not accountability. It is the ability to be together without hiding.

EDUCATION FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE: TRAUMA-INFORMED HUMANISM

"We do not teach abstract minds. We teach people who have experienced loss. And continue to learn – even through pain".

Trauma-informed as the ethics of acknowledging pain.

Ukrainian education in the 21st century is forced to work with trauma that is not an individual pathology, but a mass experience. War, forced displacement, loss of home or loved ones, social turbulence, the legacy of post-totalitarian schooling – all of this affects the internal architecture of a student, even when they remain silent [25, 26]. Traditional academic culture was not prepared for such a scale of vulnerability. It thought in terms of "success" and "motivation", but did not ask: what to do when a person is barely holding on? The trauma-informed approach is not therapy, but the pedagogy of ethical listening. It recognises that learning is impossible when the brain is still in "survival" mode [25, 27].

Trauma-informed humanism is education that does not ask "why are you so weak", but asks "what happened to you – and how can I be there for you?".

The teacher as a bearer of safe presence.

In conditions of mass trauma, the teacher ceases to be merely a bearer of knowledge – they become a figure of safety regulation. Their voice, gaze, and reaction can either calm or activate triggers. The trauma-informed approach invites the teacher to a different presence: not as a judge or lecturer, but as a source of support that does not humiliate [28].

Neuropsychology confirms that when the brain is under chronic stress, its learning centres are blocked. Hyperactivation of the amygdala, suppression of the hippocampus, and disruption of cortisol regulation all make memorisation and thinking nearly impossible [29, 30]. Only the sense of security that comes from the presence of a stable, friendly figure allows the nervous system to "return" to learning.

CHAPTER 3

A trauma-informed teacher does not "admit" a student to knowledge. They create a space in which the student can be present – with all their experiences, including pain.

The educational environment: a space for re-traumatisation or healing? University is not just a programme. It is an environment that either heals or deepens wounds. Anything can be a trigger: the tone of the teacher, the atmosphere of the exam, the lack of choice, an unexpected task, silent humiliation in the group.

Trauma-informed pedagogy asks not only "what we teach", but also how we remain silent, how we look, how we listen. Research confirms that spaces where students feel emotionally and physically safe have higher academic results, fewer dropouts, and greater engagement [31]. Simply implementing flexible deadlines, breaks for regulation, rooms for silence or psychological support will not "spoil students" but will make them capable of learning.

The body remembers, and silence acknowledges.

B. van der Kolk wrote: "The body keeps the score" [32]. Even when the mind wants to forget the trauma, the body reacts to signals as if they were a threat. And then the student is seemingly in the classroom, but in reality – in another reality: muffled, heightened, dominated by fear, shame, confusion. Dignity pedagogy must recognise these signals – alienation, avoidance, withdrawal – and not perceive them as "problematic behaviour". Trauma-informed means seeing the person, not just their reaction.

Sometimes the most important gesture is silence. Silence that does not rush, does not force a response, does not pressure with a "plan". It is silence that is close by. S. Krymsky called this "silent solidarity" – a presence that acknowledges suffering without objectifying it [26, 33].

Academic coldness as a form of defence.

Paradox: it is precisely those who should be most sensitive to vulnerability – the academic community – who have often cultivated a culture of "neutral detachment". Professionalism has been equated with coldness. Objectivity – with disembodiment. But in reality, it is a defence against affect. Against the fear of not being able to cope if you allow yourself to feel [31], [34].

Trauma-informed pedagogy does not reject reason. It simply does not reject the person who cries under its weight.

Pedagogy of empathy and trust: an investment in recovery.

Empathy is not weakness. It is a condition for resilience. Trust is not naivety, but an invitation to responsibility without humiliation. Trauma-informed humanism is not about comfort. It is about recognition that gives strength. A student who feels *seen* is more likely to learn, take risks, try, make mistakes, and not disappear from the classroom – because it no longer seems hostile [31, 35].

Education without dignity repeats trauma. Education with dignity opens up the future.

PSYCHOANALYSIS OF PEDAGOGICAL FEAR: WHAT IS REPRESSED AND WHY IT IS SILENCED.

