

# Resymbolization of A.S. Makarenko's Experience in Modern Pedagogical Discourse

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**Abstract** The problem discussed in the article is related to the attitude to the pedagogical tradition born in conditions of the formation and development of the totalitarian society. Advanced is the idea that the determining condition for reconstruction and analysis of the tradition experience which is available exclusively in the form of the text of the tradition is not so much its certain essence but a modern context which contains the text of the tradition. As a result, the connection with the tradition is implemented as an inter-textual attitude. The inclusion of the text of tradition in the modern context is termed as “resymbolization” in this paper. Described are three strategies of resymbolization, namely: “iconophobia”, “iconophilia”, and “social-constructionistic”. They all, to some extent, are present in the pedagogical discourse of post-socialist communities. The former two strategies are oriented at the “truth” of the tradition, whereas the third strategy considers it as an interpretive and practical category. Analyzed is the structural-functional organization of the three strategies of resymbolization.

**Keywords:** *Makarenko's experience, pedagogical discourse, strategies of resymbolization, tactics of resymbolization, design of communication environment, null value*

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## 1. Introduction

Resymbolization of the current social experience accompanies and, at times, is ahead of any significant social changes. Regarding A.S. Makarenko's pedagogical archive, one can theoretically distinguish two “foci” of resymbolization, being the works by Western scholars related to an attempt of identifying the archive's potential for its use in the practices of communicative governance and corporate interaction, and post-socialist reviews of A.S. Makarenko's heritage pursuing various axiological goals – in the field of implementing educational policy, in the first place. In this analysis, we will focus in detail on the latter experience of resymbolization.

The situation of the recent decades for many countries of the former socialist camp is related to the attempts – sometimes dramatic – of reevaluating the systems of established values as well as the mechanisms of their support and reproduction. The critical reflection area primarily embraces the “icons” of the socialist style, namely, ideological backbones which now will have to be tested anew in terms of their attractiveness and cross-situational sustainability. Following H. White, the author “Metahistory”, ideology is understood as “a set of instructions for taking a position in the modern world of social practice and action in accordance with it (either to change the world or reinforce it in its current state)” [1].

The current debate concerning the cultural heritage under way in the post-socialist societies has divided its participants (here we will refer to the division made by the American art expert W. Mitchell) into “iconophobia” and “iconophilia” [2]. The former strive for discursive ousting the codes of the lost culture, whereas the latter are working on their “exhumation” and “animation”. The preservation of the letter and spirit of the socialist tradition, according to “iconophiles”, is a requirement for supporting the cultural continuity. Not only do the humanities scholars, but also educators-practitioners participate in this semiotic battle.

One of the most significant problems of the resymbolic discursive conflict is that the experience considered by the opponents does not currently exist in the way it was created by its initiators. The French social historian of education A. Savoye points out that in the history of forming educational experience it is possible to discover the primary phase of auto-designing performed by the “author” of the pedagogical practice in his own works, as well as the secondary phase of the institutional practice arrangement, the key role in which belongs mostly to scholars (politically engaged in some cases), who make the educational experience look finalized and consistent [3].

The only thing available at the disposal of the opponents is texts (and texts about texts), which in this or that way regard the tradition, practices of their rendition, interpretations, and criticism related to the narrator's identity. However, the very idea of narrative cohesiveness

is determined by the convention of the “linguistic turn” of the liberal thinking and is based in turn on the idea that “the process of understanding has got a constructive, not reproductive nature... In other words, the reality is not reflected but constructed and repeatedly reconstructed by an individual’s consciousness” [4].

A statement about tradition often times is more about the user’s ideology rather than the “truth” of experience. From this perspective, a judgment about tradition is self-referential, i.e. it refers not so much to the content of an utterance, as to its initial characteristics – the reality stated, explicit and implicit contexts, as well as patterns of behavior and consciousness. In other words, a judgment depends on a conventional procedure by means of which the tradition is introduced to the contemporaneity context.

To the extent that the practice of regarding the tradition acquires public recognition, “iconophobs” and “iconophils” get a chance to participate in cultural processes, hence, the processes of social impact. As a matter of fact, this impact is not absolute. It depends on numerous circumstances in place, e.g., public policy, situational dynamics, state of liberal thought and social sensitivity to it, etc. However, this dependence of resymbolization does not exclude (on the contrary, it presupposes) a symbolic struggle of discursive constructions being the object of analysis in this text.

