ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE ON ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP AS AN INDISPENSABLE PREREQUISITE FOR EDUCATION TO HAVE A FUTURE

Ogün ÜREK*

ABSTRACT

When other educational fields are put aside, it can be claimed that the nature of school education is directly linked with the nature of mutual communication between the tutor and tutee. The more mutual communication has the relationship; the education shall be more productive and have rich content. When the structure of todays' education is considered within the context of mutual communication, it can be observed that mutuality of education is passing through a more turbulent period than ever. It seems not possible for education to have a future when a method to improve this communication could not be devised.

At this point, one can assert that an ethical relationship understanding with an onthological-anhtropological basis, as Kuçuradi understands, may operate. Because, ethical relationship, as Kuçuradi considers, is a relationship founded based on an understanding that, other than gender, age, religion, language, race etc. which are the basis of social relationships, considers persons as an indivisible integrity namely as human, above all. Within this context, it becomes an indispensable prerequisite for a tutor, the trainer, to possess such knowledge of relationship to build up a qualified educational relationship.

Keywords: *Ethical relationship, Education, Knowledge, Communication,*

(Eğitimin Bir Geleceğinin Olabilmesinin Onsuz Olamayacak Önkoşulu Olarak Etik İlişki ve Etik İlişkinin Bilgisi)

ÖZET

Diğer eğitim alanları bir kenara bırakıldığında okul eğitiminin niteliğinin öğretmen ile öğrenci arasındaki karşılıklı iletişimin niteliğiyle doğrudan bağlantılı olduğu söylenebilir. İlişki ne denli çok karşılıklı bir iletişime sahipse eğitim de o denli daha üretken ve zengin bir yapıya sahip olur. Karşılıklı iletişim bağlamında günümüzdeki eğitimin yapısına bakıldığında ise, eğitimdeki karşılıklığın geçmişe göre daha sorunlu bir dönemde olduğu görülür. Bu karşılıklı iletişimi artırmanın bir yolu bulunmadığı durumda eğitimin bir geleceğinin olması olanaklı görünmemektedir.

Bu noktada Kuçuradi'nin anladığı anlamda ontolojik –antropolojik temeldeki bir etik ilişki anlayışının bir iş görebileceği ileri sürülebilir. Çünkü Kuçuradi'de etik ilişki, toplumsal ilişkilerin temelini oluşturan cinsiyet, yaş, din, dil, ırk vb. dışında, kişiyi parçalanamaz bir bütünlük olarak, yani her şeyden önce insan olarak gören bir anlayış temelinde kurulan ilişkidir. Bu bağlamda, nitelikli bir eğitim ilişkisi için eğiticinin, öğretmenin böylesi bir ilişkinin bilgisine sahip olması onsuz olamayacak bir ön koşul olmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Etik İlişki, Eğitim, Bilgi, İletişim*

---

* Uludağ Üniversitesi Felsefe Bölümü öğretim üyesi

Ethical Relationship and Knowledge on Ethical Relationship as an Indispensable
Prerequisite for Education to Have a Future

1.

Education is among the accomplishments and values a human may put forth through its inherent nature. As in its all other values of a human, education may solely unveil itself in the relationship between a person and a person. When considered focusing merely on "school education" putting aside all other fields of education, it may be suggested that such relation is a relationship between the trainer and the trainee; the tutor and the tutee. The nature of the relation between the tutor and the tutee and therefore the nature of education is directly associated with the mutuality of this relationship. The more on mutual dialogue is the relationship based, the more it becomes productive, efficient and rich. Then, the right question to be introduced at this point shall be; how may the mutual relation between a tutor and a tutee be improved? It seems, particularly in our age, that this is the question of primary emphasis to be fielded in terms of pedagogy. Because our age experiences one of its most turbulent periods in respect of educational relationship. Consequently, it seems not possible for education to have a future as long as it remains non-intervened.

2.