"Pedagogy that fears its own humanity represses not only emotions – it represses itself".

Fear as the shadow of the profession.

In the collective imagination, a teacher is someone who *knows*, *keeps the class under control*, *manages the process*, and *does not allow weakness to control them*. This image is functional but incomplete. Because in its shadow lives fear: of not being authoritative enough, of making a mistake in public, of losing control, of not meeting expectations. Freud would call this repression: when we avoid conscious contact with what threatens our ego, we hide it under a layer of protective behaviours [36].

In the context of education, these protective forms often take the form of:

– methodological rigidity;

– emotional neutrality;

– evaluative authoritarianism;

– silence that masks fatigue and anxiety.

The teacher and the shadow: a Jungian perspective.

C. Jung spoke of the "shadow" as that part of the psyche that we do not recognise in ourselves, but which still acts. The shadow of a teacher is not a "dark side", but a vulnerable, human part that is afraid of being ridiculed or rejected. Authoritarianism in the classroom is often not a sign of strength, but a fear of revealing weakness. When a teacher forbids students from speaking "off topic", it may be hiding their own anxiety about losing control of the discourse. When the phrase "we're not here to talk about emotions" is uttered, it often sounds like an unconscious cry: "don't make me feel what I can't bear myself".

Pedagogical silence: not quiet, but a symptom.

Sometimes silence reigns in the classroom. But this silence can be different. There is the silence of listening – a space where meaning matures. And there is the silence of avoidance – when both sides are afraid to say something that will reveal their true presence.

A teacher's silence is sometimes not restraint, but a protective isolation of affect, a classic psychoanalytic mechanism that allows one to "survive" but blocks contact [37].

Containers that cannot withstand.

D. Winnicott described the "holding" figure – father, therapist, teacher – as a container for the emotions of another. But not every teacher is capable of performing this function. If the student's emotions are too strong, too real, too familiar, the teacher begins to close off – either disciplinarily, methodically, or sarcastically. We hide behind "structure" because we do not have the mental endurance to withstand affect. This is an important point: this is not an accusation, but sympathy for the inner fatigue of the teacher, who constantly holds, restrains, shapes – but who is not held, recognised, or listened to.

R. Kegan: fear of transformation.

R. Kegan wrote that real changes in consciousness are a loss of stable identity, which is always painful. When we demand that teachers "be open", "be empathetic", "be vulnerable", we are demanding a psychological transformation that not everyone is ready for [38]. Sometimes teachers do not resist new practices. They resist the loss of the old "self" that somehow gave them support.

CHAPTER 3

Language as a mask.

The stereotypical "professional language" of education – restrained, emotionless, abstract – is sometimes just rationalisation. It allows them not to say: "I am scared when students ignore me"; "I don't know how to react to tears in the classroom"; "it hurts me when I see indifference".

A teacher who does not talk about fear is not always brave. He may be more afraid for his students.

What to do about it?

Do not "re-educate" the teacher. Do not "instruct" them. Instead, create a space where the teacher can be a presence rather than a function. Where they are held as they hold others . Where fear is not condemned but spoken about, and thus loses its power. Because the scariest thing is not having the right to be afraid. And it is precisely the culture of dignity in education that is a culture where teachers have the right to be vulnerable. And at the same time, no less dignified.

3.4 RESISTANCE AS A FORM OF HOPE

"That which resists is not yet broken. That which thinks is still breathing".

PEDAGOGICAL INERTIA AND AUTOMATISM: ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM

We are accustomed to believing that education is synonymous with development, progress, and change. This is part of the great educational myth – that each generation learns better than the previous one; that school or university is a natural incubator of the new; that the very act of teaching is an act of renewal.

But what if education is not only a vector forward, but also a mechanism for consolidating the familiar?

What if, at certain historical moments, it does not serve as a breakthrough, but rather as a stabilising force in conditions of existential chaos? What if it does not lead us forward, but protects us from collapse – not people, but structures, formats, methodologies, hierarchies? In this light, education appears not as a space for change, but as a ritual of preserving form, even if its inner content has faded, dissolved, and been reduced to a template.

