

Tact and Atmosphere in the Pedagogical Relationship

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The purpose of the article is to analyze the experienced educational situation of the community of inquiry from the viewpoint of phenomenological hermeneutic philosophy. We will first discuss the meaning of dialogicality in general. After this, we will outline the meanings of tact and atmosphere as complicated phenomena aiming at dialogicality in a pedagogical relationship. Our article contributes to the recent discussion on the nature of the classroom CI and especially on the relationship between teacher and pupil in it within the P4C movement. Our aim is to offer some tentative elements for deeper understanding of the CI as an educative space by discussing it from these ‘new’ points of view.

1. Introduction

Converting the classroom into a community of inquiry (CI) is in the core of Philosophy for Children (P4C). It is assumed that doing philosophy as dialogical and communal inquiry has significant pedagogical value, because it encourages multidimensional (i.e. critical, creative and caring) thinking and this way produces comprehensive educative experiences built through language and thought in children. Matthew Lipman refers to this idea as an attempt to show, with the help of philosophy, issues that attract and satisfy children’s curiosity in a constructive manner. These overlapping functions (i.e. instrumental and consummative) of doing philosophy with children can be regarded as the main characteristics of this ‘reflective model of educational practice’ where the classroom CI, Lipman claims, should be proposed as ‘a master educational paradigm’.¹

The classroom CI pursues the dictum of Socrates by following the argument where it leads. Here the role of the teacher emerges as fundamental. It is the teacher who can guide and enhance the philosophical dimension in a dialogical inquiry, says Lipman.² In addition to knowing philosophy, Lipman continues, the teacher has to learn to think like a philosopher in that s/he has to be able to connect the questions that the class raises with the big philosophical questions of the tradition.³ On the other hand, the teacher should be capable of inspiring an atmosphere of friendship and co-operation. The ideal classroom CI is essentially a space for certain atmosphere or feelings, says Lipman.⁴

From the viewpoint of pedagogy, it would seem to be essential what happens in the CI when the

teacher and child encounter each other. That is, what kind of experience and which conditions are 'educative' in it? In this core question Lipman draws heavily on the educational thinking of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. For them both, "... instruction should be an interchange of experience in which the child brings his experience to be interpreted by the parent or the teacher."⁵ Following this idea, Lipman thinks that all educational situations involve this adult mediation between culture and the child where, as Mead further states, "the subject-matter of instruction (is) brought into the form of problems arising from the experience of the child" and where "the relation of the child to the instructor becomes a part of the natural solution."⁶ However, in that process the teacher is, for Lipman, the absolute pedagogical authority meaning not so much the demonstration of the authority of rule-enforcer as the pedagogical strength or the sagacity of the expert in pedagogy.⁷ S/he guides the inquiry by following the 'tertiary qualities' (or 'primary aspects') of the unique, indivisible and immediately experienced inquiry situation - as Lipman describes the *Prägnanz* that lends a sense of direction to the CI .⁸

Inquiry takes place in situations - in contextual wholes or fields. A situation is a whole by virtue of its "immediately pervasive quality" ... These qualities ... are akin to what we designate by such terms as "perplexing", "cheerful", and "disconsolate"... All inquiries are guided by such qualities, including Socratic inquiry.⁹

The purpose of this article is to analyze this indivisible and immediately experienced educational situation proposed by Lipman from the viewpoint of phenomenological hermeneutic philosophy. How could the teacher's pedagogical strength and sagacity, the relationship between teacher and pupil, and the unique nature of an inquiry situation in the classroom community be better understood within its framework? We will first discuss the meaning of dialogicality in general. After this, we will outline the meanings of tact and atmosphere as complicated phenomena aiming at dialogicality in a pedagogical relationship. Our article contributes to the recent discussion on the nature of the classroom CI and especially on the relationship between teacher and pupil in it within the P4C movement.¹⁰ Our aim is to offer some tentative elements for deeper understanding of the CI as an educative space by discussing it from these 'new' points of view.

2. Dialogue, encounter and the pedagogical relationship

Meeting other people is likely to be one of the most meaningful things in one's life. This special character of human relationships has been discussed in philosophy in terms of encountering and dialogicality/monologicality, among others. They are connected with the tradition of German idealism and above all with its critique which has given rise to phenomenology, existentialism and hermeneutics. The starting-point for this thinking is always the relationship of anyone's 'I' to other people. This "I"-centeredness gives rise to the concepts of the 'other' and 'otherness'. The phenomenon of encountering cannot be found if human relationships are viewed as if from the outside objectively and from the viewpoint of a third party. An encounter with another person always takes place in the lived perspective of an individual.

In modern discussion on educational philosophy, Martin Buber (1878-1965) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) would appear to have the role of classics in discussing these phenomena. The concepts of encounter and dialogicality have been, however, used in this discussion in different senses.¹

Their more limited use focusing on the special character of interpersonal relationships is referred to as existential by Otto Friedrich Bollnow.² This conception is represented above all by Buber. For him 'genuine encounters' and dialogicality are more like exceptional events in a man's life, and their value is added to through this exceptionality. According to the existentialist view, a dialogic encounter with another person means immediate experience of unity. The other person unpredictably makes a deep impression on me, touches me with his difference, and this experience changes me. Such an encounter with an experience of unity is not limited to verbal communication or, for instance, learning only. It is not a matter of 'factual' consciousness of another person's speech as a goal-oriented expansion of one's own previous knowledge, but of the special experience of a 'touch' that has a broad and deep influence on the development of our entire personality. Such existentially understood dialogical encounters with others – who can be our fathers and mothers, friends, dear ones or perhaps also children, among others – create our identity, our understanding of ourselves.³ We become ourselves while others 'tell' it to us in situations in which our persons are fully present. This very totality in situations of encounter is the core of this existential conception: reciprocity (You to Me and I to You), personal presence, kindness, a desire to understand the other person, and confidentiality are required for it to be realized

