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Wanda Dynowska's Educational Laboratory: Elements of Performative Education among Tibetan Refugees in India in the Early Formation of the Community in Exile

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to present the educational activities of Wanda Dynowska (1888–1971) within the Tibetan refugee community in India during the initial period of its existence in exile. Dynowska, a now largely forgotten Polish theosophist and social activist, typically worked within cultural niches, focusing primarily on educational issues. In interwar Poland she was active in small theosophical communities, but she also directed her educational initiatives toward children and adults excluded from the formal education system. After moving to India in 1935, she worked, among others, with the children of Polish refugees in India, emphasizing the need to build an axionormative community. Eventually, she undertook work among Tibetan refugees who began arriving in India after 1959. She focused on the education of children and young people, striving to create a system of schooling that addressed the specific needs of young refugees – understood by her primarily as the necessity of shaping and preserving identity. To this end, she introduced the Montessori method into the Tibetan education system. This article seeks to present and interpret Dynowska's activities in light of the performance theory of Victor Turner (1982, 1988) and Richard Schechner (2013), with particular emphasis on the transformative potential of performative acts to model human attitudes and behaviors.

KEYWORDS: Wanda Dynowska, Tibet, Montessori, education, performativity

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STRESZCZENIE

Laboratorium edukacyjne Wandy Dynowskiej. Elementy edukacji performatywnej wśród uchodźców tybetańskich w Indiach we wczesnym okresie formowania się społeczności na wygnaniu

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie działalności edukacyjnej Wandy Dynowskiej (1888–1971) w środowisku uchodźców tybetańskich w Indiach w początkowym okresie istnienia społeczności na wygnaniu. Dynowska, dziś już niemal zapomniana polska teozofka i działaczka społeczna, zwykle pracowała w niszach kulturowych, skupiając się na kwestiach edukacyjnych. Początkowo w Polsce w okresie międzywojennym działała w małych wspólnotach teozoficznych, ale swoje programy kierowała również do dzieci i dorosłych wykluczonych z systemu oświaty. Po wyjeździe do Indii w 1935 r. pracowała m.in. wśród dzieci polskich uchodźców w Indiach, pokazując im potrzebę budowania wspólnoty aksjonormatywnej. Ostatecznie podjęła pracę wśród tybetańskich uchodźców, którzy zaczęli napływać do Indii po 1959 r. Skupiła się na edukacji dzieci i młodzieży, dążąc do stworzenia systemu szkolnictwa uwzględniającego specyficzne potrzeby młodych uchodźców, które rozumiała jako konieczność kształtowania i zachowania tożsamości. W tym celu do tybetańskiego systemu edukacji wprowadziła metodę Marii Montessori. W niniejszym artykule zamierzamy przedstawić i zrozumieć działania Dynowskiej w świetle performatyki Victora Turnera (1982, 1988) i Richarda Schechnera (2013), ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem transformatywności aktów performatywnych, które mają potencjał modelowania ludzkich postaw i zachowań.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: Wanda Dynowska, Tybet, Montessori, edukacja, performatywność

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the activities of Wanda Dynowska (1888–1971) within the community of Tibetan refugees in India. Dynowska usually conducted her activities in cultural niches. Initially, they were small Theosophical communities in post-partition Poland, while in India, she worked with youth, instilling patriotic ideals in them and during World War II with Polish refugee children who found themselves in an entirely unfamiliar cultural environment. Then, in the 1960s, she cared for Tibetan children in India. In all these situations, Dynowska considered it crucial to build a sense of identity among young people, to shape them into conscious members of their communities. She recognized the importance of organised education, in the creation of which she took part, but above all, through her own individual actions, she created a kind of performative laboratory that allowed her to achieve these goals. That is why we intend to show and understand her undertakings in the

light of Victor Turner's (1982, 1988) and Richard Schechner's (2013) performance studies in which the point of departure is the analysis of communicative behaviour, inscribed in a given cultural context and, at the same time, transforming it. The communication processes are strengthened by the impact of cultural performances, such as theater or dance, as well as by the practices of religious rituals, in which emotions and gestures expressing them renew their meanings, reveal their values, and create a sense of social bonds. Performances can also cause even customary gestures to undergo various, sometimes far-reaching, transformations. In such a case, bonds may turn into the experience of *communitas*, and the participants of the performance gain a new perspective on social reality, which they are prepared to recreate in accordance with their new needs. By participating in such an event, a person gains a sense of influence on the reality and becomes capable of permanently transforming it. An important element of performance studies is the indication of the significance of this transformational aspect of behavior, both for the lives of the individuals involved and for entire communities.

