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Editorial

Theta, Phi and Pi on the Stage of the World Theatre The logo of the journal *Theology and Philosophy of Education*

Zuzana Svobodová

The image of the world as a theatre, known for many centuries and used by many thinkers, can also be read in the logo of this journal of which the first issue of the second year we are now offering. If we look at the logo of *Theology and Philosophy of Education*, we see on the left three arches symbolizing the galleries of the theatre, such as can still be seen today in many places in the world, including, according to Pausanias (2, 27, 5), the most beautiful one, in Epidaurus in Greece. On the right we see three Greek letters that symbolize the three areas or spheres that are at the heart, centre, or core of our journal. These three letters are therefore in our logo as what is “on the stage of the theatre” of our world. Certainly, what we deal with is not all that can be seen in this world. Surely what is on the stage of our world is not on the stage of all worlds. And what is at the core of our journal is not what primarily interests everyone.

If we wish to give particular attention to theology, philosophy and education in our journal, then, to write articles in our virtual medium, we are not inviting only those who are engaged in theology, philosophy or education in universities, various schools of other types or in professional publications. The choice of the logo as an image in which theology, philosophy and education are on the stage of the theatre of the world is meant as an invitation to all who are interested in thinking about what the cultivation (education) of man means, what the way of life that knows that wisdom and love are to be united means (philosophy), and what any talk about what transcends us is, supposes and implies (and what religions that profess the one God call theology).

Because the ancient Greeks called that wondrous possibility of education *paideia* (παιδεία), we have chosen the letter pi (Π) from the Greek alphabet as a symbol for education. We want to see it as a wondrous possibility because it refers to the reality of the openness of man or the possibility of such. If man did not have the possibility of receiving the action of other people and did not have the possibility of subsequent change or conversion, then we would not speak of the possibility of education in him. *Paideia* would still be possible for such a person, however, because this Greek term has also been translated, for example, as nourishment. So, if a person is alive, he has a chance to receive what the ancient Greeks referred to as *paideia*. In *Theology and Philosophy of Education*, we do not want to see education as an instrument or

only as a means to a clear end or purpose, namely, as an instrument of which its aim is intentional formation. We want to see education much more broadly or universally, and as the very backbone of life. This is how Comenius perceived education in the 17th century. Unlike Descartes, Comenius was aware that methods were not the most important thing, albeit very important. Indeed, unlike many even in today's world, Comenius was aware that our views here in the world are only partial, incomplete, and that "playing" for a complete view of the world is akin to "playing" at the theatre. Such a theatrical play can have a purifying effect as it can move a person, his thinking, emotions and will, very much, but the play itself is not the real whole of the world. A theatrical play can only be a reference which, if it moves a man powerfully, has become connected with something which, though we perceive it, we do not have it entirely in our power, which means it transcends us, it is beyond our power. That the deepest movement happens is a phenomenon, a dynamical act that takes place in the core, the heart, the depth, which we can call, for example, the inner or inward man. For Comenius, education was not just one of the things of man, but was for him the very backbone of life, that very thing that is capable of shaping our existence into human existence.

The letter pi is placed in the middle of our logo between the letter theta (Θ), as a symbol for theology, and the letter phi (Φ), as a symbol for philosophy. The letter pi is placed horizontally so that the top of the letter pi can connect the letter theta and the phi in extension. At the same time, the two lines of the bottom of the letter pi can be interpreted as parallel lines, as those paths that, according to projective (non-Euclidean) geometry, intersect at infinity. Yet here we are, and we cannot perceive that intersection, much less perceive it in its fullness. Thus, for now, Euclidean geometry is often perceived as sufficient for us. But this does not mean that we want to claim that there is nothing other than classical Euclidean theory. This is why we see education as the backbone of life because it helps us see our world as an order. Rather, paideia as education is seen here as a way of seeing our world as a meaningful whole, in which we leave the vision of one order behind as we grow into other connections and as new horizons open up. It is of course often possible to survive successfully with the order of the clear and distinct. Indeed, it is possible to live successfully in this way. And it is quite likely that if you are truly seeking success above all else, then this way with clear and distinct order should be enough. But if the idea of human life is broader than the idea of successful living, then we want to show that it is good to have gained from education that which both philosophy and theology have to offer: philosophy as not only the love of wisdom, but also as the wisdom of love; and theology, not just as talk about God, but above all as that which grows out of talk with God and which is above all love of God, theophilia.

Theology and Philosophy of Education, or TAPE, launches the first issue of the second volume with a look at the horizons of education and training that open up in the Hebrew vision of education, expressed in the Bible and in rabbinical literature as well. The second article offers teacher education a dialogue with mystical theology and thus a glimpse of what is The Eye of the Storm. The third article analyses a particular method of character education. The contribution of phenomenological philosophy to education is discussed in the fourth article,

which focuses specifically on the three original positions of phenomenological orientation in Polish pedagogical thought. The fifth article introduces how one can prepare for ministry in a different cultural setting, specifically here the preparation of medical students from a university in Europe in an African hospital. In particular, it is about gaining multicultural competence and acquiring cultural competence, both of which are seen as essential for service to the human person, for service in which we are called or urged to be human. The issue concludes with a conversation about visions for the paths of education, but also about the paths themselves that we have been taking so far.

Dear readers, I wish you to experience the joy of seeing that we are not alone in the theatre of the world, that we are different, and that this diversity can bring us something truly new,

Zuzana Svobodová

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PhDr. Zuzana Svobodová, Ph.D.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5151-056X>

Charles University

Theology and Philosophy of Education

editor in chief

svobodova@tape.academy

Basic Impulses of Hebrew Pedagogy

Andrej Čaja

Abstract

The privileged place to learn about Hebrew pedagogy is the Bible and rabbinical literature and thus it is of primary interest especially to the religious systems that grew out of it. Nevertheless, from a formal point of view, it offers a priceless contribution to the reflection on educational values as such. The aim of this article is to put forward some basic impulses of Hebrew pedagogy that may be inspirational even today for both teachers and pupils.