The objectives of further provisions of this paper are two-fold: first, to participate in the processes of post-socialist resymbolization of the educational reality; and second, to interpret the pedagogical tradition in the context of the “symbolic logos of education” [5].

The above means that the article’s field of interest includes an interpreting pedagogical text per se and the practice of regarding the tradition experience by it rather than extratextual factors and circumstances. In this context, we also consider the consequences that appear due to an intertextual interaction in a local act of resymbolization to be significant. This paper’s goal is not to provide full and complete answers to all the possible questions. Its goal (paraphrasing Gilles Deleuze) is rather to constitute meaningful problems and create concepts which make us move in the direction of understanding and solving problems.

## 2. A.S. Makarenko’s Pedagogical Experience from the Perspectives of “iconophilia” and “iconophobia”

Before proceeding to the main point, it is worthwhile making a short methodological specification. It concerns the language game in which this or that part of the analyzed pedagogical discourse is involved. In this case the game will be about making an utterance act following the pragmatic rather than semantic rules. In other words, our focus of interest will be in the way A.S. Makarenko’s experience is interwoven in a theoretical or practical context, as well as the way “a theoretical Makarenko” performs in the direction of social and educational changes. The regulator of the “pragmatic turn” will be R. Rorty’s well-known statement that the progress of the humanities knowledge should be considered as “history of useful metaphors” rather than from the viewpoint of understanding what things are in reality. [6]. It means that

in the focus of the analytical interest, in the first place, there are those narrative contexts which are used by “iconophils” and “iconophobs” who resymbolize the image of A.S. Makarenko’s practice.

Among the narrative techniques of “iconophilia” realized against the background of the general narrative strategy of *sacralization* there are distinguished the following interrelated textual tactics: *tautologization*, *decontextualization*, and *assimilation*.

### 2.1. Tautologization

The interpreter literally (or with minor formal modifications) reproduces A.S. Makarenko’s utterances. It is stated, for instance, that Makarenko:

“...considered a collective as an organic part of the society, evaluating it as the main instrument of education... The collective’s forming function is determined by the fact that its members are active subjects of socially significant activities and relationships ... Modern pedagogical science continues to develop a theory of collectivist education” [7].

That said, the phenomena of “collective” and “collectivity” are not analyzed, but exposed as supertemporal and matter-of-course values. The hyper-evaluation of Makarenko as a “great pedagogue” is aimed at ensuring a respective symbolic identification with this image. Tautologization in the above quotation not only maintains a non-critical continuity of the meanings important for the interpreter, but also eliminates the very necessity of criticism, because this function is performed by “modern pedagogical science”.

As a result, the tautological technique is realized as an instrument of symbolic compulsion and superiority over the recipient of the message. Quite a paradox, but just as important for the “iconophilia” practice is the content voidness of an utterance. The formalism of a tautological thesis produces estrangement on the reader’s part, which in turn provides the “eternal” existence of a theoretical “Makarenko” in the capacity of the “dead” symbol (the light of the used-to-be star).

### 2.2. Decontextualization<sup>1</sup>

A.S. Makarenko’s pedagogy is retrieved from its local cultural-historical context, universalized (it is presented as an absolute benefit and practice of the significant in a human being). It is attributed a high moral potential (a status of the program of personality’s development), which simultaneously is aestheticized (being accredited with indicators of the perfect artistic form):

“It would be appropriate in this context to draw special attention to the fact that A.S. Makarenko, in formulating the goal of education, covers all the riches of a human being’s relationships with the world, the internal beauty of the relationships, his individual-specific combination of significant traits and characteristics, which are seen in his

<sup>1</sup> The same discursive technique is pointed out by A. Savoye when he notes that in the process of popularizing the author’s educational practices one can oftentimes encounter narratives which “are able to take a form of simplified reproductions, mixing several major facts (often distorted and sometimes inaccurate) with the elements of theories and methods cut and decontextualized” [3].

behavior, deeds, and activity. This is the initial provision of the program of the human's personality; they contain not only pedagogical wisdom, but an obvious beauty of the pedagogical principles" [8].

Decontextualization can also have romantic configurations, in which Makarenko's experience is presented as supertemporal essence, an object of direct continuity and literal reproduction. In the "poetic" narrative of "iconophilia", the pedagogical tradition created by A.S. Makarenko is presented as a significant contribution to the world pedagogy:

"...based on the humanistic foundations directed to the people of the whole world, liberating and enriching the new pedagogical techniques, and effectively affecting an individual and a group, as well as other communities" [9].