Wanda Dynowska – Biographical Sketch

Wanda Dynowska[1] is one of the most fascinating figures in Polish culture of the twentieth century. Born in St Petersburg, she grew up in Polish Livonia (now part of Latvia). At an early age, she came into contact with Theosophical ideas, which influenced her actions for many years. Dynowska became the *spiritus movens* of Polish Theosophy, by building its organisational structures and leading to the registration of the Polish Theosophical Society with the Theosophical Society in Adyar (Chennai, India) in 1922. This recognition integrated the Polish organisation into the worldwide Theosophical network. Dynowska gave Polish Theosophy a distinct national and patriotic character, presenting it as a force that could contribute to the revival of the Polish nation, weakened by more than a century of partitions (Trzcińska, 2015). One of the main goals of her activity was to create a new society based on the principles of brotherhood, which was in line with the ideals of modern Theosophy (Campbell, 1980, p. 194; Dixon, 2001, pp. 3–4). Dynowska identified two areas which needed pedagogical attention. The first one was children's education and formation, as she saw in them the next generation of conscious and responsible Theosophists. For the same reasons she saw the need to devote attention to the adults – and that was the second area of her interest and work. She was convinced that being a Theosophist required constant formative work aimed at developing

1 Dynowska's biography has recently been the subject of a detailed reconstruction, see Trzcińska and Świerzowska (2024).

an awareness of the importance of Theosophical brotherhood and improving moral and spiritual qualifications. At the same time among her interests were also adults who were excluded from the educational system and for this reason could not ensure their subsistence on a decent level and participate in the life of society (Karasiówna, n.d.).

At the end of 1935, she came to India to attend the annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in Adyar. Fascinated by the places she was discovering and by her contacts with spiritual masters such as Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950) and Swami Lakshmanjoo (1907–1991), and above all with Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), she decided to stay in India and devoted herself to working for independence and civic education among Indians. Dynowska met Gandhi at the annual convention of the Indian National Congress in Lucknow in 1936, on the occasion of an exhibition of folk art accompanying the event (Boniecki & Skwarnicki, 1969; Dynowska, 1938a; 1938b). In her work among Indians, Dynowska focused on strengthening feelings of attachment to their homeland, but also a sense of responsibility for it. She tried to show Indians the value of their own culture(s) presenting it as a tool that could be used to build community and thus – on a larger scale – to transform social reality. The methods of her work were very simple: lectures, talks, direct conversations with the participants in meetings, organizing exhibitions of folk art, preparing catalogs, collecting the exhibition items. Dynowska was very keen on meeting young people and did so very often – she visited schools and universities, was a guest at afternoon clubs run by youngsters, spoke at various educational institutions, and she also talked with young activists working in social organizations such as, for example, Arya Samaj (Dynowska, 1954). Dynowska carried out these activities until September 1939. The outbreak of *World War II* made her return to Poland. Failing to get there, she come back to India at the end of 1940. However, she did not resume the educational work among Indians.

A similar model, based on the same assumptions, was adopted by Dynowska in her work with Polish refugees who began to arrive in India in 1942 after being released from Soviet gulags. Dynowska was one of the first people to become involved in helping Polish refugees. Initially, she dealt with broadly understood organizational activities, but over time, she focused on educational work. In the refugee camps, she organized lectures, talks, exhibitions: she addressed topics related to the history of Poland, presented national heroes, spoke about traditions, customs, and culture. She also instructed the teachers working with Polish refugees, emphasizing the need to include national and civic elements in regular classes. Dynowska worked among Polish refugees until 1948, when the settlements were closed and their inhabitants returned to Poland or emigrated further to other countries.

Alongside these activities, Dynowska was involved in publishing for almost the rest of her life. In 1944, she founded the English-language series *Indo-Polish*

Library, followed a year later by the Polish-language *Biblioteka Polsko-Indyjska*. In the *Biblioteka Polsko-Indyjska* series, Dynowska published works presenting Poland from various perspectives – its immediate and distant past, its tragic and heroic history, various dimensions of its culture, education, social life, economy, domestic and international politics (especially relations with Germany and Russia), as well as geography. In the Polish-language series, she published books on Theosophy as well as works introducing readers to various aspects of Indian culture and history, including religion, the struggle for independence, geography, and economics. More than 100 volumes were published in both series (for a complete list, see Trzcińska & Świerzowska 2024, pp. 527–533). It should be noted that all publications were distributed in Poland and abroad through private channels.