A broader and less demanding way to understand dialogicality is to define it as a relation to another person which also aims at unity with the other person, but which is satisfied with internal dialogization of mutual discourse (Bakhtin) or 'genuine understanding' (Gadamer). Mutual speech and understanding are also one of the most important levels of the dialogical relationship to Buber. The most fundamental question is: how can I attain an understanding of what is strange to me from my own starting-points? For Gadamer, genuine understanding does not mean the adaptation of the other into one's own horizon, i.e. into what in the other person's expression is interpreted to me as something already known and obvious, or what pleases me because it goes well together with my previous thoughts and feelings. This kind of listening or reading that excludes otherness, the difference of the other meaning horizon, is not about understanding at all, as nothing new is understood in it. Genuine understanding is for Gadamer a dialogic process of encountering the other person, in which my own meaning horizon is merged with the other different horizon, in which an effort is made to find a new understanding of what was spoken or written as text in unity with the 'other'. It is not about an attempt to understand the other person's mental life, but the issue at hand as seen from the other person's perspective. Then what would dialogicality mean in the so-called pedagogical relationship between educator and educatee? Does it allow for a dialogical encounter with the other person, and if it does, in what form?

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) are often cited among the first to present the concept of the pedagogical relationship. As the fundamental relationship in education it has been dealt with by German hermeneutic pedagogy in particular.⁴ In a broad sense, the pedagogical relationship refers to the whole of relationships constituting pedagogical activity in which the essential basic element, in addition to the educator and educatee, is culture (or tradition). Hermeneutic pedagogy aims at understanding and conceptualizing how the individual's process of *Bildung*, reproduction and on the other hand reforming of culture are ultimately possible within the framework of these basic elements. In this way the emphasis is on the educator's responsible action as a condition for the (subjective) individual process of *Bildung* on the one hand and for the reproduction of (objective) culture on the other. The not-yet-grownup educatee is not assumed to be capable of this alone. This might also be formulated in such a way that in a concrete educational situation something is paradoxical

cally realized in the field of the encounter between educator and educatee that is not only based on the educator's intention but on the other hand also cannot be realized without it. The educator is empowered both by the child and by the culture. Efforts have often been made to perceive this dialectical tension between subjective and objective and its outrun as a kind of synthesis ("Aufhebung") from the viewpoint of dialogicality.

Buber presents the pedagogical relationship as a special form of the dialogical relationship.⁵ The "I-You" relationship between educator and educatee cannot be fully reciprocal in the same way as the "I-You" relationship based on equality between adults which also can be such only in principle. The *Umfassung* of ideal dialogue means to Buber the ability of both the parties to the dialogue to live through the situation of encounter in all of its aspects, i.e. not only from his or her own viewpoint but also from the partner's point of view. Buber thinks that this is also the fundamental element in the relationship between educator and pupil although it is bipolar by nature. The educator must inspire a dialogical "I-You" relationship in the pupil, who in turn "... should refer to and acknowledge his or educator as this certain person."⁶ The educational connection is, however, broken when the pupil as well is capable of reciprocally living through the common situation from the educator's point of view.

According to Buber, an educative connection as such cannot represent full reciprocity in accordance with ideal dialogue. Education, similarly to the way in which a psychotherapist's patient is healed, requires that a person lives in the encounter but is also withdrawn at the same time. The educator experiences a child's growth from the child's point of view, but the child cannot experience the educator's activity from the educator's point of view. However, this very capability means the breaking of the educational connection with the emergence of the "I-You" relationship and finally in the evaporation of the pedagogical relationship, which also for Buber would appear to be the *raison d'être* of education.

Ben Spiecker discusses the same thematics in early interaction between mother and child.⁷ The infant's world mostly consists of her mother's behavior, her voice, face, body and hands. It is interesting that the mother behaves quite differently towards her small baby from older children. The mother acts unusually with her baby, using baby talk and exaggerated mimics. It would appear that adults are also attracted by physical features typical of children such as a large head, relatively large eyes, round cheeks, etc. According to Spiecker, the child also would appear to have from her birth an endogenic potential for observational and motor skills on which social interaction can be built. By being allowed to take part in various activities, tasks and games, the child learns rules and conventions through which she can participate in a human form of life. It is about social preadaptation. Although this so-called joined activity, says Spiecker, is largely based on biological and hormonal factors for the mother and on social preadaptation for the child, they alone cannot explain it.

On the basis of these observations Spiecker concludes by finding that the newborn baby and parents literally need each other, which in turn is a vital condition for a pedagogical relationship. The most important step in an infant's development is that s/he gets through interaction into a relationship with his/her parents, as a result of which s/he gradually achieves (learns, finds) the concept of dialogue. Early interaction is a one-way thing, a kind of pseudo-dialogue that is based on the mother's initiative as she echoes and responds time and again to the infant's actions. The mother thus acts as if the child's responses had a communicative meaning, thereby repeatedly drawing the child into situations similar to a dialogue. Spiecker characterizes the parents' action and its conceptual frame of reference as one-sided

contrafactuality, in which the parents presuppose in relation to the child the principles that should be realized at the same time. Spiecker maintains that for the very reason that a child is addressed as if s/he already were an autonomous person, s/he also becomes an autonomous person in relation to significant others. Spiecker's one-sided contrafactuality as a unique characteristic of the pedagogical relationship is actually a reformulation of the idea of bipolarity associated by Buber to the relation between educator and educatee.