And here appears another paradox. A decontextualized phenomenon is not turned to an abstraction of a higher level; in the course of numerous repetitions it is naturalized, thus acquiring quasi-physical and independent forms of existence. From this perspective, decontextualization is the basis of reification of educational phenomena and at the same time – a mechanism of their preservation in a discourse of specific type that confirms the reality of the "eternal" and "valuable". Apart from the fact that decontextualization is produced by means of simplification, it adds to the "simple" a status of a symbolic alibi, thus concealing the contextualizing work from an observer. It is due to this that the procedure of decontextualization is primarily about concealing the "evidence" of its own activity.

### 2.3. Assimilation

A.S. Makarenko's experience is associated with the humanities phenomena known to the narrator. It is recognized on the basis of the existing matrixes of perception, taking in it their specific features. The unknown is defined through the known:

"...we can see ... similarity with T-group: community self-survey which is designated as a self-studying community". For the same purposes, A.S. Makarenko created another highly effective model – that of parallel impact on a personality" [10].

In associating, there disappear specifics of pedagogical and therapeutic practices, whereas social reality acquires the appearance of homogeneous environment. The closest effect of the action of the utterances organized in this way is becoming the text recipient's insensitivity to the differences.

A most important specific of the "iconophilia" text style is narrative realism<sup>2</sup>. This technique establishes subordination between the signifier and signified, in which the signifier is secondary with regard to the signified. The signifier of the narrative realist is to reflect its object, and the tighter the bonds of their relationship are, the truer is the result of the synthesis of the interacting

landmark elements, i.e. the concept. For this type of writing it is natural to raise a question "What was Makarenko's experience in reality?"

Fetishization of extratextual reality being alpha and omega of the realistic narrative, as well as the conventionality of the sign, even if a realist formally accepts this thesis, in reality does not have an operative importance. In this way there is confirmed the existence of such type of reality for which it is natural to have a self-identical order of things and events. Beyond this reality, the figure of Makarenko appears to be threatened by the fatal disintegration into a series of fragmental practices of the "real Makarenko", semi-chaotically revolving around the sign of his name. The same "fears" of "iconophilia" are also realized in the strategies of "iconophobia".

**The strategy of "iconophobia"** is the desacralization of an "icon". The "iconophobia" practice is criticism-unmasking of "iconophilia" constructions as false, and that of designing – as a biased or simply ungrounded action. A. Savoye regretfully points out that "iconophobia" is a rather uncommon action addressed to A.S. Makarenko, at least in the Francophone scholarly works, with extremely poor repertoire of the techniques used [3], whereas in the post-socialist countries "iconophobia" often times acquires the nature of the dominating discursive tendency.

According to our observations, the attack of the symbol in the desacralizing context is following several directions: both with regard to the holistic symbolic system and its individual parameters. Our analysis was also able in this case to identify several descriptive tactics which we denoted as *renomination*, *reevaluation*, and *archivation*.

*Renomination*, as a rule, has got a holistic orientation and is associated with lowering the symbol's status and changing it into a sign:

- "...one cannot speak about a certain system of Makarenko as an implementation of the original pedagogical concept...";

- "...if the author in his work considered to be the most significant one says practically nothing about the educational process, is it appropriate to call him an outstanding pedagogue of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?" [12];

- "Makarenko is not a pedagogue, let alone an outstanding pedagogue; he is a manager, an energetic organizer, which is not bad at all; in any case, to be a manager-practitioner is as necessary as the work of a pedagogue-innovator" (ibid.);

- "...a great pedagogue Anton Semyonovich Makarenko is one of the myths of the heroic (no irony!) of the Soviet epoch" (ibid.).

In certain cases, renomination is realized not by means of lowering the symbol's semiotic status, but as a confirmation of anti-symbol. From this perspective, Makarenko is in the picture as an "idol of the state-totalitarian and autocratic-communist pedagogy" [13], and his educational experience is marked in text-books on general pedagogy as the one of "totalitarian pedagogies" [3].