The last decade of Dynowska's life was dedicated to her work for Tibetan refugees in India, which she began in 1960. The influx of refugees was related to the invasion of Tibet by Chinese troops in 1950 and the Lhasa uprising that broke out on March 10, 1959, forcing the Dalai Lama and a group of his supporters to flee to India. Over time, the refugees were relocated to settlements in Dharamsala (Himachal Pradesh), which became the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration, and in Bylakuppe (Karnataka). Dynowska responded to the Dalai Lama's call to help provide basic living needs for Tibetan children, often orphans. Dynowska organized a collection of money and clothes among her friends and acquaintances, which were then transferred to the refugees in Dharamshala (Łopszyc, 1979, p. 5). Eventually, she settled permanently among the Tibetans. Initially, Dynowska worked as a caretaker at the Tibetan Refugee Children's Nursery in Dharamsala. Since the institution was still in its early stages and lacked qualified staff, Umadevi took on all responsibilities, providing comprehensive care for the children, offering medical assistance, and teaching. However, from the very beginning, she aspired to work on a larger scale. What was crucial for her was educating Tibetans in a way that would help them preserve their identity.

Identity formation –Tibetan refugee community in India

Almost from the very beginning of the formation of the Tibetan diaspora in India, protecting identity became a key issue; however, the refugees had to remain open to the changes and challenges arising from the new situation they faced. Hence, the concern of the leaders of the Tibetan community turned to education, on the one hand in order to maintain their traditions and, on the other, to give young refugees an education that would enable them to take care of themselves, their families' needs, and the future of the entire nation. It was not without reason that almost immediately after his arrival in India, the Dalai

Lama established the Council for Tibetan Education, which was to supervise the education of the youngest generation of Tibetans – children whom he poetically referred to as "the future seeds of Tibet" (Dalai Lama, 1991; Mishra 2022; Jolden, 2016), i.e. depositaries of tradition and builders of a new, independent Tibet. Therefore, the Dalai Lama strove to create separate Tibetan schools, and he did so against the original intentions of Nehru, who wanted to include Tibetan students in the Indian public education system (Dalai Lama, 1991). Although the emerging Tibetan education in exile was to become a depositary and conveyor of tradition, and thus a space for maintaining and even creating an identity. At the same time, the Tibetan leaders, led by the Dalai Lama, were aware that the educational model based primarily on monastic education must be changed (Tseyang & Dhondup, 2008; Choedup, 2017; Wangdu, 2019).

In this reflection, external impulses and influences proved to be of particular importance as the Tibetans did not have their own human resources qualified to build such a system. One of the people who played a key role in the creation of modern Tibetan education was Dynowska. Drawing on her previous experiences, Dynowska was able to anticipate the problems that might arise while working with the Tibetans and this allowed her to develop a plan of activities for the refugee children who belonged to a different cultural environment and spoke a language that she did not know. The first stage of her work was the preparation of a place where the children – after a long and usually traumatic journey – could find shelter and medical assistance. For about a year after arriving in Dharamshala, Dynowska worked as a nanny at the Tibetan Refugee Children's Nursery (Chodon, 1964, p. 10) which in 1972 officially was registered as a charitable organization known since than as Tibetan Children's Villages, TCV (Tibetan Children's Village, n.d.; Pema, 2003). She cooperated there with Dalaj Lama's sisters Tsering Dolma Takla (1912–1964) and Jetsun Pema (1940–) who were appointed to organize systematic care for the children. This institution was only in its early stages and lacked qualified personnel; hence, Dynowska, in fact, handled everything – childcare, medical assistance and teaching. From the very beginning, however, she sought to act systemically – to create conditions for children and adolescents in which they could receive an education at the highest possible level, forming the basis for further development in the future (Dynowska, 1961, January 19). She also thought about building an education system so that the Tibetans would have their own teaching staff, which would make their community independent of Indian schooling, which Dynowska considered ineffective, and – additionally disqualifying it in her eyes – since it was run on the basis of the English language (Dynowska, 1968a, February; Dynowska 1968c, June 3). She wanted to create a new, secular Tibetan elite, rooted in tradition, but able to navigate the modern reality efficiently, beyond the borders of Tibet (Dynowska, 1968b, March 3). These two elements – modern education and the preservation of

identity – were inextricably linked in her thinking. Consequently, she sought ways to combine both organically.