Keywords

Hebrew pedagogy; teacher-student relationship; study and ethics; logic and sapiential approach

If inclusion and plurality belong to the popular notions of the current debate on educational reforms and policies in the Western world (Hodkinson 2010), it would be appropriate to take into consideration the Hebrew vision of education, expressed in the Bible and in the rabbinical literature, as well. This is not only because it has shaped and influenced the monotheistic religion of Judaism and Christianity, but also because its long tradition of teaching, its focus on both intellectual and ethical formation and above all its sapiential and argumentative dimensions can offer a unique model of tutoring for both teachers and students even regardless of their religious beliefs. We will therefore briefly examine its gradual development, some of its basic principles and its most commonly used methods.

Outline of the Development of the Hebrew Teaching System

A noteworthy position of education in the Hebrew tradition is already indicated by the fact that the Bible uses a variety of expressions to describe teaching activity. The most common word for “to teach” in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is the verb *נָמַךְ*, which literally means “to beat” or “to chastise” (with a rod) and originally referred to the training of livestock. Subsequently, it came to signify the disciplining of soldiers and, figuratively, the actual education of pupils, since this was often accompanied by harsh discipline.¹ The most frequent Greek word is the verb *διδάσκω*: it occurs 100 times in the Septuagint and 95 times in the New Testament, with about two-thirds of the occurrences in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles (Rengstorf 1935, 139–141).

¹ It is worth noting that from the verb *נָמַךְ* is derived also the term *Talmud*, which denotes the well-known collection of Jewish law and theology.

It is not without interest that the Mosaic Law itself is designated by the apostle Paul as a “pedagogue” (Gal 3:24–25): if on the one hand this terminology refers to the Roman custom according to which wealthier parents entrusted the education of their son to a tutor (usually a slave), on the other hand it has deep historical roots, since the Torah was transmitted principally by teaching. As God taught Moses (cf. Ex 4:12) who in turn taught the people (cf. Ex 18:20), so in one of the foundational texts of the Bible Moses gives the Israelites the task of teaching their sons all the precepts of the Law: “Teach them to your children. You shall talk of them when you are sitting in your home, and when you are walking along the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Dt 6:7).

The ordinance makes it clear that in the Jewish home it was primarily the role of the parents, and especially of the father, to teach the children, as it is later highlighted also by the Talmud in the Tractate *Kiddushin*: “A father is obligated with regard to his son to circumcise him, and to redeem him if he is a firstborn son who must be redeemed by payment to a priest, and to teach him Torah” (*Kiddushin* 29a,10–19).

It seems that the first forms of public education appeared during the monarchy. 2 Chr 17:7–10 reports that King Jehoshaphat (873–848 B.C.) established a kind of peripatetic school when he commissioned princes, Levites, and priests to visit all the cities of Judah and teach the Law to the people. Another example is described by Nehemiah 8, where on the occasion of the renewal of the covenant, the priest Ezra orders the reading of the Book of the Law and at the same time appoints a group of Levites to interpret it to the people. It is clear, then, that the work of instruction was entrusted primarily to the priests, as Roland de Vaux notes (1994, 353–355), which can be traced back to Moses’ blessing to Levi in Dt 33:10: “He teaches your decrees to Jacob and your law to Israel. He offers incense before your altar and whole burnt offerings on it.”

Yet priests were not the only educators in Old Testament times. An analogous role was exercised by the prophets and their disciples (“sons of the prophets”: cf. 1 Kgs 20:35; 2 Kgs 2:3; 6:1) who are not characterized only by giving oracles, but by their efforts of reforming and educating the Israelites. An important chapter in this development is the Wisdom Literature with a whole series of instructions on righteous living before God (Proverbs), on the transience of worldly things (Ecclesiastes) and on the importance of union with God (Song of Songs), which thus lays the foundation for the three classical stages of the spiritual life: *via purgativa*, *via illuminativa* and *via unitiva* (Bergsma and Pitre 2018, 661). Furthermore, during the Second Temple period the priests were progressively replaced by a new class of scribes and teachers who offered instructions on the Law in their homes and especially in the synagogues. This phenomenon gradually led to the rise of rabbinical schools, of which two in particular stood out: the school of Hillel the Elder (60 B.C.–20 A.D.) and the school of Shammai (50 B.C.–30 A.D.).

The title of “teacher” by which Jesus of Nazareth is repeatedly addressed in the Gospels and the circle of his disciples give the impression that his movement may have been initially looked upon as a form of rabbinical school, as well. It is generally estimated by scholars that also the

first Christian communities who gathered around some of the apostles were each constituted as a sort of school, complementary and yet clearly distinguished, such as those associated with John, James or Paul. In fact, in his pastoral letters Paul explains how the apostolic doctrine is passed on to the next generations through carefully chosen and appointed teachers: “And the things you learned from me in the presence of many witnesses you must pass on to trustworthy people who will be capable of teaching others” (2 Tim 2:2).

Basic Hallmarks of Hebrew Pedagogy

What are the major hallmarks of Hebrew pedagogy and how can they enrich our view of education today? Although a complete characterization of the subject is not possible due to space constraints, in this section I want to highlight at least some of its basic features.

The Study of Torah: a Goal in Itself

In antiquity as well as today, the financial provision of an education institution is certainly one of the serious problems that those responsible for its running and management have to deal with. Yet a major constant of Hebrew pedagogy points out that the acquisition and transmission of knowledge must always remain the central and ultimate priority of education and should be pursued in a highly disinterested manner. Just as Solomon in the Old Testament reminds us that he received all other material gifts after he prayed for Wisdom (cf. 1 Kgs 3:10–15), so Jesus as the new Solomon emphasizes the principle that all material things necessary for sustenance will be given to the one who first seeks the kingdom of God (cf. Mt 6:33).