Renomination oriented at lowering the symbol's status cancels the action of the old truth and confirms the new one. Being an expression of the holistic attitude to the object of reevaluation, it becomes a factor of reorganization of all the structural ties that acted in a symbolic area of the

<sup>2</sup> Narrative realism: the author of the term "narrative realism" F. Ankersmit points out such characteristic of the realistic utterance as its connections with the truth. A narrative idea of this type "does not dare to give up the concepts "truth (or falsehood) of the narrative". The basis of the narrative realism, according to Ankersmit, is a visual metaphor of the "picture" or "photograph", presupposing the necessity of *verification* of the correlation "between photographs and pictures (taken as a whole and in detail) and the fragments of the seeable reality portrayed in them" [11].

old symbol. The impact of this kind of narrative on a consumer is getting larger if his/her identification with a symbolic past is getting stronger. From this perspective, the renominating text tends to act like a semiotic alternation machine modifying the reader's consciousness. Alternation means a radical change by a subject of sense-organizing coordinates, including a biographical order. The past, for instance, can be assessed by an alternator as a period of delusions and inauthentic existence, whereas a post-alternational period – as epiphany and true life. A historical prototype of alternation is religious conversion [14].

*Reevaluation* may concern individual components of the symbolized experience. Here it is realized as a reshuffle in an infix notation due to the change of sign (+) to sign (-). V.A. Sukhomlinsky, who considered himself as A.S. Makarenko's disciple and follower, highly evaluated his activity. This is what he wrote:

- "Education will be somewhat erroneous if these collectives become the goal of education. The goal of education is a human being, a many-sided personality, whereas a collective is a means of education" [15].

- "The collective's action force is obvious. However, to oppose the "parallel action" to direct interaction of a pedagogue and a student means in fact to deny pedagogy" (ibid.).

- "There is no doubt that one of the most important traits that we educate in a student is discipline. But to consider discipline to be just the result of education means to ignore what kind of things are done at school. Discipline is primarily a means of education, and only later on it becomes the result of education" (ibid.).

In reevaluating A.S. Makarenko's activity and reproaching him for insufficient attention to the student's personality and a spiritual unity of a teacher and a student, V.A. Sukhomlinsky thus confirms the pedagogue's right to intervention in the child's internal world, which in turn is not possible without idealization of the pedagogue's image and identification (Freudian type) of a student with him.

*Archivation* as a narrative technique is in line with the declaration of tradition which historically was overcome by practice. In case of Makarenko, this is expressed in limiting his creative activity within the framework of the Soviet (socialist) project aimed at destroying humanistic pedagogical aspiration. The author believes that in a certain period of the Russian history...

"...there began a digression from the idea of education in the direction of pedagogy which was initiated by works of Ushinsky, Makarenko, and Stalin. His ideal was a school class which was totally controlled by the dominating teacher" [16].

Another scholar also shares this opinion:

"Teleology of education is rooted in the communist ideology. Examples of this are numerous, starting from Makarenko's text. The goals of education denoted by the author are those at which the educational activity should be aimed in the communist reality..." [17].

The archivation in the above quotations is done in a negative way, after which the reference to the material of pedagogical tradition as a resource of development becomes problematic; however, a positive archivation in the following statement, strange as it may seem, is similar in its consequences:

"...Makarenko's pedagogical innovative experience was carried out in the USSR in conditions of the Soviet system, when ideas of collective, collectivism, responsibility, and civic position were in demand by the public opinion of the country's majority of population. In the capitalist society, even on the level of experiment, on a systemic level such pedagogical activity is impossible. Makarenko himself never minded the socialist embeddedness of his experience in the Soviet system" [18].

In a more radical version of archivation, A.S. Makarenko's experience is dangerously approaching the structures of "secret police", where he not only served<sup>3</sup>, but also enjoyed a personal favoritism on the part of Ukraine's GPU-NKVD boss, the organizer of mass terror V.A. Balitsky. The author of this archivation version, the German philosopher of education G. Hillig, defines the context of his research in the following way:

"How did it happen that A.S. Makarenko who was neither GPU staff, not even a member of the Communist Party was entrusted F.E. Dzerzhinsky commune in autumn 1927? Who recommended Makarenko for this job, who appointed him as its director? How was he able to stay alive in Kharkov, the then capital of Ukraine, and later – in the new capital Kiev, where he was transferred in 1935 to a minor position in GPU-NKVD until in 1937 he managed to move to Moscow and thus escape terror in Ukraine?" [19].