To achieve this goal, Dynowska once again employed methods she had used in the past, focusing on personal contact with children and young people, and trying to show them the value of their own culture. In this case, however – unlike her work with the Indians – Dynowska did not play the role of the Other (teacher), but assumed the role of a family member. It is worth emphasizing that when Dynowska started working with the Tibetans, she was already approaching the age of seventy, so she could not act as a peer to the children around her – she became their grandmother instead. This identification played an important role because it established a close, even familial relationship with the pupils. This is confirmed by numerous testimonies of Dynowska's protégés, who even called her "mola" (grandmother in Tibetan) and the young Tibetans referred to themselves as "Umadevi's grandchildren" (Dorje, 1975). As a grandmother, Dynowska cared for the children's health, their nutrition, relaxation and games, social life, material needs. She also spoiled them slightly by distributing candies (Dynowska, 1966, July 9; Dynowska, 1962, July 25; Dynowska, 1963, March 3; Dynowska, 1968a, February 2; Dorje, 1975).

The role of grandmother, however, placed Dynowska in a significant position within the hierarchy of authority. By creating this type of family relationship, Dynowska also entered the structure of the transmission of identity appropriate for post-figurative cultures as understood by Margaret Mead (1970). She became an important figure from the point of view of intergenerational transmission, despite the fact that, as a European, she was not part of this chain. She could, however, create a space in which a common sense of belonging could arise, and a community of people sharing certain norms and values, as well as acknowledging a common heritage and history could emerge. Since many young Tibetans were orphans these tradition-oriented groups partially replaced family communities. Taking on the role of a grandmother was paradoxical in a way – Dynowska was a grandmother from a different culture. This gave her the opportunity to view the problems of the Tibetan refugees and their needs from an external perspective, from the standpoint of someone familiar with the globalizing world and its demands. Hence she saw her task not only in supporting the cultivation of the traditional identity of the younger generation of Tibetans, but also in preparing them to face the challenges posed by the modern world.

Tibetan dance became a special interest for Dynowska. She even devoted two publications to it, which she issued at her own expense (Umadevi, 1966; ca. 1970). These works show that she was well aware of the importance of such forms of cultural performances that perpetuate the memory of the community, but also have the power to recreate it. She considered them – using Turner's (1982, p. 104) words, as "most forceful, active ... genre of cultural

performance." In her opinion they were supposed to strengthen social solidarity and build social bonds, but most of all, they were meant to transform the awareness of their participants. Participation in shared cultural performances – their creation and reenactment – involved reading or re-enacting social experiences (history, traditions, even current events), but also "interpretive reenactment" (Turner, 1982, p. 104) and – what is important here – in confrontation with a foreign cultural environment. Thus, such a performance became the "metacommentary" *par excellence* that the group articulated in relation to itself and its own situation.

Dynowska was convinced that cultures express themselves and gain self-awareness most fully through various types of performance. At the same time, as she emphasized and tried to persuade everyone with whom she worked – the involvement of participants in the organized event was of key importance. She aimed not only at shaping the cultural awareness of her pupils, i.e., a certain ability to receive, understand or interpret symbolic content, but also at building affective social identification through active, community involvement in the very process of creating culture and, consequently, the identity. In this process, she tried to include not only the cognitive abilities of the Tibetan youngsters, but also emotional, sensory, and bodily experiences, which are essential for participation in culture, both in the form of its creation and, importantly, transmission. This combination of action and awareness is, as emphasized by Schechner after Turner (Schechner, 2013, p. 33), crucial for performances, which in this way show common goals, values and meanings.

In Dynowska's work, this approach stemmed from the principles of Montessori pedagogy, which places great emphasis on working with the body, seen as a perfect system through which a child connects with the world, discovers cultural traditions, and at the same time, builds his or her individual identity (Montessori, 1992, p. 126). In this way, the body does not determine a person but rather becomes a source of creative transformation and better adaptation to changing and often unfavourable conditions. This makes it possible to achieve the fundamental aim of Montessori pedagogy: to build the future (Montessori, 2023). This goal corresponded to the idea of Theosophical evolution, which was to be realised, among other things, through the creation of a modern society of free individuals. It was also reflected in Dynowska's efforts to introduce this educational system into Tibetan schooling. While working with Tibetan refugees, Dynowska could not conduct dance classes on her own, but she prepared a theoretical and organizational basis for them. Dynowska created a community in which this tradition could be nurtured and recreated – she helped older adolescents build a group that had "a nice program of maintaining national traditions, culture – music, dance, theater, etc." (Dynowska, 1967, August 7). She also supported the establishment of the Tibetan Music, Dance and Drama Society (In Memory of Umadevi, ca. 1976, p. 3).