It is thus understandable that in some biblical texts we find very strong statements against teachers who in their work are mainly motivated by profit. Particularly critical of this mind-set is the prophet Micah when he writes: “Her leaders accept bribes for favorable judgments, her priests render judgments for a fee, her prophets practice divination for money” (Mi 3:11). Similarly, Paul compares the bishop, who as God’s steward and teacher is not to be “avaricious”, with false teachers who are “teaching for dishonest gain what it is not right to teach” (Titus 1:7,11).

It is not surprising then that we encounter a similar attitude in rabbinical writings, according to which one of the basic conditions of study is “the absence of selfish intent. The Torah must be studied for its own sake (*Torah Lishma*)” (Sládek 2008, 201). Thus, according to Rabbi Meir, when one studies *Torah Lishma* the creation of the entire world is worthwhile for him alone, and he brings joy to God (*Pirkei Avot* 6,1). And the main motive for this is that God himself engages in Torah study for the first three hours of every day (*Avodah Zarah* 3b).

Study or/and Practice of the Law

There has long been a debate among rabbis about what is more important: studying Torah or *practising* the Law (*Kiddushin* 40b)?² If the Talmud on the one hand teaches that study

² The question was addressed in the 19th century by John Henry Newman in his now classic work *The Idea of a University*, where on the one hand he defended the so-called “liberal education” against intentions to reduce

of Torah is greater than all other commandments (*Shabbath* 127a), on the other hand Jewish scholars generally agree that both study and action are necessary. The first must lead to the second and manifest itself in concrete good deeds, for the simple reason that the goal of Judaism is the mission of “improving the world” (תִּיקוֹן עוֹלָם), i.e., the cooperation in the work of creation through acts of charity and kindness. It is understandable, then, that Jesus adopts the same principle and even elevates it to a beatitude when he declares: “Blessed, rather, are those who hear the word of God and obey it!” (Lk 11:28).

Closely related to this is the connection of scholarship with moral integrity, which is given great emphasis in Hebrew thought. Already in the Book of Sirach, for example, there appears the well-known appeal that the Lady Wisdom addresses to her devotees: “Whoever obeys me will never be put to shame; whoever follows my instructions will never sin” (Sir 24:22). There is an immense amount of material on this subject in rabbinical tradition, which flows from the fact that a Torah scholar well versed in Jewish law (תַּלְמִיד הַחֵם) must be a righteous man (צַדִּיק). In one of the minor talmudic tractates, *Derekh 'Eres* (“The Way of the Land” or “Ethics”), which every scholar should learn before proceeding to the study of Torah, there are enlisted these moral principles, according to which the תַּלְמִיד הַחֵם must live:

The characteristics of a scholar are that he is meek, humble, alert, filled [with a desire for learning], modest, beloved by all, humble to the members of his household and sin-fearing. He judges a man [fairly] according to his deeds, and says “I have no desire for all the things of this world because this world is not for me”. He sits and studies, soiling his cloak at the feet of the scholars. In him no one sees any evil. He questions according to the subject-matter and answers to the point (*Derekh Eretz Zuta* 1).

Teacher-Student Relationship

A typical feature of Western higher education is that it is usually a one-man job, namely the teacher's, whose task consists in delivering a lecture in the manner of a *Vorlesung*. This approach is not unknown even in the Bible. Just as Deuteronomy contains the three great speeches of Moses (Dt 1–4; 5–26; 29–31), so the Sermon on the Mount occupies three whole chapters in Matthew's Gospel (chapters 5–7), where Jesus teaches without interruption. Yet biblical and later rabbinical scholarship is also characterized by a more interactive relationship between the teacher and the students built mostly on posing questions and giving answers, which could certainly be given more space in our way of transmitting knowledge, as well. A typical example is the pericope of the twelve-year-old Jesus of whom Luke writes that “they found him in the temple, where he was sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his intelligence and his answers” (Lk 2:46–47). The rationale of what we could term as a father-son relationship between the teacher and the students is explained in a beautiful way by Talmud Torah:

education to the level of mere utility, and at the same time he pointed out that separation of education from virtue only leads to the creation of a gentleman. Cf. John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co.: 1889), 120–121.

A teacher should take care of his students and love them, because they are like sons who bring him pleasure in this world and in the world to come. Students increase their teacher's wisdom and broaden his horizons. Our Sages declared: "I learned much wisdom from my teachers and even more from my colleagues. However, from my students [I learned] most of all..." (Talmud *Torah* 5,12-13).

Methodology of Hebrew Education

In this final section a focus is given on some fundamental methodological elements which give the Hebrew way of thinking a remarkable originality and make its system of education particularly respected in the field of scholarly inquiry.

Logical Form of Argumentation

Just as Western philosophy is known for precise logical procedures of thought, so the Hebrew way of thinking is characterized, at least in part, by a specific form of logical argumentation. The Jewish scholar Hillel is associated with the so-called seven exegetical rules (מִדּוֹת), which form the basis of rabbinical hermeneutics. The first and most famous is the rule known as וְהוֹמֵר לְקַל, which indicates an inference from the easier to the more difficult, from the lesser to the greater or vice versa. In a sense, it is the equivalent of the Latin expression: *a fortiori*. It is noteworthy that we encounter it repeatedly both in the Bible and in rabbinical literature, as Eugenio Zolli points out in his classic work *Il Nazareno* (Zolli 2009, 119–136).