University programmes that have not been revised for years, exams that test memory but not understanding, lectures that no one listens to because their function is not to inspire but to confirm status – all this becomes an example of education as a system that, by imitating progress, serves the fear of change. There is something disturbingly reassuring about pedagogical automatism. It is like an internal pilot: it turns on when the teacher is tired, discouraged, or does not feel the point of interaction. Mechanical speech, repetition of past lectures, distance in the classroom – this is not always a lack of professionalism. Often, it is a form of unconscious defence. Automatism

provides the comfort of predictability: it allows one not to take risks, not to engage in live contact, not to encounter the Other in all their complexity and unpredictability. It numbs teaching when live presence seems too dangerous. It muffles feelings of guilt when there is no strength to be empathetic. It maintains the illusion of control when surrounded by information overload, moral anxiety, and methodological exhaustion.

Pedagogical automatism is not indifference. It is an internal mobilisation against overload, the system's response to its own fatigue. But the longer we hide in this predictability, the more difficult it is for us to meet ourselves – as someone who does not read knowledge, but creates encounters. Because teaching without risk is just broadcasting, and education without presence is just a replication of the meaningful past.

What is inertia in teaching?

Inertia is not just "routine". It is a gesture of survival in a system that constantly changes the rules but does not always support the person who has to implement these changes.

In teaching, inertia does not necessarily manifest itself as an outright unwillingness to work. On the contrary, it is often disguised as professional consistency, "methodical discipline", and "compliance with standards". But at its core is the fear of losing one's bearings, as well as a lack of time, energy, and space to comprehend change.

This is not about laziness. It is about a teacher who tries to keep moving without asking whether they still have an internal compass. When the content of a course is not reviewed, it is not always because the teacher is indifferent or incompetent. Often, it is fear: what if my favourite texts are outdated? Will I lose what I still feel confident about? Will I look uncertain in front of a new generation of students?

Changing content is not just about updating the programme. It is about updating oneself. And this, as R. Kegan showed, requires a change in the structure of thinking, not just a change in methodology [39]. When the form of a lecture does not change, it is not always because of a reluctance to experiment. Often, it is a fear of dialogue. After all, as soon as we move from the role of "knowledge transmitter" to that of co-thinker, we find ourselves in a space where students can ask questions about things we do not know. Or talk about something that is not in the plan but exists in reality.

Dialogue is not a method. It is a loss of guarantees. And not every educational space – and not every teacher's inner state – allows us to withstand this loss. When a meeting turns into a ritual where terms such as "resource optimisation", "project load" and "performance indicators" are used, we are not dealing with a real discussion. We are dealing with a collective silent agreement not to talk about the main issue.

And the main thing is: teacher fatigue, which cannot be formalised in a report, a sense of absurdity when bureaucracy eats away at meaning, a loss of meaning that no certification can compensate for.

And so, we continue to play the game of the "functional system" because as soon as someone starts telling the truth, the structure will crack. And we are afraid: if the structure collapses,

CHAPTER 3

will we survive? Therefore, pedagogical inertia is not a personality defect, but a way to withstand turbulence.

It is an unconscious defence against excessive emotional stress, against shame for "non-progressiveness", against powerlessness in the face of reforms that change forms but do not always care about people. It is a strategy for survival in a system where flexibility is required but not accompanied by care. Where there are many changes but little room for reflection and dignified adaptation.

And until the teacher feels that his fear of being imperfect will not be punished, they will cling to form – because only form still holds them.

E. Fromm: Escape from Freedom as a Pedagogical Strategy.

When E. Fromm published his work "*Escape from Freedom*" in 1941, he was trying to understand why modern people, having gained individual autonomy, so often flee from it. Freedom is frightening because it forces us to make choices. And choice always means responsibility. And responsibility not only for one's actions, but for the very construction of one's own self. *"Freedom brings not only liberation, but also a burden: to be the author of oneself"*, wrote E. Fromm [40].