Along with these activities, Dynowska tried to individually shape the cultural awareness of young Tibetans. She made efforts to make it expressive and thus to cultivate it in their everyday social interactions. Her pupils recalled that she always insisted that the young people study Buddhism, cultivate family customs, learn Tibetan and, most importantly, use it on a daily basis while at home. During longer school breaks, she organized meetings and talks about Buddhism for them, as well as lessons in their mother tongue (Dynowska, 1967, August 7). She also demanded that the children wear traditional clothes at home rather than Western ones, which were required at schools (Dorje, 2015). In her view, every daily action could be symbolic behavior, or, as Schechner calls it (2013, p. 28) "restored behaviour," which in fact forms the fabric of human cultural identity – "mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body, and tell stories" (Schechner, 2013, p. 28, cf. also p. 206 ff.). Dynowska also eagerly supported the independent activities of young Tibetans aimed at strengthening such "twice-behaved behaviour" (Schechner, 2013, p. 28) and was very proud of the projects they carried out, often inspired by her. For example, in Bylakuppe, "Dynowska's children" formed a youth association with a curriculum which included traditional Tibetan dance, music and theater, sports activities, contacts with other youth organizations, and even hygiene issues. The youngsters also organized meetings, talks, and group activities on their own (Dynowska, 1967a, August 7; Dynowska, 1967b, January 7).

Dynowska was not directly involved in cultural transmission, but she was very consistent in moderating the type of historical narrative used by young Tibetans. She regularly met with them and debated on culture, tradition, history, identity, as well as their actions towards independence (Dynowska, 1968, January 5; Dorje, 1975). She did not act as an expert, which she was not, but by referring to the Tibetan tradition, expressed in the art of dance, and also using her own experience as a person belonging to a nation strongly affected by history (partitions, World War I and II) she began to create a specific type of historical narrative, which can be described as "narrative of chosen glory" (Wangdu, 2019, pp. 36, 183). She built a positive image of the community and emphasized pride in being a member of the group. At the same time, she showed a way to interpret the current difficult situation which the Tibetans faced in the context of their own cosmological scheme. In this way, she once again used the performative nature of elements of the Tibetan tradition that allowed refugees to understand, in their own categories, the causes of the situation they found themselves in, but also to find the motivation to act (cf. Turner, 1982).

In her published books, Dynowska sought to spread this type of narrative beyond the refugee community (*Wianuszek Drogocenny o Dharmie Buddhy wśród Ptaków* [Precious Wreath about the Buddha-Dharma among Birds], 1967; Dynowska, 1965; Umadevi, 1966; ca. 1970d) and in conference speeches (Dynowska, 1963a, December 19; Dynowska, 1963b, November 5; Ghosh,

1966, p. 135). This way of speaking about the history of Tibet was eventually introduced into emerging Tibetan schools and replaced the "narrative of chosen trauma," which was in a way natural to the first generation of refugees who suffered the trauma of war and exile (Wangdu, 2019, pp. 36, 183; Vahalli, 2009).

Dynowska was aware that all these activities were only temporary and must be replaced by systemic solutions, which the Tibetans themselves were also seeking. Considering the specific situation in which the refugees found themselves and bearing in mind the fact that a significant number of the young people arrived in India as orphans, and thus were deprived of the natural context in which their identity could be shaped, Dynowska decided to initiate an educational system that would meet these needs, while at the same time preparing children to cope with their new reality. The educational method she found most promising was the one developed by the Italian medical doctor Maria Montessori (1870–1952). In the last decade of her life, Dynowska devoted herself to implementing it in emerging Tibetan schools in exile.

The fact that it was Dynowska who initiated the introduction of the Montessori method to the emerging Tibetan education was mentioned by Pema who, after the death of her sister Dolma, in 1964 took over her duties related to the care of young Tibetans. Pema emphasized that while creating a schooling system in exile, educational methods were sought that would respond to the "social, physical and psychological needs of our children" (Pema, 2005), and the person who showed her this method and convinced her of its advantages was Dynowska (Pema, 2004; 2005). Thinking about introducing the Montessori method to Tibetan schools, Dynowska first planned to educate the Tibetan teaching staff. Therefore, she focused on obtaining funds that would enable the participation of promising Tibetan students in Montessori Training Courses – and several of them managed to complete such courses (Wiederkehr, 1971, January 6). Later she made efforts to start the courses as well in Dharamsala and Bylakuppe, already in Tibetan and based on Tibetan human resources (Joosten, 1971, February 10; Dynowska, ca. 1967; Association Montessori Internationale, Hyderabad, 1971, January 19). She negotiated this case with Albert Joosten (1914–1980) one of the Montessori's earliest pupils, her personal Representative in India and the Director of the Indian Montessori Training Courses. She also undertook many organizational activities like creating a didactic space or purchasing teaching materials (which she ordered herself from a local carpenter in Madras; Dynowska, ca. 1968) so that such events could take place.