Several instances of the rule occur already in the Pentateuch, as in Ex 6:12, where Moses says to the Lord: "Behold, the children of Israel have not listened to me; how could Pharaoh listen to me, for I am a man of unskilled speech?" Similarly, in Dt 31:27, the following reasoning is found: "If you rebel against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, how much more so will you be after my death." Extensive use of the rule was made by rabbinical scholars, who for the purpose of instilling a sense of goodness and charity, first pointed out the qualities of the Lord to prompt men to follow the divine example. In the Talmud (*Shabbath* 133) we find this statement: "Stick to, that is, follow the attributes of the Lord. The Lord is clement and merciful. As He is clement and merciful so be you also" (Zolli 2009, 123).

Unsurprisingly, this method of deduction is used by New Testament authors as well and can be found even in some sayings of Jesus, as in Mt 7:11: "If you then, despite your evil nature, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" In particular, the Apostle Paul, as a former Pharisee, was familiar with the *instrumentarium* of rabbinical argumentation, as evidenced by this text from Rom 5:9: "And so, now that we have been justified by Christ's blood, how much more certainly will we be saved through him from divine retribution."

The Use of מְשַׁלֵּם and παραβολαι

Rigorous logic is certainly not the only weapon of Hebrew thought, which is much more imbued with the search for wisdom than with rationalistic reasoning, as the Old Testament wisdom literature demonstrates. A central place in it belongs to the Book of Proverbs which

comprises a collection of short sayings, מִלִּשְׁנָה, expressing basic principles for leading a wise and virtuous life. Teachings contained in מִלִּשְׁנָה were considered “the very foundation of education in ancient Israel and the preferred method of instruction by many teachers and prophets” (Bergsma and Pitre 2018, 597). Usually they are pithy, two-line sentences, but they can also expand to a longer story becoming a παραβολή. There is no doubt that the most famous narrator of parables in the whole Bible is Jesus of Nazareth, known for teaching in figures to the multitudes (Mt 13:34). His parables are stories based on ordinary life experiences, and although they are simple and easy to remember, their meaning is not immediately apparent. They illustrate an underlying ethical or theological principle that forces the listener to reflect, while the story itself is often unfinished and has an “open end”.

Memorization of Biblical Texts

In the last decades various studies by psychologists and neurologists have shown that cursory reading and fast acquaintance with information through easy access to internet networks often lead to superficial learning and even to alteration of our brain (Carr 2020). This alarming fact thus brings us to another significant feature of the Hebrew teaching method, which is the memorization of study material. One of the first biblical references to it can be found in Dt 6:7 (“Teach them to your children”), where the verb יָדַעַד does not simply mean “to teach”, but “to inculcate” or “to repeat”. The point is that the Israelites were supposed to memorize the Lord’s words and so it is comprehensible that the teaching of Jewish children started usually with loud recitation and repetition of key biblical texts.

However, there are other reasons for this teaching technique. First of all, it can be explained by the fact that the initial phase of the transmission of the biblical message took an oral form, which required its repetition in order to be able to retain it in memory and to transmit it faithfully. This was facilitated by mnemonic devices, particularly by parallelisms and alliterations, which were to make it easier to remember the information. A huge presence of these rhetoric figures in the biblical text suggests that a great part of the Old Testament was composed according to this “rhythmic pedagogy” (Daniel-Rops 1963, 265).³

The memorization of the biblical text has possibly a liturgical connotation as well, because the Hebrew term זָכַר refers as much to the process of committing something to memory as to a liturgical celebration. In this way, the whole study of the Bible culminates in cultic worship and in the “thank psalm” (תְּהִלָּה) for the “mercy” (חַסְדֵּי) that God has continually shown to his people throughout history.

³ For the Hebrew rhetoric cf. Roland Meynet, *L’Analyse rhétorique. Une nouvelle méthode pour comprendre la Bible. Textes fondateurs et exposé systématique* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1989); Id., *Leggere la Bibbia* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1998), 77–97.

Conclusion

The study focused explicitly on the formal side of Hebrew education, identifying some aspects of “how” the Hebrews teach and not “what” they teach, which is rather the competence of various departments of theology and other sciences.

On the one hand, it must be acknowledged that the Hebrew educational model is necessarily limited and thus represents a reality open to improvement and even to eschatological fulfilment. It is noteworthy that the Talmud itself perceives it in this way when it presents the vision of a heavenly academy where God studies the Torah with deceased scholars and reveals to them the reasons for the various commandments that are hidden from mortals (Sládek 2008, 201). On the other hand, however, it should be noted that in this way a suitable space is created for all members of the community, and not only for teachers and pupils, to cooperate in improving the quality of education, which is particularly the case in the area of religious instruction. As A. Sacchi points out, this is indispensable primarily at the level of orthopraxis through personal example and witness, without which teaching would be reduced to the mere communication of doctrines (Sacchi 1988, 755).

It may be that the Hebrew pedagogy does not give easy solutions to all contemporary educational issues, but with its specific prioritization of spiritual, sapiential, moral ideals as well as of values promoting psychosomatic human well-being, it can offer many motivational ideas for teachers and students alike. A great proof of its efficacy is the enormous multitude of significant scholars, Hebrew and Christian, who have been shaped and guided by its principles.

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ThDr. Andrej Mária Čaja, Ph.D.

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0708-3260>

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

Institute for research of Constantine and Methodius' cultural heritage

Štefánikova 67, 949 01 Nitra, Slovakia

p.andrej@familiemariens.org

The Eye of the Storm

Mystical Theology in Dialogue with Teacher Education

Sander Vloebergs⁴

Bert Roebben⁵

Abstract

In this interdisciplinary paper we explore ways in which medieval mystical theology can inspire religious education teachers in their work in the classroom. One of the major challenges to them is to (help to) understand the tension between religious literacy and religious experience. By using an experiential and imaginative rather than a rational theology, based on the work of the mystics, we hope to clarify this tension. Firstly, we describe the “hermeneutical storm”: a metaphor to understand the complexity of the religious learning process in the context of friction between worlds. Teachers bear witness and need to stand firm at the centre of this clash. Secondly, we present medieval mysticism as a frame of reference to deal with this situation that challenges the modern urge for rational control. We discuss the historical context of the democratization of mystical theology, the multiple genres and the imaginative language mystics use to guide their students during their personal development, exemplified by Hadewijch’s mystical experience as an interplay between Love and Reason. This imaginative theology can offer contemporary religious education teachers insight into the “hidden presence of God” when faced with hermeneutical storms in the classroom and can help them in clarifying the tension between religious literacy and experience.