The analyses of the special character of the pedagogical relationship mentioned above are united by the idea of the child developing in a human way for the very reason that the educator initiates him/her into the form of common action within the framework of his own meaning space. However, putting an emphasis on the fact that it is not a result of natural development but a human achievement aiming at the growing person's autonomy, the wish is to underline the well-known idea of hermeneutic pedagogy about education as a necessary condition of the process of *Bildung*. As *Bildung* is basically an open process as such, for which a condition is that the educatee necessarily remains for the educator as the 'other', the question arises of what is the ultimate content of the educator's mind guiding the concrete educational situations. What is it exactly that takes place in them? We will confine ourselves next to discuss this complicated field of phenomena in the light of the concepts of tact and atmosphere. So far as we can see, they are important phenomena aiming at the dialogicality in the pedagogical relationship.

3. The notion of tact

Tact, *Bildung* and hermeneutical rationality: Hans-Georg Gadamer

According to Max van Manen, "the educator cannot get oriented on the basis of the sciences". Not a single scientific theory of education can tell us how to act in a given unique educational situation. The sciences aim at finding general explanations for events in nature and human action, while Manen thinks that educational research should create "a pedagogical theory of uniqueness". Every educational situation is always special and individual in terms of the educator, educatee and setting. He does not mean that everything connected with education is always fully individual and occasional, but that this aspect of uniqueness is always essentially connected with any educational situation. Educational research should enhance the educators' "awareness of educational situations".⁸

This kind of idea, though in more general level, is presented by Hans-Georg Gadamer when emphasizing the value of the Aristotelic concept of *phronesis* for the understanding of interpersonal situations. In the chapter entitled "The hermeneutic relevance of Aristotle" of *Truth and Method* (1960) he presents his interpretation of this idea.⁹ Moral situations require an understanding that is neither theoretical scientific knowledge nor technical knowledge that is needed to realize projected goals or to produce something. Purely scientific or technical knowledge as the guiding principle of the educator, for instance, 'a theoretically based grip on work', would lead to a mechanical attempt at solution in which the educational plan and its methodical realization would be predetermined things. Here theory precedes practice in a unidirectional way, even if theory was applied specifically to the situation. According to Gadamer, practical consideration and accordant action only emerges in connection with each unique situation. The educational situation contains essential aspects that do not derive from anything generalizable or modellable. Tact is one such an aspect.

Gadamer associates tact with the core of *Bildung*. Becoming cultured is to Gadamer a historical

process of the development of the spirit, and it functions as an endlessly shaping element within the sphere of which the cultured (Gebildete) person always moves. Bildung together with the concepts of common sense (sensus communis), judgment (Urteilkraft) and taste (Geschmack) forms the basis on which the (non-methodical) hermeneutic, interpretative understanding in humanistic sciences is based. They represent a practical, non-reflective way of knowing based on the intuitive nature of the humanistic tradition derived from the phronesis of Aristotle's theory of virtues, the immediately opening readiness for action in a hermeneutic situation. Tact is for Gadamer a kind of idea that puts together these basic humanistic concepts and generates and gives shape to Bildung.¹⁰

Furthermore, tact means to Gadamer a certain kind of elasticity of the mind, an ability to revive by forgetting and keeping oneself open to others, i.e. an ability to remove oneself further from one's own immediate interests. Tact manifests itself in reactive sensitivity in situations for action in which we cannot get any information from any general principles. Tact tells what we must say or do in a particular situation. In its inexplicitness and inexpressibility, Gadamer's tact helps to keep a distance, avoid aggressiveness and intrusion into a person's intimate sphere. Gadamer points out above all that tact is at the same time a form of both knowing and being. Thereby its truth is practical by nature, a hermeneutic rationality in distinction from the methodical knowledge of the natural sciences.¹¹

Gadamer thinks that a condition for trust in tact is cultivated esthetic (in the broad sense of the word) and historical awareness. Tact does not work reflectively, but as a sensation-like immediacy, in individual cases capable of confident analyses and evaluations without demanding for criteria or grounds for itself. Tact as a function of esthetic and historical Bildung, says Gadamer, as a kind of 'universal sense', goes behind the empirical senses differentiated for their own functions and is active in all directions.¹²

For Gadamer, tact connected with hermeneutic experience or genuine and new understanding through the merger of horizons constitutes the condition for the possibility of the radical openness of the process of Bildung. In other words, tact is anchored with the dialogical encountering of the 'other' in the construction of Bildung. Thus, tact is essentially a dialogical phenomenon. We can then also ask what tact means especially from the viewpoint of the construction of an educational situation. What is tact in the pedagogical relationship?

Pedagogical tact

In his book entitled *Pädagogischer Takt* (1962), Jacob Muth provides a survey of the history of the concept of tact.¹³ He locates its first articulation particularly in the educational discourse in the first pedagogical lectures of the young Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) in 1802. It appears that tact as a social conception was crystallized to Herbart from various sources. It was influenced by his experiences as a private tutor in Switzerland on the one hand, and then his musical experiences in particular, and by various written analyses of interpersonal relations that Herbart had quite obviously familiarized himself with.¹⁴ Tact is, after all, originally connected with the rhythm and pulse of music. The development of understanding their meaning from the mechanic beating of time into varied soft nuances took place in the compositions of the classic masters of the 18th century – something that Herbart also obviously observed when he took part in the social life of the von Steigers. 'Tone' (Ton) proposed by Schleiermacher in 1799 as a concept to describe the sensitivity and flexibility of human intercourse (Elastizität im Umgang)

clearly heralded Herbart's tact.¹⁵

Herbart thinks that the critical question of an educator's skill is how s/he manifests tact in his/her action. "Die grosse Frage ... ob jemand ein guter oder schlechter Erzieher seyn werde, ist einzig diese: wie sich jener Tact bei ihm ausbilde?"¹⁶ Tact finds a place between theory and practice when a human being makes quick decisions and presents immediate judgments in his action, says Herbart. It is, above all, a situationally specific form of action based on sensitive feeling (Gefühl), and only remotely connected with ideas consciously derived from theory or beliefs. Herbart's tact senses the unique nature of situations, and is "...der unmittelbare Regent der Praxis."¹⁷