Right at this point, we may observe that French Philosopher Lyotard, in a report he furnished to fulfil the request of the council of the universities, made considerably conspicuous assignments. Lyotard, collected his report into a book named "Postmodern Condition" takes the background of the question back to industry revolution. According to him, improvements in technique following the industry brought forth the technological developments in early times of the 20th century which subsequently gave rise to a new language, a language that may also be qualified as technological language. Such radical alteration made the way for an essential transformation in the structure of knowledge itself. Such that, today knowledge is considered as merchandise and traded and produced to be traded. "Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange. Knowledge cases to be an end in itself, it loses its use-value" [1]. Today, humans do not take note of the accuracy or falsity of

---

[1] Lyotard Jean-François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* Translation from the French by Geoff Bennington and Brain Massumi Foreword by

knowledge and instead, considers knowledge a material that may be converted into the language of technology which has functionality, well balanced input-output and high performance[2].

According to Lyotard, this fundamental change in the structure of knowledge is followed by a fundamental change in the structure of education. Today, education is no longer a relation of transfer of knowledge between the professor who is positioned as the cognizant and tutee who is assumed to have no knowledge on the subject, as it was in the classical approach. The objective of the former educational approach which was founded by the understanding of "Science for its own sake" and justified itself by referring to the metanarrative of freedom is to lay open the whole body of learning and expound both the principles and the foundations of all knowledge"[3] However, in today's computer age, educational institutions constructed in such a manner for centuries long fall apart and fictional justification is defunctionalised. From Lyotard's point of view today "the transmission of knowledge is no longer designed to train an elite capable of guiding the nation towards its emancipation [4] ...the student has changed already and will certainly change more. He is no longer a youth from the "liberal elite" more or less concerned with the great task of social progress, understood in terms of emancipation"[5].

A student of today, along with the conversion of knowledge into language of informatics, is a person capable of recognizing how he may have access to data banks and aware of its language and with a texture suitable to most effectively asses the brain storms which emerged as a result of interdisciplinary team works he carried out without need to a professor[6].

When a professor, flip side of the educational relation, is considered; today, as Lyotard suggests, is an age when the alarms for the doom of the professor's age loudly sound. A professor is now "no more competent than networks in transmitting established knowledge, no more competent than interdisciplinary team in imagining new moves or new games" [7] Today professor who has no presence more than transferring the permanent knowledge to his silent students is in part replaced by machines.

Fredric Jameson, Theory and History of Literature Volume 10, (Manchester University Press, Manchester 1983) pp. 4-5

[2] *Ibid,* p 51.
[3] *Ibid,* p 33.
[4] *Ibid,* p 48.
[5] *Ibid,* p 48-49
[6] *Ibid,* p 52.
[7] *Ibid,* p 53.

3.

The determination of Lyotard here, on the educational relationship is extremely an accurate one. Indeed, today we pass through a period with highest turbulence of the bond between the trainer and trainee, a communication based on interaction which divulges itself more apparently in particular in higher education. We can observe that an educational manner based on distance education becomes distinct and more common gradually in the university education. Consequently, this process is such a one that, as Lyotard narrated, where tutor in its classical meaning and it may also be suggested that tutee in its classical meaning has lost their identities and presence. However, from the perspective of Lyotard, this is such a positive progress and the integrity of relationships we name as education today is realised in such a favourable manner than ever before.

However, I believe that Lyotard is mistaken at this point. No doubt that when education should be considered merely an activity to spring out the mental talents of a tutee – which I believe this, today, is what education is considered to be – then Lyotard is right. However when we consider education a human activity intended not only to unfold the mental gifts but also the ethical capabilities of tutees' which may help the trainee to proclaim his humanity, then we may profess that Lyotard is wrongful.

4.

Then, when we go back to the beginning to field our principal question, we should again ask how we can transform the relation between the teacher and student into a mutual relationship? No doubt, when we look into the history of philosophy to locate our fountain head, it is possible to see the traces of such a relationship in the philosophy method of Socrates as Plato narrated in his dialogues. A relation founded on this philosophising, is above all, a relationship embodied in the relationship of one another which may also be considered as a master-apprentice relation.[8] The aim of this relationship is to turn persons into good namely virtuous persons. Thus, persons who become merry at the same time become good citizens.