Keywords

religious education; mystical theology; teacher education; religious literacy; religious experience; interdisciplinarity; Hadewijch

Introduction

Contemporary religious pedagogy espouses a concept of theology that relies heavily on a cognitive understanding of religious texts, rituals, practices and communities. Religious literacy, it is then claimed, should be the aim of religious education and assumes a grammar, the mastery of a language game, in order to learn to understand the phenomenon of religious (and non-religious) worldviews. True, there are performative broadenings available in this concept to fill in the missing experiential substrate and provide the concepts with content. That which is missing in a secularized context, particularly religious experience, is then supplemented by spiritual and moral practice elements within or outside the classroom.

⁴ Postdoc researcher at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the KU Leuven (Belgium).

⁵ Professor of Religious Education at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Bonn (Germany).

But is this cognitive perspective the only theological perspective conceivable and available to guide the development of religious education (research)? A provocative proposal is made in this paper: in particular, the mystical theology of the Middle Ages, strongly marked by experience and imagination, is invoked here to describe the tension that exists between professional subject knowledge, on the one hand, and personal spiritual knowledge of teachers and/or students, on the other. We contend that mystic theology can open up the classroom and its traditional “learning about religion” approach for new forms of “learning from religion” (Grimmitt 1987, 225).

Enduring “hermeneutical storms” in the classroom

A good learning process presupposes and generates friction: between the learner’s life world and the world of the text, between person and subject, between experience and tradition. Learning is an answer to the question, “What does this (segment of reality) have to do with me (as a learning person)?” Both worlds collide and create an interesting friction. The friction motivates the learners to explore questions that arise during the learning process. The teacher stands in the middle. He or she mediates between the colliding worlds, standing in the eye of the hermeneutical storm: he or she voices both worlds, builds bridges and increases the knowledge-cutting point between the two worlds, in order to create a maximum of learning opportunities (Roebben et. al. 2023).

Religious education offers a great example of this stormy learning process. Here, too, worlds collide: the world of the existential questions of children and young people and that of the theoretical responses from religious and non-religious traditions. Spontaneous and simple correlations between the two worlds ceased to exist. Students enter the classroom these days as “a rich hermeneutical field of ‘multicorrelation’” (Pollefeyt 2020, 8), of different options through which powerful knowledge is activated and negotiated.

A great deal of interaction of the *subject* (person) with the *object* (thing) of knowledge and vice versa can be sparked by the *intersubjective* moment of intervention by the teacher. He or she can decide to consciously collide the two worlds with each other, not only perceiving and naming their collision, but also activating the collision in a methodically controlled way or even embodying the collision in one’s own person as a teacher. Whoever as a teacher of religion thus lights the fuse, “hermeneutically irritates” children and young people (Roebben 2023, 91–92) with existential issues that are profoundly ambivalent, and provides them with a theological jargon will be confronted with hermeneutical storms. Anyone who theologically empowers young people with theological knowledge on beginning and end, vocation and occupation, desire and pain, life before and after death, connection and rupture, to name only a few, will be challenged by them. And that need not be destructive, but quite the contrary.

The traditional presupposition is that the teacher should control this storm during the learning process by working with students on religious literacy and argumentative power. But it may happen that this does not remove the irritation from the learning process. On the contrary, even more ambiguity, discomfort and messiness may arise during rational discourse, because

religious issues simply cannot be separated from the undefinable and unsolvable existential questions of concrete (young) people. From the moment religious literacy (e.g., based on a religious text, symbol or space) in the classroom is enriched with biographical elements based on religious experience (“what does this knowledge do to me?”), a different language game is needed. Which theological languages and genres, which creative methods do teachers need besides domain-specific knowledge and didactic skills? How do they communicate about religious experiences that surpass rational control?

Medieval mystical theology as an interdisciplinary research format

Our premise in this article is that the teacher must performatively weather the hermeneutical storm with students. Students wait for a courageous signal from the teacher not to flee from the storm and count on him or her to be a safe guide. In a previous paper three performative teacher education models were presented, in which teachers learn to deal with this vulnerable challenge: through music, body work and dance, pilgrimage (Roebben et. al. 2023; Vloebergs 2021). What follows is a first step⁶ in an interdisciplinary search design to ground this experience-dense and performative-oriented vision of the religion teacher as a “wounded healer” from a mystical-theological perspective. This perspective offers a different kind of theological rationality, specifically that of “enlightened reason” from the time of medieval mysticism. It provides us with creative methods and literary genres that can pique our interest and offer us clarity. This reason is first and foremost about bodily knowledge and imagination, encapsulated in the concept of *minne*, which is the medieval Flemish word for love, through which the human person learns to open up to a reality other than the observable one.

Drawing on the insights of the Australian practical theologian Aaron J. Ghiloni, we take three steps in this interdisciplinary search design (Ghiloni 2013). First, we point out the democratic nature of this enterprise. Then we briefly explain the diversity in mystical genres that emerged in the Middle Ages, among other things, from this democratizing trend. Finally, we address one mystical author specifically. Hadewijch of Brabant illustrates how mystical knowledge is based on an experiential wisdom that crosses different theological genres.

The RE teacher as a medieval mystic?