After Herbart, references to pedagogical tact have been mostly made in the German discussion.¹⁸ Meanwhile tact has remained almost fully unknown to Anglo-American research. William James, however, does refer to it quite emphatically at the beginning of his *Talks to Teachers* (1899), but only Max von Manen in the 1990's has introduced it more systematically for English discussion. James thinks that psychological knowledge alone is not enough for a good teacher, as s/he needs a very special additional talent, the fine instinct and understanding to do the very thing that needs to be said and done at a particular moment.¹⁹ For James, teaching is an art in which a resourceful teacher applies the results of science to practice in his or her own way. Instinctive perception of the situation is the most important thing in this art of teaching, says James. It is a kind of pedagogical ingenuity by means of which the teacher transforms the situation in which the teacher and pupil meet into a process of growth.²⁰ James uses these arguments to justify the autonomy of education in relation to psychology. The influence of Continental European educational thought on James seems quiet obvious. At the beginning of his discussion, James also explicitly mentions Herbart and a little later the concepts of 'tone', 'school tone' and 'tact'.²¹

However, the concept of pedagogical tact was not developed systematically until Muth in *Pädagogischer Takt*. He emphasizes the binding and planless nature (Nichtplanbarkeit) of pedagogical tact as it is essentially connected with the educator's unpredictable feeling (Gefühl) that s/he only experiences in each individual situation.

Takt ist nicht dem planenden Willen des Lehrers unterworfen, und darum kann taktvolles Handeln nicht in einem planvollen erzieherischer Vorgehen aktualisiert werden, sondern immer nur in der unvorhersehbaren Situation, die den Erzieher in Anspruch nimmt. ²²

Muth goes on by elaborating this notion especially from the didactic point of view. This means to him an attempt to perceive the meaning of tact by examining it in its functional contexts or in the concrete situations that manifest the above-mentioned characteristics associated with tact. According to Muth, tact manifests itself in education in general in many different ways. It is manifested in the engagement of speech (Verbindlichkeit der Spache), naturalness of action (Naturlichkeit des Handelns), avoidance of hurting the child (Vermeiden der Verletzung des Kindes) and keeping the distance necessary for a pedagogical relationship (im pädagogischen Bezug notwendigen Distanz).²³ In individual teaching situations, Muth says that tact is seen in situational confidence (Situationssicherheit), dramaturgic skill (dramaturgische Fähigkeit) and talent of improvisation (improvisatorische Gabe).²⁴ Muth specifically tries to show the opening of the realization of tact when the school ventures to follow free forms of action that were not planned beforehand.²⁵

Es ist eben die Regel, dass die Nichtplanbarkeit einer Form schulischen Handelns und damit die Möglichkeit der Aktualisierung pädagogischen Taktes in dem Masse stärker wird, in dem die betreffende Form von der absichtlichen Führung durch den Lehrer und allgemeinen Verbindlichkeiten didaktischer und methodischer Art freier wird, dafür aber auch in ihrem Wagnischarakter wächst.²⁶

Lack of advance planning means openness to what happens in a unique pedagogical situation. It is about risk taking in a way, allowing room for tact for this very reason. For Muth, this most profound essence of teachership obviously derived from Herbart, i.e. unselfish surrender to the child, the ability to love (Liebesfähigkeit) all people and especially learning to make quick assessments and decisions and acquiring situational confidence, does not follow any routine rules that can be learnt beforehand, although one can get prepared for them within certain limits.²⁷ It is easy to note that Muth's thinking manifests not only Herbart's but also Gadamer's ideas. It is worth noting that he still does not examine the tact of the pedagogical relationship from the viewpoint of dialogicality, for instance.

In his book entitled *The Tact of Teaching* Max van Manen recapitulates and modifies the themes of Muth's *Pädagogische Takt* from a phenomenological viewpoint through a variety of practical examples. In this sense his working method in conceptualizing tact is similar to Muth's. Van Manen makes a distinction between general tactful action as symmetric interaction of adults and pedagogical tact which he considers asymmetric, although he attributes the same characteristics to both of them. Van Manen characterizes the former as a considerate way to act rather than as reflective knowing. Although general tact often involves withdrawal and waiting, it is still about a human being exerting an influence on another one. A tactful person needs to be sensitive but at the same time strong, as tact may require straightforwardness, determination and an open heart. Tact is about sincerity and truthfulness, it is never deceitful or misleading. Van Manen describes that a tactful person is able to 'read' another person's internal state, i.e. other people's thoughts and feelings from a variety indirect signs (gestures, behavior, expression, body). Furthermore, tact is connected with an ability to interpret the psychological and social meanings of this internal state. A tactful person understands the requirements, limitations and balance of a situation, which is why s/he knows almost automatically how far to go in them and how distant to stay. According to van Manen, tact would eventually also seem to be associated with a certain moral intuitiveness, as a tactful person is capable of realizing how to act well in a given situation. Tact in this general sense is for van Manen about deeply dialogical respect of human subjectivity and dignity, openness and sensitivity to another person's thoughts and feelings irrespective of the other person's age, for instance.²⁸