This idea resonates surprisingly well with the current situation of university lecturers. Educational freedom is not a privilege, but a constant existential responsibility: for the content of the course, for the language you use to refer to the Other, for the tone in which you give feedback, for the way you are – in front of, in the presence of, under the gaze of the audience. Nowadays, when the student audience has become *the public,* and every teacher *is potentially being recorded,* teaching is no longer just the transfer of knowledge, but an ethical event that requires conscious presence. And this presence is difficult. It requires being alive, open, vulnerable.

It is not surprising that many teachers – even the most intellectual ones – flee from this freedom back to form. Form – methodology, slides, standards – provides an alibi. It can be used to defend oneself: "That's how it's done", "That's in the programme", "That's how it should be". But behind this standardisation often lies an inner reluctance to be exposed to the complexity of the other.

Escape from freedom is escape from encounter.

Fromm identified three main strategies of escape: authoritarianism (delegating one's will to another), destructiveness (destroying the threatening object), conformism (adapting to the masses).

These three models can also be seen in educational practice:

1. Authoritarianism – a teacher who hides behind strictness: they do not listen because they themselves are afraid of being heard.

2. Destructiveness – a teacher who ridicules "new trends" because they see in each of them a threat to lose themselves.

3. Conformism – a teacher who automatically implements new methods without worrying about their content – so as not to be excluded from "normative pedagogy".

This is not a caricature. It is the existential anatomy of survival in a profession that demands freedom but does not always provide the conditions for it.

THE TEACHER WHO FEARS CHANGE: THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF INTERNAL RESISTANCE.

"The greatest resistance is not against novelty. It is against the disintegration of oneself that this novelty forces".

In pedagogy, there is often talk of "resistance to change". This expression is heard in methodological offices, at conferences, in project reports. And for the most part, it carries condemnation: the teacher, they say, is not keeping up, does not want to, is not able to adapt. But what if we are mistaken not in our diagnosis, but in our tone? What if resistance is not a dead end of consciousness, but an attempt to protect the identity that has given meaning, dignity, and security for many years? What if it is not "outdatedness", but an ontological attempt not to dissolve into uncertainty?

Change as an event not of method, but of the "I".

When we say to a teacher, "Be open to change", we often fail to see what lies behind it: not just a change in the format of the lecture; not just a transition to digital platforms; not just a rejection of monologue.

We are essentially asking a person to rewrite themselves. To give up the role they have built over decades, through which they have defined themselves. And this means losing the "I" that, although limited, is familiar and gives a sense of control.

R. Kegan says that a person does not change on command, but only when their internal structure can no longer withstand the old limitations [41]. Change is a crisis. And not every educational context is capable of accompanying this crisis with dignity.

The psychology of resistance: not "I don't want to", but "I can't take it".

Teachers who are afraid of change often experience shame because they no longer feel like experts in the world of new practices; confusion because they do not understand what is expected of them; and self-blame because they want to respond but cannot psychologically keep up with the pace. Deep down, this resistance is not about refusal. It is an internal layer of anxiety, shame, pain, and loss of meaning.

And the more a teacher hides behind authority, discipline, and the phrase "I know how it should be done", the deeper their fear of being exposed in their own confusion sometimes is.

The shadow of transformation: when an invitation to change is aggression.

The educational system often denies teachers the right to process. They are either "implemented" or ignored. And then even the most worthy initiative becomes a threat to a person's mental landscape. When change is imposed as an order, without reflection, support, or space, it is experienced not as an opportunity, but as an intrusion.

In response, the survival instinct kicks in: denial, minimal participation, demonstrative indifference, formal implementation of changes without meaningful involvement.

How can we support teachers at the point of resistance?

Not with orders. Not with training. But with presence and understanding that within resistance lies pain. And acknowledging this pain is not capitulation to inertia, but a gesture of trust in the human depth of the teacher. A culture of dignity is not something that is imposed. It is something

that first recognises fatigue, confusion and vulnerability – and only then invites movement. Change does not happen when it is commanded. It happens when people are not afraid to be part of it.

Freedom as silence that is difficult to bear.