Mystical theology is a relatively new discipline within modern academic theology. Yet mystical theologians specialize in a corpus of texts that starts with the Church Fathers and extends to contemporary times (for a survey of primary and secondary literature, see McGinn 1991). This is an interdisciplinary field of research in which the texts are studied by theologians, philosophers, (art) historians and literature scholars. Mystical theologians reflect on the experiences of the “hidden presence of God”, rooted in an immediate personal encounter with

⁶ First attempts on the work of Meister Eckhart can be found in “Looking at the Religious Education Teacher Through the Lens of Medieval Mysticism” (Roebben 2016, 121–26) and in the doctoral work of Maria Magdalena Stüttem at the University of Cologne.

the divine that requires a creative and rational word play in order to communicate (Howells & McIntosh 2020, 1–2).

The mystics of the past were gifted word artists whose experiential language could directly touch the hearer or reader. This language is different from the objective and precise language that academic theology cultivated in universities. The mystics created a language that is inspired by their own personal experience. Contemporary mystical theologians are, first and foremost, academics who function within the rational environment of the university. These researchers often avoid personal involvement in their examination of mysticism. They write about historical mystical experiences of other Christians.

Contemporary theology, however, does not happen only at the university,⁷ nor do numerous theologians agree with eliminating personal experience from theological discourse. On the contrary, the movement towards context, situation and biography – both personal and structural – has in many ways formally democratized and substantively dynamized the academic theological enterprise.

We go one step further and propose that, like the mystics and mystical theologians of the past, our own personal and image-rich experiences also inform our reflection – in this case, on religious teaching and learning. We look at the role of the religious teacher as a “student in the school of the mystics”. Indeed, both the teacher and the mystic are rooted in a personal experience of reality which they seek to put into words, based on different traditions and worlds. The mystic and *mutatis mutandis* the teacher of religion is:

(...) Someone who, overwhelmingly, experiences the presence of what transcends him/herself and which is much more real than all that is usually considered real. The whole human system – the world in which we live and which seems so natural and solid – becomes a transparent backdrop for the mystic, because another, ultimate reality presents itself (Mommaers 1997, 25, our translation).

A rich treasure of mystical knowledge

The democratization trend in theology is not only characteristic of the present period. The late Middle Ages also saw a rich exchange between theological traditions and genres in which experience and imagination played a crucial role. The literary scholar Barbara Newman even speaks of an “imaginative theology”, an umbrella term to subsume the various genres based on a shared interest in imagery (Newmann 2003, 295–96). The mystical tradition, previously practised in monastic contexts and written down in Latin, now reached people outside the monastery walls with its imaginative language (McGinn 1998, 19–24).

In these exciting but also turbulent times, mystical theologians were masters at handling and teaching this lived imaginative theology. Their texts were mystagogical in nature and aimed at training and supporting students in their personal experience of the hidden presence of God. This assumed a creative approach since this experience cannot be captured by words.

⁷ This line of thought refers to the development of “children’s theology” and “youth theology” in the German speaking world and “ordinary theology” (Jeff Astley) in the Anglo-Saxon world (cf. Roebben 2016, 81–97).

Mysticism therefore consists of several genres. Vision literature is a privileged genre through which mainly female mystics shared their knowledge. We take the mystic Hadewijch as an example to illustrate how mystical imaginative theology can still appeal today, especially when we learn to understand how embodied imagery and rational reasoning are not mutually exclusive.

Hadewijch and the images of storm and love

The mystic Hadewijch is an enigmatic figure about whom researchers have been able to gather only scant biographical material. Situated in the thirteenth century, she probably lived as a beguine or Cistercian (Faesen 2004). She wrote in several genres: visions, songs and letters. Especially, her visions are mystagogical in nature (Fraeters 1999). In each vision, she presents new imagery which, through the medium of text comes to live within in the personal imagination of the reader, and which, in turn, is interpreted and re-interpreted. To understand Hadewijch's mystagogy and visionary imagery, it is necessary to understand her key concept of "minne" (Love). Love is the subject and object of theological knowledge that can only be known through personal engagement, through experience (Mommaers 2004, 45–46). God as Love, and Christ as the ideal lover play the leading role in her theology. Through visions, the mystic teaches Love.

Reason is given a unique place as both antagonist and accomplice of Lady Love. Reason is an intellectual function of the soul that provides the soul with the capacity to make distinctions. It is responsible for creating (visual) language. Of great importance in Hadewijch's love mysticism is the voice of Reason that warns the mystic of a possible fusion with the object of love's desire, with God himself. Indeed, Reason clarifies the distinction between the human being and God, where Love emphasizes that a personal encounter with God is possible. Together, Reason and Love form "two eyes" through which the person gains divine knowledge (according to Hadewijch in Letter 18). The tension between the two is highlighted and depicted by the mystic in various ways. In her ninth vision, for example, Reason takes the form of a queen who attacks the mystic and holds her in a stranglehold until she surrenders. Hadewijch writes in Vision 19: "The queen approached me dreadfully fast and set her foot on my throat, and cried with a more terrible voice, and said: 'Do you know who I am?' And I said: 'Yes indeed! Long enough have you caused me woe and pain! You are my soul's faculty of Reason'" (Hadewijch 1980, 285). However, Reason is in turn vanquished by Love, who embraces the mystic and leads her to an unspeakable oneness with God, transcending the soul's capacities. Thus, the mystic reaches a wisdom that human reason deemed impossible.

The vision reveals that Reason remains active, even when overcome or transcended by Love. Reason is included in Love's dynamic embrace and will act out of Love, still conscious of human limitations and distinctions but no longer hindered by them. Reason is incorporated in Love and in the eternal desire for Love. Hadewijch called this "enlightened reason". The enlightened mystical writer can act in daily life without losing the constant access to divine inspiration. Thanks to this process, Hadewijch gained self-knowledge and appropriated the divine attribute of Wisdom. She accepted that human Reason always fails to comprehend

Divine Love entirely. This impossibility to capture Love, however, did not stop her from speaking. Human Reason is not annihilated but transformed. She now serves not the individual but Love.