Van Manen considers the tact of the pedagogical relationship to be asymmetric in that the adult has no right to expect it from the child. Similarly to Muth, van Manen also emphasizes the responsibility connected with pedagogical tact, which means above all protecting the child and helping the child to grow. For van Manen, pedagogical tact is a complicated phenomenon that is not based to any major extent on habits or problem solving. It is not only intellectual or bodily, not purely reflective consideration, nor spontaneous or arbitrary. Tactful pedagogical action means a kind of thoughtful alertness, says van Manen, in which the teacher is present, i.e. s/he does not try to reflectively draw away from a situation by, for instance, thinking about or experimenting with various alternatives or consequences to action. Van Manen interprets Herbart's - and why not also James's - idea of pedagogical tact between

theory and practice to mean a conception through which the problematic separation of theory from practice can be surpassed. He does not conceive of tact so much as an ability to make quick decisions as a certain kind of mindfulness that enables considerate action.²⁹ So when we, says van Manen, come to tactful action rather than say that it is 'reflective' we should say that tactful action is thoughtful in the sense of 'mindful'.³⁰ Ultimately, tact is also for van Manen at the core of the pedagogical relationship.

...the real life of teaching and of parenting happens in the thick life itself when one must know with a certain confidence just what to say or what to do (or what not to say or do) in situations with children. Therefore, pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact may be seen to constitute the essence and excellence of pedagogy.... Pedagogy is structured like tact.The tact that adults are able to show with children is a function of the nature of pedagogy itself.³¹

Similarly to Spiecker and Muth, van Manen would also appear to think that educatorship is at least partly based on the ethical responsibility to offer oneself constantly to be available to the child as a kind of instrument or mechanism. Thereby the educator is assumed to act in such way that s/he produces the results that s/he immediately feels (believes) the child to intend in his/her own action. It is not about conscious calculation, but a task that opens up to the educator as an immediate requirement and responsibility. This relation between child and parent/teacher is symbolized by 'living with the child in loco parentis'.³² Van Manen means by this the normatively loaded interaction between adult and child which is permeated by the adult's responsibility to take care of the child's life and growth into a responsible person, " ... the human charge of protecting and teaching the young to live in this world and to take the responsibility for themselves, for others, and for the continuance and welfare of the world."³³ In this educational task 'oriented towards the good' van Manen demands priority of experience as it is entwined into the adult's pedagogical tact in the pedagogical moments of educational situations as a multifaced and complex mindfulness toward children.

As new aspects of tact, van Manen points out the orientation towards the 'other' connected with it and the touchingness of tact.³⁴ Tact is the practice of 'otherness', states van Manen. This means overcoming egocentrism by realizing what and how other people are to 'myself'. This double viewpoint of 'myself' means, above all, the experience of the other's vulnerability. According to van Manen, "...it is when I see that the other is a person who can be hurt, distressed, pained, suffering, anguished, weak, in grief or despair that I may be opened to the essential being of the other".³⁵ Van Manen would appear to think here that even the requirement issued to the educator 'to be for the child' or to 'orient oneself to the child' is ultimately based on the 'other' realized in that double perspectiveness of 'myself'. Due to these double perspectives, I also experience myself as 'seen' by the child, which in turn places the immediate ethical requirement that concerns me. Based on this basic starting-point, pedagogical tact is manifested in many ways, plenty of which are itemized by van Manen, largely recapitulating the characterizations that were previously presented by Muth. It means, for instance, an ability of holding back, openness to the child's experience, preparation for subjectivity, delicate influence, situational confidence, and improvisatory ability. Pedagogical tact is further conveyed in speech, silence, eyes, gestures and the atmosphere.

The responsibility included in the tact of the pedagogical relationship referred to above as a kind of immediate ethical primate can be understood through the concept of responsibility proposed by Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995). Levinas understands responsibility

...as responsibility for the Other, thus as responsibility for what is not my deed, or for what does not even matter to me; or which precisely does matter to me, is met by me as face...The face orders and ordains me. Its signification is an order signified ... this order is the very signifyingness of the face.³⁶

For Levinas, the 'face' means everything that is expressive in the 'other', thus actually the whole meaningful body. Adapted to the educational situation, Levinas' thinking means the experience of responsibility as 'being for the child'. It falls on me immediately without me in any way consciously taking responsibility for him or her. Therefore I feel affinity with the child. It does not, however, derive from intentionality or knowledge of the other, but is based on the above unselfish sense of responsibility. In this way the pedagogical relationship can turn into a Buberian 'genuine dialogical encounter', an exceptional experience of existential unity with the child.

The phenomenon of pedagogical tact reveals the many levels of the encounter between an adult and a child. An educative situation cannot be based on monologic unidirectionality, as it is shaped in tact, a dynamic manifestation brought forward by Bildung itself. The various concrete forms of pedagogical tact described above lead to the necessity of perceiving the educational situation as a comprehensive field of bodily phenomena. The educational situation gives rise to 'space' and 'atmosphere' that search for dialogicality and are not derived from either party of the interaction before that situation.

4. Bodily space and pedagogical atmosphere

The relationship between 'I' and the other is one of the basic aspects in the 'overall structure of being a human being' as expressed by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).³⁷ This interpersonal relationship is connected with another aspect that fundamentally shapes human life, namely experienced corporeality and the space and atmosphere associated with it. They are also always present in the constitution of an educational situation. The word 'body' usually only awakens anatomical or physiological thoughts and mental images in us, because our culture has defined it purely from the viewpoint of the natural sciences in the most typical conceptions of man (dualism, naturalism). If we ask within this framework the question of the pedagogical meaning of the body, of the relation between learning and body, for instance, it is only meaningful from the viewpoint of the natural sciences, mostly brain physiology. The issue can be, however, approached phenomenologically from the experiential point of view, how this thing we call body is manifested to us in the experienced, non-reflective flow of life, how it is part of the life we experience. The meaning of such research lies in the fact that corporeality in an educational situation is present to each individual particularly as experienced corporeality and not so much as an anatomic physiological human body of the natural sciences.