We can suggest the presence of three stages in the philosophy method of Socrates: Asking questions, replying and obtaining replies. This, in

---

[8] Kuçuradi İoanna, Çağın Olayları Arasında (Among the Events of the Era) Ayraç Yayınevi, Ankara 1997 pp 93.

the education relationship is based on an understanding; where the philosopher, with a sort of ingenuity of philosophy trainer, based on the things which he considers the trainee against him is aware; that contains enabling of the trainee to ask the right question and to lead him through a stage where finally trainee gets replies by the help of exemplary replies provided by the trainer to such questions of the trainee.[9]

Here, there are some crucial points to take note of. Firstly, here all steps of the process are in full mutuality and communication flows on a ground of dialogue. Secondly all materials processes during the process consist of things the "apprentice" supposes to be right. Thirdly and finally, the process is triggered with the move, starting to ask questions, of the apprentice.

This final point is essential to perceive the environment of the education of today. Since, as well known, the process in today's education is evoked by the trainer and therefore things that trainee is considered to be aware of and his interests are not taken into account.

5.

After all these, it may be suggested that the foundation of educational relationship be based upon a mutuality, as in philosophising relationship in Socratic point of view, should be laid by an ethical relationship concept based on an ontological-anthropological approach as Kuçuradi understands.

The fundament characteristics of Kuçuradi's ethics areits starting point, which is the action of a person, and its reliance on values. "what is central in Kuçuradi's ethics is looking at the action of a person in its ethical relationship,i.e without losing sight of the acting person and of the conditions in which he or she acts"[10] In other words "the most important difference between Kuçuradi's ethics and other theories of ethics, or the novelty of her ethics, is the centrality she ascribes to 'the ethical relationship',i.e. to human action in its singularity. In this way, she puts forth what she calls ethical relationship as a subject matter of ethics"[11].

---

[9] *Ibid,* pp 95.
[10] Tepe Harun, *Ethics in Turkey*, (The Proceedings of the Twenty-first World Congress of Philosophy: Philosophy Facing World Problems. Volume 13. Editor: İoanna Kuçuradi), Philosophical Society of Turkey, Ankara 2007, pp 333.
[11] *Ibid,* pp 334.

As for Kuçuradi, "when interhuman mandatory relations founded on inherent structure of humans are set aside, a part of other interhuman relationships are relationships worked up voluntarily either directly or indirectly and some are incidental relationships. The first ones come into being upon being established and second ones play a part in existence as being experienced.[12] Kuçuradi, who named first type of relationships as social relationships named second type of relationships as ethical relationships.

According to Kuçuradi "each action of a person of a particular integrity is carried out in the framework of a relationship with another person of a particular integrity, or with human beings in general –with persons with whom he or she does or does not come face-to-face- and in this relationship questions of value are involved"[13] [14]. And continues "In life, an ethical relationship is in question where all relationships, established as member of the group, are grounded[15]. Kuçuradi, locating ethical relationship as such, shall strive to fill in ethical relationship concept by pointing out the differences between social relationships and ethical relationships.

According to Kuçuradi, social relationships exist as relative notions to specify the social functions of those who give rise to this relation – both ends of the relationship - [16] In other words, there are no beings as husband or wife but there is only a husband-wife relationship and similarly there are no managers -managed persons but a manager- managed person relationship. In other words, against these legally-circumscribed dependent relationships, the characteristics of ethical relationships should be real relationships experienced. These real persons are celebrated persons with no matches and particular integrity. For examples, those are Dr. Rieux, Henri, Antigone or Raskolnikov. "In such a relationship, both the relationship itself and the persons on either side of relationship have real existence, each of them is unique. An ethical relationship is unique in all its aspects; this is why it is not easy to make it an object of analysis"[17] (Tepe 2007:334)

Another difference of ethical relationship than social relationships is that the ethical relationship is a relation of values and valuableness-valuelessness life experienced by persons through a chain of events[18]. Such