Dynowska's choice of this particular method of teaching fits well with her approach to educating young people. It systematically captured all the elements of the education process that Dynowska considered the most important in the context of building a community deprived of natural points of reference due to

exile. Two issues were particularly important to her. The concept of an "absorbent mind" (Montessori, 1965, p. 84 ff.), assuming that the child, like a sponge, absorbs everything that is necessary for him or her, to create his/her individual form, allowed Dynowska to justify the need to build schools based on Tibetan resources, so that they may become not only places for the transfer of knowledge or practical skills, but also communities that shape the identity of children. This, in turn, was linked with the communal character of Montessori schools implemented through "Case dei Bambini" (Children's Houses), which were complete educational spaces (Montessori, 1912). In them, through the daily social interactions, a process of self-education took place under the guidance of the teachers performing the roles of parents or authorities. They created a specific social and cultural reality, favorable to the Tibetan children who could not find support in their own family. In "Casa dei Bambini" the performance was "«make belief»" – created the very social realities they enacted" (cf. Schechner, 2013, p. 42 and 170 ff.) and the performative acts had a real impact on the children who were their recipients and participants. In the situation created in Children's Houses, real life and performance merged and the boundary between them became blurred. In this way, in the conditions natural for children, and maintaining the traditional systems of authorities, it was possible to pass on to young generations the most important values and principles of social life, as well as to instill in them sense of social order, together with an indication of their place within it. Dynowska considered this formation to be crucial for preserving the identity of young refugees who would have to adapt to a foreign cultural element in their lives. She was convinced that having a strong foundation in the form of social and cultural reference points, the young Tibetans would be able to function in the modern world – learn and work, and ultimately return to their community to contribute to its development and, in the future, the sovereignty of Tibet (Batogowski, 1971, March 21).

Dying in 1971, after a decade of work with young people, Dynowska saw the first generation of Tibetan teachers educated in this method. It was largely her vision of what education should be and how it should be conducted, as well as her efforts, that set the directions for thinking about modern Tibetan schooling in India for the following decades.

Conclusions

Dynowska's activity did not have a large-scale impact, but, as we have shown, it did yield some results. Their scope, however, cannot be precisely estimated today. In the case of her work among Indians, we cannot even attempt a general reflection on the influence of her undertakings. It is worth noting, however, that many people who were socially active during World War II and after it

ended and who participated in the creation of a civil society in Poland (which, taking into account the fact that Poland found itself behind the Iron Curtain, was not easy) came from the Theosophical milieu. A similar social and civic activity was characteristic for many "Poles from India", often living in exile, but emphasizing their commitment to fostering a sense of Polish identity among the next generations of the Polish diaspora. Without a doubt, the greatest and most tangible success of Dynowska's activities was the introduction of Maria Montessori's teaching method to Tibetan schools in exile. In fact, the Montessori method of education remains the basis of the educational program implemented in Tibetan pre-schools in India (Pema, 2005).

Dynowska's work – starting from her Theosophical experiments, through her work with Indians, then with Polish refugees in India, and finally with Tibetan youth – was spontaneous and idealistic in its assumptions. Her actions stemmed from a conviction shaped by her Theosophical background about the possibility of creating a new man with a high social sensitivity and a sense of responsibility for society. Despite these idealistic motivations, Dynowska's actions show that she was aware of the social mechanisms of cultural transmission and knew how to apply them in her educational practice. She understood education not as a way of transmitting information, but as a process of shaping a person within a social context. Referring to performative activity allowed her to undertake educational activities in the communities of people excluded in various ways from the educational, as well as cultural systems of transmission. Performative elements, both those that belonged to the cultural repertoire of a given community, and by enacting specific roles herself, Dynowska could pursue her goals – focus on building social, cultural awareness and the identity of the people with whom she worked.

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NOTY O AUTORKACH?????