This version of archivation is curious due to a number of circumstances. First, it is the intrigue that makes details of Makarenko's life open to the reader's attention. A biography in this case is a kind of statement in the shade of which there is concealed the pedagogical tradition. Second, it is its orientation to the past. The past forms a closed notional enclave which, as a repressed trauma of Freudian experience, determined the present. The researcher enchants the reader by the past and his conspiratorial connotations. Makarenko's experience is excluded from the present, thus forming the integral whole with the totalitarian epoch.

The analysis of the narrative tactics of "iconophilia" and "iconophobia" is important not so much due to the object described, but mostly due to the system of semiotic constructs, with the help of which reevaluation occurs.

In the above quotation, we have highlighted several categorical pairs: *collective - personality*; *parallel action - pair interaction*; and *goal - means*. On the surface, these elements of description look like opposing each other. However, this is just an elementary difference. The narratives of "iconophilia" and "iconophobia" disclose a high degree of rhetorical identity on the level of the language system on the whole. Both of them sensitively are connected with the idea of the Great narrative capable of carrying out a universal synthesis of any discourses (languages) that happened to be in their areal. As a matter of fact, the Great narrative itself is endowed with the values of truth, contemporaneity, and progressiveness. By legitimizing itself, it performs a flight in the transcendent space, and being there, it creates a picture of the "actual

<sup>3</sup> In 1927 a juvenile detention home, in which A.S. Makarenko worked, based on his application, was transferred from Ukraine's Ministry of Education to the supervision of GPU (NKVD).



state of things” in pedagogy. As a result of this kind of education objectivization, the language system remains the same. It means that despite the polemics (or rather thanks to it), the reality of education and what is more important – the very principle of the reality of education on the whole is maintained intact.

### 3. A.S. Makarenko’s Pedagogy as a Symbolic Practice

The idea of descriptive language that would enable to disclose the productive potential of A.S. Makarenko’s practice was prompted to us by the article of the Polish philosopher of education W. Siegień “From Dzierzynski to Magnicki with a turn. Studying childhood and orphanhood in the Russian policy of symbol”. This research analyses the relationship between the totalitarian state and education and shows how with the help of symbolic dictate the political power significantly restricts the educational refractivity, the ability to transfer external constraints to a specific form for the system [20] and turns education into a machine of indoctrinating its subjects. Based on the research of I. Čolović, W. Siegień describes the mechanism of this dictate which conforms with the narrative compulsion, forming and spreading in the public space various kinds of mythological narrations (“mythical stories”). This enables the authorities to “connect and make a new sense to political idioms, events and figures that beyond the framework of this narrative look controversial and ambivalent” [21]. From this perspective, the authorities are interested in a certain set of reality versions, including the alternative ones, with the help of which they can manipulate public conscience, whilst keeping control over the situation and maintaining semblance of changes<sup>4</sup>. To describe the Soviet state’s symbolic policy in the field of education, W. Siegień actively engages the language of modern philosophy and sociology, thus encouraging habitual categories of the pedagogical language to develop.

Using this technique, we will try to consider A.S. Makarenko’s symbolic practice in the voice immanent to education as a moment of its internal productivity and social effectiveness. With this purpose in mind, we will refer to works on theory of symbolic capital by the French sociologist P. Bourdieu and his followers. In his book “Les Règles de l’art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire”, Bourdieu introduced two concepts that are productive, in our opinion, for the analysis of Makarenko’s symbolic practice, namely, *illusio* and *nomos*.

*The first one – illusio* – is related to the ability of the field to be especially productive “in the sense of investing in the game, which rescues the agents from indifference

and encourages them to make differences that are significant from the viewpoint of the field’s logic ... What is also true is that a certain form of participation in the game, belief in the game and in the value of the bets (of the game) which make the game attractive is the root cause of the game’s action, and that the agents’ deal in *illusio* is the basis of competition, which sets agents in opposition to one another and ensures the game itself” [22]. Or, in other words, *illusio* is the bet for the sake of which individuals engage in communication. There are several principles issues here: first, *illusio* is a social belief, i.e. a condition for group identity’s functioning. Second, *illusio* is characterized by special “attractiveness”, the ability of being a tempting and subjectively close reality causing something that R. Girard called a mimetic desire – an urge to have what others want [23]. Third, genesis of *illusio* is determined by a state of communication and is not an individual product of separate participants, And finally, fourth, as the Bulgarian sociologist D. Deyanov, points out is “what in *illusio* is obvious looks an illusion for those who do not feel this obviousness” [25].