I am in double perspectives

According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), the dualistic way of distinguishing between human awareness and body has led us 'away from the original experience of the body'.³⁸ He thinks that this experience is comprehensive and uniform: I am here doing something. This 'I' is then not consciousness, mind or thinking, but the bodily 'I' or 'I-Body'. The functional life of a human being is essentially determined by the viewpoint of bodily experience. According to Merleau-Ponty, 'corporeality is the latent horizon of all our experiences'.³⁹ It forms the background, often quite unnoticeable, of all

our experiences, on the basis of which we act in the world. Corporeality is also involved in all perception of the world, in the construction of preunderstanding, and thereby also in the formation of all higher understanding and knowledge. Human activity is intentional, i.e. we approach reality on the basis of our meanings, objectives and values. This way the acting body is also intentional. (Understanding the action of an individual requires the understanding of the underlying meanings.) This very point of view gives rise to the phenomenological question of the meaning of corporeality in an educational situation.

Merleau-Ponty discusses about the ability of the body to 'understand'. It emerges through experience and habit and is manifested in our immediate bodily action. For instance, dance as 'erotic understanding' would not even succeed under conscious control. Similarly to Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty aims to emphasize that human life and action is not only controlled by some isolated, higher consciousness and thinking.

The interpersonal world involves two perspectives. The first one is 'I' with my functional orientation toward the world, while the other one is the same in reverse, i.e. another person, another 'I' in front of me as a bodily actor oriented toward the world. I am 'seeing and seen' at the same time as expressed by Merleau-Ponty. This simultaneous existence of two viewpoints is present in all our relations to others, thus also in an educational situation. From the teacher's perspective, a pupil is something other than the pupil feels s/he is, and vice versa. Awareness of this difference of perspectives can only be lost in extreme monologicality. In what way do other people exist to me, and in what way do I exist to them? Through this question, corporeality enters the field of expressions and meanings between human beings and of their understanding.

Max Scheler (1874-1928) emphasizes this hermeneutic aspect of corporeality.⁴⁰ He thinks that I do not see the pupil sitting in front of me as a physical body, but immediately as a whole of bodily expressions, meaningful movements, positions, expressions, gestures, speech. These expressions with different varieties and nuances carry social meanings which can only be understood in the field of meanings of a cultural community. The expressive body of 'I' and the 'other' thus forms the basis for all 'I - the other' relationships. If the relationship between 'I' and the other is only understood as some kind of a 'mental' relationship - such as mutual speech, verbal meanings and their understanding - we drift easily to the domain of 'what takes place in the head'. We thus lose the opportunity to examine the connections between pedagogical tact, atmosphere and corporeality, for instance.

The various descriptions presented earlier of the ways in which pedagogical tact is conveyed focus on the significance of corporeality in an educational situation. For instance, a look as a carrier of tact cannot be interpreted technically as establishment of eye contact, but it must be considered as a relationship between looks between two corporeal human beings. It is about a meaning relationship experienced between a teacher and pupil, which meanings the look acquires in that very situation between those two people.⁴¹

Space and atmosphere

In the 'structure of human existence' described by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*, a special place is occupied by the experienced space and the state (*Befindlichkeit*) or mood (*Stimmung*) connected with it. The experiential/experienced space is not the same thing as the physical, objectively understood space as a place where we are located as physical bodies. The experiential space in each and everyone's per-

sonal meaning horizon only arises when we enter it in a bodily form.⁴² Thus the basis of experiencing space is in each person's corporeality, in the bodily mood. The body is a point where the spatial perspective as well as its atmosphere open up. Herman Schmitz expresses this in an exciting way by saying that space flows along with us.⁴³ Space always means something to us, we experience it as human meanings. According to Heidegger and phenomenologists in general, it is not a field of mental phenomena as some kind of internal feelings of an individual. We do not create a space and its atmosphere in our own minds, as it emerges inevitably in our bodily connection with the world, above all with other people, as a phenomenon between people. The atmosphere thus arises in connection with a situation, it is spirited above all by the bodily human beings in it.

The people in a space have a crucial significance for the emergence and change of the atmosphere. An educational space is always a human space. So it is not just a matter of the furnishings, size or lighting of the classroom, but above all a matter of the social mood in that space. Corporeality and experience of space entwined with other people, the atmosphere, mood, are non-intellectual aspects of the pedagogical relationship.⁴⁴ That is why their description and conceptual grasp is highly difficult. And it is similarly difficult to try to guide or manipulate them consciously in a practical educational situation. And yet their significance from the viewpoint of growing can be inestimable.