---

[12] Kuçuradi İoanna, *Etik*, Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu, (Ankara 1999) pp. 5
[13] *Ibid,* pp 3.
[14] The translation used herein is quoted from the article of Harun Tepe titled "Ethics in Turkey" Information related with the article is given in the bibliography.
[15] Kuçuradi , *Etik, pp 5.*
[16] *Ibid,* pp 6.
[17] Tepe, *Ethics in Turkey, pp 334.*
[18] *Ibid,* pp 6.

actions may either blossom or wither the world of values of the persons. In other words, such relations may be experienced with values such as respect, love and confidence or may be the opposite with deception and disrespect as well. In fact, social relationships are off-value and how to establish them were predefined by law[19] Here, the expectation is to fulfil abidance in conformity with predetermined written rules.

Another difference is although social relationships are unsettled functional relationships; the structure of ethical relationships is unswerving.[20] For example, the structure of ethical relationship of today is as it was at the time of Socrates. Because ethical relationship, from the point of view of Kuçuradi, discovers its basis within the structural potentialities of humans.

However, the nature of social relationships manifests itself in its ability to adapt according to recently emerging conditions. And law, above all else, is the tool for such change. Such difference between social relationships and ethical relationship, according to Kuçuradi, give rise to the social relationships be realised on a historical background and such changes to have its own history. "Thus, the history of social relationships consists of the line generated by changes – their termination, invalidation of one and replacement by another or restoration of the same relationship in a new fashion-. However ethical relationships have no history. Solely the past of the relationship may be made mention of, at most[21].

6.

Thus, it can be suggested that, Kuçuradi, with her ethical relationship understanding referred to a relationship style founded on the propensity to establish relationships other than gender, age, political identity, race, language, religion which underline the social relationships in the relation of a human either with himself or with other humans and also with humanity.

---

[19] At this point, contrary to the positive referrals of our time on the term ethics, it may be observed that Kuçuradi does not intend to use the term ethics solely with a "positive" meaning. This is a crucial point for philosophical thinking as well as all other thinking methods that argue to put forth knowledge. Because when the content of notions which are ingredients of thinking are filled previously with values, it shall be no more than an act of fancifulness to expect those to produce products leading to informative outcomes.

[20] Kuçuradi , *Etik, pp 11.*

[21] *Ibid,* pp 11.

To put it in another way, for Kuçuradi, an ethical relationship in which ethical values are experienced, is a relationship founded on tending humans based on the sole knowledge that human is an esteemed being and a cordial urge adopting not to scatter values in his relationships as a principle.

Under the light of these thoughts, it may be mentioned that the educational relationship of today should be reconfigured based on an ethical relationship as to the understanding of Kuçuradi. The relationship between the trainer and trainee being based on a mutual communication as in all interhuman relationships and speaking of a future for education seems solely possible in virtue of such an ethical relationship. It has a vital role at this point that educators, of our age in particular, verge on this relationship with such a cordial urge with an ethical point of view. And to this end, it is a primary prerequisite that educators acquire the knowledge of a relationship in this fashion which is founded on the knowledge of the value of humans and takes into account that the person addressed also attained an ethical integrity. "Even so hard, knowledge on ethical relationship may be revealed by looking into humans and moving around the arts of literature"[22]. This perspective is possible merely with an ethical education given based on an ethical approach.

---

[22] *Ibid,* pp 4.

REFERENCES

Kuçuradi İoanna, *Çağın Olayları Arasında (Among the Events of the Era)* Ayraç Yayınevi, Ankara 1997

Kuçuradi İoanna, *Etik (Ethics),* Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu, Ankara 1999

Lyotard Jean-François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* Translation from the French by Geoff Bennington and Brain Massumi Foreword by Fredric Jameson, Theory and History of Literature Volume 10, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1983

Tepe Harun, *Ethics in Turkey*, (The Proceedings of the Twenty-first World Congress of Philosophy: Philosophy Facing World Problems. Volume 13. Editor: İoanna Kuçuradi), Philosophical Society of Turkey, Ankara 2007