*The second one – nomos* – is defined by Bourdieu as a “fundamental law of the field, a principle of vision and division” [22]. *Nomos*, despite its semantic closeness to the law, has as a field of its reference not external, but internal order, which, however, has no “absolute independence on external laws” [20]. *Nomos* is usually employed for denoting a “central, objective principle of practice in a certain field. In the capitalist economy it is “profit”, in the field of art it is “pure art”, and in politics it is domination” [26]. The purpose of *nomos* is to connect “experience of practice and experience of field” [27], as well as to distribute cognitive and evaluative structures that are “a foundation of not only logical, but also moral conformism – a secret agreement, pre-reflective and direct – with regard to world perception being the beginning of the experience about the world as world of common sense” [28]. An important distinctive characteristic of *nomos* is its non-explicit, implicit status.

Placing A.S. Makarenko’s pedagogical experience in the context of Bourdieu’s symbolic experience makes it possible to see it other than it is presented in “iconophobia” and “iconophilia” versions. Its attraction means a change of the research optics. We will consider it by the example of the analysis of an extract from the “Pedagogical poem”:

“Almost without any efforts we managed, instead of humble shoe-maker’s ideals, to place ahead exciting and beautiful signs. Back at that time, the word “rabfak” meant something different from what it means now. At this point, this is just a name of a modest educational establishment. Back then, it was the banner of liberation of the working youth from the dark and ignorance. At that time it was a tremendously bright confirmation of unfamiliar human rights for knowledge, and our attitude to rabfak at that time, honestly, was sort of tender” [29].

This is what one of the renowned Russian opponents of Makarenko writes in this context:

“... in the [juvenile] detention home they provided just elementary education, and in all appearances, only few individuals who were able to do some tasks in the Russian language and arithmetic we accepted to study at rabfak ... the vast majority of the detention home residents did not have knowledge of elementary education. The amount of

<sup>4</sup> For instance, in a recently published research by Russian scholars there are described the authorities’ tactics in education which operate the images of A.S. Makarenko and V.A. Sukhomlinsky. The authors point out, in particular, the authorities’ intentions aimed at revising Makarenko’s heritage at the end of the “thaw” epoch. At that time, the Soviet state formulated the order to scholars to embed in the public conscience the “principle of personality and attention to individuality”. A rapid growth of scholarly publication related to this order in the second half of 1950s – early 1960s correlated with the [Communist] Party’s directives and plans for accelerated communist construction” [24].

those accepted was quite insignificant against the total amount of the residents” [12].

The focus in the comment, as can be seen, is made on the word “rabfak”, by means of which they unmask the utopian nature of the pedagogical objectives set by Makarenko. What we suggest doing is reading the quotation from the “Pedagogical poem” in another way. Let us emphasize in it the following fragments: “to place ahead exciting and beautiful signs”, “the banner of liberation of the working youth from the dark and ignorance”, “our attitude to rabfak at that time, honestly, was sort of tender”. Rabfak as *exciting and beautiful signs!* What do the words in italics point out?

What we believe, they point out a specific social construction – “*illusio*”. For a semiotic object of this type the criterion of realizability used by Makarenko’s opponent does not really matter. *Illusio* is a utopian form, and its importance is related, first of all, to a mobilizing potential, and second of all – to horizon ability which connects relevant activity with far-distant future. Rabfak being considered from this perspective is a dream shared by a community of the juvenile detention home resident; it is a force that raises them above everyday routine, a symbol making a “tomorrow’s joy” sense of their efforts.

Without taking into account the *illusio* work, “uplift in the mood”, and the *nomos* contextualizing structure, the leaders’ change, labor relations, interdependence in the collective, and so on, Makarenko’s experience acquires exclusively mechanistic characteristics and becomes “easy meat” for “iconophobs” or an object of mystification for “iconophils”. That said, one should realize that “rabfak” as *illusio* is not Makarenko’s individual work. It is accidental when he writes that “our attitude to rabfak at that time, honestly, ... was sort of tender”. By those words he denotes a social genesis of rabfak-*illusio*, its connection with the collective imagination.