In his book entitled *Die Pädagogische Atmosphäre* (1964), Otto Friedrich Bollnow discusses the space within which a concrete and active pedagogical relationship, for instance, can develop.⁴⁵ Bollnow thinks that the education of a child presupposes certain affective states in both the adult and child. Honesty, impartiality, an ability to distinguish one's own life from the child's life, self-control and industry are examples of virtues whose realization in the educator him/herself before the actual pedagogical relationship helps him/her to get oriented toward the child. On the other hand, necessary preconditions of a child's growth include his or her confidence with the teacher, sense of responsibility, love and respect. According to Bollnow, they enable not only taking care of the child but also the child's readiness to be taken care of. Bollnow puts a special emphasis, however, on the double-sidedness that is essential for a pedagogical relationship. In an educational situation this is constituted by the intertwining and inseparability of the adult's affective attitude and, correspondingly, the child's emotional disposition. Bollnow thus thinks that they are not separate and separable from each other, but different aspects of the same affective medium, comprising both the caring adult and the child, which is why they can only be separated in a relative sense. So, by the concept of pedagogical atmosphere Bollnow means the total joint harmony or disharmony between the child and the pedagogue that is formed between them in an educational situation.⁴⁶ The atmosphere of the educational situation - experienced to be, for instance, confident, safe, cheerful, loving, respectful, heavy, troubled or oppressive - is not derived from either party to the interaction as a mental feeling, but is constituted in the encounter by both 'here and now'. These moods that arise between people help to provide for the total experience of the space.

According to Bollnow, the generally supportive mood experienced by a child gives rise to unique sentient feelings in him or her in relation to the people which whom s/he is involved in a pedagogical relationship. Both the child and the adult are supported by this general mood, and its fundamental nature has a strong influence on both of them. They both in turn actively create more of this encompassing atmosphere. A positive and healthy growth presupposes that the child shall master certain sentient feelings in relation to corresponding feelings in the adult. According to Bollnow, these feelings

include the love and confidence shown by the adult to children. They lead to a merger of the relationship, which is why it is difficult to make a distinction between the adult's and the child's viewpoints. Yet from the adult's point of view, these feelings have a different meaning. From the adult's viewpoint, the nature of the pedagogical relationship involves 'reflective realization of what is good', sensing the meaning of humanness, hope for the child's growth and finally, an endless sense of patience to know how to keep down the adult's expectations and other requirements.⁴⁷

Bollnow is astonished at why these problems that are essential from the viewpoint of children's education have not really been studied and developed after Herman Nohl. The cause is likely to be connected with the difficulty of getting a sufficiently intelligible account of the educator's pedagogical acts in educational situations. To understand the educational process, one therefore tends to drift easily into analogies with production methodology and techniques or with the organic idea of 'allowing growth'. Bollnow thinks we thereby lose what is essential in education, as we fail to achieve a pedagogical atmosphere. We can add to this that those various comparisons – James, for instance, refers to education as art – do not reach the principles of responsibility and reciprocity that are essentially connected with the educational situation.

There is no such thing as monological tact, only tactlessness, yet there is a monological pedagogical atmosphere. It is produced by the educator's unidirectional goal-oriented intervention to change the other one, expressions of power, withdrawal into an official role, and haste, among other things. Meanwhile in a pedagogical relationship that aspires for dialogicality the atmosphere is essentially based on openness, the desire to understand the other person, kindness, respect for the other person's dissimilarity, confidence, making room for the other and personal presence. The educator has a primary responsibility to construct the atmosphere, not only between the pupils and him/herself but also between the pupils themselves.

The atmosphere is largely constituted in a bodily manner, through expressions of corporeal meanings. In a pedagogical relationship, the looks between two people, for instance, can involve the assumption of power, they can close or make silent, or inquire, challenge discussion, laugh, respect, appreciate. In the same way bodily locations in a space provide for a meaningful atmosphere. The most easily noticed of them is probably the teacher's position in front of the others, or his or her way to move in the classroom.

An essential question in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* is related to the pre-intellectual conditions of perceiving the world (*Erschlossenheit*). He places the mood arising in a space as the foremost of them. The affects generated in a space function as forms of the world opening up with understanding and speech. So they do not just constitute an obscure (or obscuring) background space for understanding, but are by themselves an essential part of the opening of the new. The world and self open up in accordance with their spiritedness, says Heidegger.⁴⁸ In a state of fear, something in the world opens up as threatening, in haste as disturbing, in love as lovable. For us to be able in the first place to meet something certain in the world, it must according to Heidegger already have taken shape, it must have opened up somehow in advance. So, for a thing that is encountered to get a meaning, to be understood and interpreted as something, it must be preceded by some kind of a preopening. According to Heidegger, this kind of opening is effected by affective relations with the world.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) talks in a somewhat similar sense about the interests of life, value goals and feelings.⁴⁹ Affects are part of functional orientation in the world. Action is always somehow tuned to observe the environment, it already has interests, a kind of orientation, and directed by those interests new things can open up to 'I'. The preconditions for the possibility of the opening up of the world are constituted in being in the world itself, in the relations between 'I' and the world. Only the mood of love can open up the world and self in a certain way. Love presupposes both hubs of the relationship, the loving person and the lovability of the world. The "ability" for love can only emerge in a world where lovability can be encountered.

Heidegger's conception of 'the opening up of the world' (Erschlossenheit) means learning in its full scope. The atmosphere shall not be only thought of as an 'obscure background' for learning, but as something that essentially guides and constitutes understanding. Heidegger thinks that understanding and the atmosphere are solidly intertwined. What and how is understood has been intertwined into the atmosphere of learning. This holistic pattern of thought typical of phenomenologists and hermeneuts does not approve of the examination of cognitive structures in separation from non-cognitive structures (which are often turned down referring to them as 'feelings' or a 'physical state').

5. Concluding remarks

In this essay we have tried to outline the pedagogical relationship as a field of phenomena aiming at dialogicality. Tact and atmosphere were raised here as essential phenomena intertwined with each other. They are related to phenomenological hermeneutic understanding of the educational situation. This is about unpredictable and unique complicated phenomena of the pedagogical relationship beyond the reach of science, through which we think the educational situation in its "immediately pervasive quality"-as Dewey suggests - can be better understood. They are realized in the educator's ability to read the educational situation *hic et nunc* - here and now, in the ability based on the educator's experience to act educatively depending on the meaning perspectives arising in each situation and the children involved in it. This in turn presupposes a dialogical attitude towards the educatee, a desire to encounter the child as the 'other', and it does not work only on the basis of goals and plans constructed in advance. In tact and atmosphere, subjective encounters objective transformed by teacher.