This process of enlightenment and transformation is not meant for the faint-hearted as it can be very painful. In her Letter 20, Hadewijch mentioned how Love “cries with a loud voice, without stay or respite, in all the hearts of those who love: ‘Love ye love!’ This voice makes a noise so great and so unheard of that it sounds more fearful than thunder (cf. Apoc 6:1)” (Hadewijch 1980, 92). Thunder accompanies the lightning that enlightens reason. It is a dreadful sound that wounds her disciples. Lightning blinds reason, leaving an afterimage on the retina, before being plunged into darkness. It is a struggle in the dark, reminiscent of the battle the visionary fought with Lady Reason in her ninth Vision. Combined with the thunder, lightning creates a violent drama that is also evoked by the imagery of the storm.

The mystic can face this storm when reason surrenders to the deep undercurrent of Love that connects the human being to the infinite source of Love, God. The storm blinds the eye of reason. The mystagogical process deals with the difficulties of learning on how to see with both eyes, Reason and Love, despite the dark path before our feet. However, the mystics offer pointers, strong images that help the “student in the school of Love”. Their mystical theologies seek images and genres that guide their students to a deeper understanding of reality. What takes shape in this imaginative world of visions is a reality that touches human beings. In this sense, the vision is real. It encourages one to bear witness to God as Love, and yet to continue to seek anchoring in the “hidden presence of God” that sometimes has an overwhelmingly illuminating effect on the human soul, and sometimes seems painfully clouded in darkness.

Conclusion

In the eye of the hermeneutic storm, the teacher seeks “groundedness”, so that he or she does not get lost in the whirlwind of the classroom. How will the teacher manage the learning process of children and young people in search of a language for vulnerable existential experiences, knowing full well that he or she does not know the answer to all theological questions and is often tongue-tied? And is there a theological “language game” conceivable and available to address the tension between religious literacy and experience? In this paper we reframed this situation as interdisciplinary by looking into the theology of medieval mysticism. Conclusively, we believe that, especially for young teachers with less and less living connection to religious traditions (i.e., literacy and experience), this approach can be helpful. Or, many seek a foothold in a mere objective religious studies knowledge and transfer. But perhaps, following the medieval tradition of imaginative theology that we exemplarily presented here, a path is just conceivable whereby teachers learn to rely on their own strength and develop their own language for the transcendent. This language is imaginative and experiential, but also reasonable, as it searches for words and understanding. It involves a “mysticism with open eyes” (Metz 1998, 163) – with the eyes of Love and Reason (Hadewijch).

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Doc. Sander Vloebergs, Ph.D.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6864-7973>

KU Leuven, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies

Sint-Michielsstraat 4, 3000 Leuven, Belgium

Sander.vloebergs@kuleuven.be

Prof. Dr. Bert Roebben, Ph.D.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3427-6190>

University of Bonn, Faculty of Catholic Theology

Rabinstraße 8, 53111 Bonn, Germany

hroebben@uni-bonn.de

Character Education in Primary Schools and the New Implementation Education Method of Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in the Czech Republic

Michaela Pachelová

Abstract

This article examines character education, which has been assessed as essential for the emotional and social development of children. Character education is included in the curriculum as early as preschool, and it should optimally continue in primary school. Furthermore, the importance of a correct choice of methods and guided reflections is also included. The article also discusses previous experiences with character education and the recommendations provided by the Czech School Inspectorate.

Keywords

Character education; primary schools; support; social-emotional learning; method Positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS)

Introduction

In his work *Didactica magna*, Comenius (Komenský 1948) considers the formation of the pupil's character as one of the most important tasks of education. Pedagogy has progressed since the times of John Amos Comenius and has a rich selection of methods for monitoring the development of the pupil's cognitive skills. But how are the didactics in forming the moral-volitional characteristics? What is the status of character education in elementary schools?

Schools contribute to our children's socialization, which is irreplaceable in the formation of other interpersonal relationships. The conditions of socialization are related to the educational programme, which schools often leave to the intuition of the class teacher. Schools create their own regulations but focus on sanctions rather than incentives for good behaviour, cooperation, and democratic principles. It is only when problems arise that boundaries and rules are enforced and sanctions such as reduced behaviour grades are applied. This is first at the class level and, if the rules are not respected, then at the level of the entire school. Some teachers believe that such education belongs exclusively to the family domain. However, Professor Hábl (2022, 41) warns that society will not thrive without individuals of character. Society should therefore take care of both the moral character of the pupils and the character of the educator.

Character is one of those overarching concepts that is the subject of disciplines from to theology, psychology, neuropsychology, sociology. Thomas Lickona defines character education as “the deliberate effort to develop virtues that are good for the individual and good for society” (Damon et al. 2023).

The psychologist Robert McGrath has proposed that character education is less focused on social skill acquisition and more on constructing a moral identity within a life narrative (Benninga and Berkowitz 2023). I think that every teacher is part of building a moral identity within a life story. For me, character education is an irreplaceable concept that includes social and emotional learning, moral reasoning and cognitive development, life skills education, health education, violence prevention, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and conflict resolution, all being necessary for our schools.

Start as Soon as Possible

It turns out that the support of colleagues, school management, and the general public is an important addition to the active, conscious work of teachers. This investment is only returned to society after a certain period of gathering experience and connecting values with real behaviour in life situations. Even though the results of the systematic work are not immediately apparent, it brings a lasting benefit. A common understanding of a certain value focus makes the school less dependent on external circumstances, such as coronavirus restrictions, multicultural cooperation, and the need for a respectful approach. Elements of prosocial behaviour are also a prerequisite for the creation and maintenance of a culture of reciprocity and cooperation.

When should character education start in schools? Svobodová (2007, 112) recommends including character education as early as pre-school and ensuring the continuity of teaching. Basic habits are educated early in families, making the cooperation between the teacher and the family a key strategy for the development of prosocial communication among pupils of younger school age. At the primary level, character education should already have its clearly defined place.