At the same, the life of a concrete *illusio* is short. The necessity of its change (resymbolization) is determined by the routinization of education and indispensable part of the process of pedagogical reproduction [30] leading to the loss of a horizon quality and turning a symbolic object to achievable pragmatic goal. It is in this context that one should consider the transfer of the M. Gorky juvenile detention home to Kuryazh, as well as the establishment and end of the pedagogical project – F.E. Dzierzhinsky commune in the late 30s. It is also clear that the materials for producing *illusio* are popular beliefs of the epoch subjected to special pedagogical arrangement.

The idea of this arrangement can be disclosed with the help of the works of the Polish sociologist of education T. Szkudlarek. On the basis of the research of the Argentine philosopher E. Laclau, Szkudlarek introduces the concept of “null value”. Null value is a word-form or image void of concrete filling “based on various labels of identification and using them regardless of the content implications” [31]. This kind of meaning is in line with its formal status, ability to be the location of collective and individual imagination’s projection, storage and configurator of intentions of symbolic society members. From the viewpoint of scientific requirement of definiteness of concepts, such constructive characteristic of null value is perceived as a major effect of conceptualization. The point, however, is that *illusio* is

not a theoretical, but a practical category (for instance, “able to win the enthusiasm of pedagogues without social mission” [3]). Its transfer from a metaphorical form to a conceptual one results in the loss of the working function.

Following the logic of symbolic practice, it is not the personality of a student that is in the center of the pedagogical attention, nor is it the collective, even though Makarenko himself sometimes insists on it<sup>5</sup>, but the interaction environment, with the processes and effects taking place in it. A pedagogue as a symbolic practitioner is *a designer of the communication environment, and this is his main educational mission.*

In constructing the environment of education, special importance belongs to the so called effect of “delayed future”. Here it is necessary to distinguish the context of its functioning. From a social-political perspective, one should acknowledge that the whole epoch of Makarenko is mesmerized with projectiveness of the future and expectation of it accelerated coming. What appears to be a paradox is that the sooner this future came, the less achievable it was for its slow adepts, thus causing their unavoidable disappointment. With regard to practical pedagogy, and in the first place, Makarenko’s intuition, the future is constituted as “empty” in the meaning of free, possessing maximum symbolic and practical valence towards any possible educational events. Future is a place of collectivized *illusio*, outlined by exciting sign-fore-runners, the basis of development motivation. Distinguishing the social-political and educational meanings of *illusio*, in our opinion, makes a dilemma not only for the designer of educational communication environment, but also for its researcher-analyst.

## 4. Conclusion

Concluding the above, we would like to focus on the two issues related to epistemology of education. *The first one* concerns the analysis of the pedagogical discourse which, as we have tried to show in this paper, is subjected to practical logic rather than scholarly one. It means that the study of the education discourse should apply not the criteria of correspondent truth, systemic connectedness and fullness, but the indicators of functionality and effectiveness, situationality and locality. In reality, it means the return to the well-known postulate formulated by the father of the American pragmatism W. James, according to whom, in the analysis of the pedagogical utterance “we should only identify the way of conduct that it is able to cause: it is in this way that there is all the meaning of the said statement for us” [32].

*The second one* is related to the status of this article and the attitude to it. What we would not like to achieve at all is for it to be perceived as a declaration of the new truth which states the only correct understanding of A.S. Makarenko’s pedagogical experience. In treating the truth we were guided by the idea that it “to the greatest extent is a *linguistic construction* determined not only in a nominalist way, but also exclusively within the framework of the local discourse” [33]. Following the Polish psychologist D. Klus-Stańska, we can say that we are not

<sup>5</sup> Here we have to speak against Makarenko for the sake of Makarenko.

going to make the readers change their mind that pedagogy in fact is of this nature; we just suggest they look at it this way [34]. What is meant is just a linguistic experiment, construction of the local interpretation aimed at, on the one hand, to demonstrate the possibility of renewing the language of pedagogical descriptions by means of attracting to them a categorical resource of other humanities disciplines, and on the other hand – to activate a new opportunity of reading A.S. Makarenko's works. This potential can be in demand, in the first place, in post-socialist situation which is characterized by "striving to extreme individualism, a derivative of the "wild capitalism" experience..." [21], whose presence is especially noticeable in the post-Soviet region in the form of education goals crisis.

Another condition of addressing Makarenko's experience as a symbolic practice now is demand for mutually creating communities of the digital epoch. Especially acute and relevant in this context is the problem of forming productive social unities in education that are able to act in the regime of "cooperative teaching capable of creating heterogeneous and accessible to others forms of knowledge" [35].

## Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests.

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