Freedom is not always action. Sometimes it is a space where nothing is imposed, and therefore everything becomes possible. But that is precisely why it causes anxiety. Because in this freedom, you cannot hide behind a function. You are no longer a "lecturer", a "standard enforcer", or a "competency assessor". You are you. And your words are a gesture, not an instruction. Your presence is an invitation, not control. And that is what is more frightening than any reform: being present as a person, not as a role.

But until we recognise that pedagogical escape from freedom is a defence strategy, not a flaw, we will reform forms without touching the essence.

Because only by acknowledging fear can we meet hope. And only through dignity can we restore freedom not as a burden, but as a right to be alive.

THE PEDAGOGY OF THE FUTURE: TRUST THAT THINKS

"The future is not where there is more data. It is where there is still feedback between the soul and the mind".

The future of education is not in VR headsets. Nor is it in KPIs, which multiply faster than values. Nor is it in the "digitisation of processes", which still fears the gaze of the student.

The future lies in a presence that can withstand ignorance. In a teacher who can step out of the role of information transmitter and become a thinking companion who honestly says, *"I don't know. But I am ready to search with you".* This is not a gesture of surrender. It is the highest act of intellectual dignity.

The future of education lies in students who do not hear *"You must know this by 6 p.m. In this form. And without unnecessary thoughts".* Instead, they hear, *"Your opinion has the right to mature. Even if it is not yet confident. Even if it is wrong".*

In the pedagogy of dignity, you can think not only after giving the correct answer. Thinking is already an action, even in confusion. Such education does not correct a person. It does not format them to expectations. It accompanies them.

Not into ready-made "career tracks". But onto a path where questions matter more than correct formulations. Where a lack of clarity is not a reason for humiliation, but a signal for dialogue.

Trust as a thinking event.

In the pedagogy of the future, trust is not an atmosphere. It is a method of cognition. Because only when you are not devalued can your opinion become your own, rather than reactive. Trust is not about "believing in the student". It is about *being with them at a time when they do not yet believe in themselves*. In such relationships, thinking is not imposed "from above". It is born in between. Between doubt and acceptance. Between a teacher who allows themselves to

listen and a student who allows themselves to think aloud for the first time – without fear of being wrong.

Education that has not yet lost its face.

In our age of existential deficit, education risks becoming a mechanism for controlling behaviour, and the teacher a moderator of algorithmic maturation. But we still have a chance.

A chance to create a pedagogy where standards do not shape people, but people rethink standards. Where competence is not the ticket to dignity, and dignity is the beginning of any competence.

The future is not a year on the calendar. It is the moment when it becomes possible to ask the audience: "Who are we when we are no longer afraid to think together?".

Hope is not an emotion. It is a form of ethical stubbornness.

Hope is not "everything will be fine". Hope is when, even if things are not fine, I will still be there. With the student, with myself, with meaning. When it is not about salvation, but about presence in a world that has not yet given up on reciprocity.

Resistance is when we continue to be human beings, despite algorithms. When education is not about "implementing innovations" but about being there.

CONCLUSIONS

Where humanity has not yet been lost.
"Education is not about skills. It's about what will remain with us when everything else is gone".
We began our reflections, looking confusedly at an education system that had lost its identity. We encountered post-truth, which had erased language. We saw teachers who were tired of being alive. We listened to silence, which was not always sympathetic. We called things by their names – not to accuse, but to see.

In this section, we did not write about reform. We wrote about people, personalities in education. Not those who are "graduating", "studying", or "being assessed". But those who feel. Breathe. Search. Fear. Believe. And remain.

Perhaps this is the most risky act in pedagogy: not to introduce innovation, but to remain present – where it hurts, where it is embarrassing, where you do not know. Because this is where dignity is born: *not from victory, but from the fact that you did not run away.*

Thank you to everyone who was here – with all your meanings, touches, and efforts. This is not just text. This is a space where people have not yet been lost. And if they are still here, then it is still possible to start talking again. It is still possible to listen. It is still possible to teach – not instructions, but coexistence.

Silence.
Breathing.
And that is already pedagogy.

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CHAPTER 3

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CHAPTER 3