¹ Lipman 2003, 83.

² Lipman 2001.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Lipman 1994.

⁵ Mead 1993; see also Lipman 2003, 84-85.

⁶ Mead 1993.

⁷ Lipman 2001.

⁸ Lipman 2003, 85-86. Here, Lipman is referring to Dewey's *Logic* and George Yoos's article "A Work of Art as a Standard of Itself" (1967). See also pp. 204, 243-244 in Lipman 2003.

⁹ *ibid.*, 85-86 (quotation "immediately pervasive quality" from Dewey's *Logic*).

¹⁰ For example Kohan 2002; Lushyn 2002; Lushyn 2003; Lushyn & Kennedy 2003. Much of the work of David Kennedy (for example Kennedy 1990, 1992, 1997 and 1998) is also closely connected with the thematics of the article.

¹¹ See for example Burbules 1993, 110-130.

¹² Bollnow 1959.

¹³ See Taylor 1989.

¹⁴ Actually hermeneutic pedagogy as a European pedagogical tradition has many different variations. According to

Siljander (1988) it consists of such developmental phases as the so called ‘geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik’, hermeneutic-critical pedagogy and objective – hermeneutic. As known, pedagogy as an independent field of science can according to Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), the discipline of Schleiermacher, be only based on the relationship between educator and child. Later, Dilthey’s disciple Herman Nohl (1879-1960) justifies the autonomy of education with the importance of a child’s well-being and his unconditional right to be educated. This presupposes a pedagogical relationship (pädagogischer Bezug) between adult and child, in which the essential thing is the attitude towards the child’s subjective life. Nohl characterizes it as a loving relationship between a mature and developing human being, the goal of which is the child’s benefit so that s/he can him/herself find the direction of his life without the requirements of an adult or any other authority. This enlightened demand of autonomy was also the core idea in Immanuel Kant’s thought of education. The justification of pedagogy as an independent branch of science is also based according to Nohl on the *sui generis* nature of the pedagogical relationship. The fact that it gradually evaporates and becomes unnecessary is not connected with any other human relationship. Ernst Weniger, Hermann Flitner and Otto Bollnow, the disciplines of Nohl, were the main authors of geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik in Europe until 1970’s when the representatives of hermeneutic-critical pedagogy (e.g. Wolfgang Klafki, Klaus Mollenhauer, Hervig Blankertz) displaced them. However, the discussion of some basic themes such as ‘pedagogical relationship’ and ‘pedagogical field’ (pädagogische Feld) still survived. (Siljander 1988).

¹⁵ Buber 1984, 130.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 131.

¹⁷ Spiecker 1984.

¹⁸ van Manen 1990, 150.

¹⁹ Gadamer 1982, 278-289.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 5-39; 278-289.

²¹ *ibid.*, 16-18.

²² *ibid.*, 16-18.

²³ In our discussion of the history of tact we mostly lean on Muth’s (1962, 63-72) analysis later also referred to by van Manen (1993, 128-133) and also on some original sources.

²⁴ Here Muth mentions the works of Cambe (1783) and Knicke (1787).

²⁵ Also Kant seems to refer to this very same idea in his *Thoughts on Education* (1803) when discussing about discretion (Klugheit) and refinement (Civilisierung). See Kant 1992, 19.

²⁶ Herbart in *Sämtliche Werke* (1887) according to Muth 1962, 68, 125.

²⁷ Direct quotation from Herbart by Muth, Muth 1962, 68. van Manen (1993, 132-133) provides a more detailed analysis of the connotations of the German terms Gefühl and Tactgefühl.

²⁸ Muth mentions in this connection the works of e.g. Martin Buber, Theodor Ballauff, Tuiskon Ziller, Peter Petersen and Otto Friedrich Bollnow.

²⁹ James, W. 1913, 11.

³⁰ It should be noted that James does not analyze this transformation of the encounter from the viewpoint of dialogicality, for instance. James’s idea of transformation in the encounter between teacher and pupil is later seen as an idea elaborated further by Mead and Dewey.

³¹ *ibid.*, 11, 41-42.

³² Muth 1962, 12, 71-72.

³³ *ibid.*, 26-62.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 74-94.

³⁵ *ibid.*, 74, 95-104.

³⁶ *ibid.*, 103.

³⁷ In this context Muth discusses in depth the debate on the topic between Tuiskon Ziller and the Herbartians. (*ibid.*, 107-119).

³⁸ *ibid.*, 125-128.

³⁹ van Manen 1993, 128.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 109.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 130, 133.

⁴² *ibid.*, 5-7.

⁴³ *ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁴ In fact, the word ‘tact’ is etymologically associated with touching. The Latin word *tactus* from which tact is derived

means a touch, while the verb *tangere* means touching. Latin-based con-tact refers to intimate human relationship, intimacy and connectedness (see e.g. van Manen 1993, 126-127).

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 140.

⁴⁶ Levinas 1996, 95-98.

⁴⁷ In his book entitled *Sein und Zeit* (1927), Martin Heidegger has made a huge effort to analyze the whole of an individual's perspective, the 'overall structure of being a human being'. According to him, some highly general basic issues can be found in phenomenological analysis that are connected with all life situations and determine the way they are experienced. They are ways characteristic to all of us to get oriented towards the world, other people, cultural things, nature and always at the same time toward

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