Character education is based on direct peer experience. Pupils gain empirical experience with socialization and community formation through social play (Klusák 1993, 63). Pupils have to communicate, show their relationships with other people, react, and evaluate good or bad manners throughout the day. They should be able to form an opinion not only about school events. The teacher’s task is to motivate the students to shape interpersonal relationships, primarily by their own example. Children perceive and copy the teacher. They then learn very quickly by imitation and are good at distinguishing between truth and lies, sincerity and pretence.

Character Education Requires a Systematic Choice of Teaching Methods and Moral Reflection

Since Maria Theresa's times, Czech education has traditionally predominantly relied on face-to-face teaching. This method has many advantages, and it has its indisputable place, but it should be supplemented with other teaching methods. Experts warn that the absence of joint activities carried out in a favourable emotional climate can have an adverse effect on the child's development (Čáp and Mareš 2007).

Pupils learn best in the context of caring and safe relationships with their peers and teachers (Klem and Connell 2004). Pupils' control over their own behaviour can be only established in an environment of safety, with a calm mind and daily self-reflection (Nytrová and Pikalková 2007, 56). On the path of educating through self-reflection and peer support, some enlightened schools have already found tools for student self-acceptance, peer cooperation and gradual socialization of students. Social-emotional learning with a focus on creating a positive climate in the classroom was also reflected in the improvement of students' academic results in the final phase.

A class will learn to naturally create rules of moral behaviour that prevent negative manifestations of selfishness, irresponsibility, cowardice and recklessness (Piaget and Inhelder 2014). Preparing such a safe environment and providing reflective support is an important task for teachers. It is often left to the teacher to set educational goals and gradually include activities for the socialization of pupils in the school environment.

Vacek (2009, 8) emphasizes the need to shape pupils' morality systematically and in an interesting and attractive way for children. This kind of teaching therefore requires motivated and prepared teachers who have gone through experiential activities themselves, have become aware of their effects, and purposefully include them in innovations suitable for the given group.

Character Education Experience

Eva Oberle et al. (2016, 14) consider social and emotional learning to be an essential part of education that should be implemented in everyday practice in the classroom and in schools. According to her, learning goes beyond the classroom, and it is necessary to implement a systemic approach within the entire school.

According to the research of the American university professor Joseph Durlak et al. (2016), the teacher is of fundamental importance for the implementation of social and emotional learning. Based on the understanding of the learning objectives, the teacher participates in the achievement of the quality implementation of the behaviour programme.

The situation in which the class collective is faced with the problems of undesirable manifestations of an individual's behaviour is, in and of itself, a teaching situation in which students learn prosocial behaviour. It depends on the teacher whether they are aware of these connections.

The British psychologist Elias (2019) published a reflection on social-emotional learning, where he expressed his belief that the development of social competences, which influenced

the basis of human interaction in schools, is no fad. He believes the consequences of the lack of education management experts means that schools must invest in teacher training to learn the best practices for developing student skills. He is convinced of the need for continuous support for the implementation of social-emotional learning in schools.

We also observe a growing interest in character education in foreign literature (Aidman and Price 2018; Borgen et al. 2021; Durlak et al. 2016; Price 2018; Seligman 2011). Aidman and Price (2018) published a study claiming that respectful communication and developing the ability to cooperate with other students is a key challenge for 21st century schools. The results of their study show the primary role of the teacher, who creatively plans character education, continuously evaluates it, and has the support of the school management.

Czech School Inspectorate Recommendation

In December 2021, the Czech School Inspectorate (2021, 6) published the research *Common Features of Education in Successful Primary Schools*. The thematic report points to significant differences between Czech schools. It looks for shared features and characteristics of schools achieving excellent results. The conclusions of the thematic report show that successful schools are characterized by an organizational culture that supports and reproduces open cooperation and support of school actors: teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil, teamwork, as well as shared vision and values.

Within the framework of the Partnership for Education 2030+, the term well-being is defined as a state in which we can fully develop our physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual potential in a supportive and stimulating environment and live a full and satisfied life together with others.

In one of the secondary analyses of the Czech School Inspectorate, it was pointed out that pupils' well-being is also characterized by a strong sense of belonging to the school and the absence of inappropriate behaviour among pupils. It is also positively related to their educational outcomes. Pupils' growth mindset is characterized by pupils' interest in their personal growth and the perception of learning as something that has meaning (CSI 2021, 5). The CSI (2021) recommends that school management support the formation of broad cooperation in the collective of teachers and pupils. Both teachers and students should be actively involved in decision-making and seeking a broad agreement on the school's activities, including proposing and implementing significant changes and innovations. Furthermore, the CSI (2021) recommends using various forms and tools for the development of cooperation, such as exchanging experiences and providing feedback through formal and informal communication; assigning and solving team tasks; and appreciation of successful examples of cooperation. Another recommendation is to constantly strive to build trust between the school, teachers, pupils, and their legal representatives. Furthermore, it is recommended to create an open and transparent environment in which the given promises are fulfilled, or the reasons for their non-fulfilment are explained. Any manifestations of inappropriate behaviour are recommended to be dealt with in their early phase (CSI 2021). It turns out that the dialogic

dimension of education and the discussion method prepares the pupil to express opinions on the given topic. In an interview, the student clarifies his position and listens to others. These habits also correspond with other disciplines, e.g., with the discipline of education for democracy.

The 2030+ strategy puts emphasis on the development of personal and social competences across the RVP ZV curriculum (Fryč et al. 2020, 11). Pupils' social competences should be developed cross-sectionally and reflect the topics of psychosomatics, mental changes, mental development, and mental and social health. The aim is to ensure the development of social sensitivity, interpersonal perception and empathy. They should also provide the means to develop the ability of self-discovery, allowing for reflection and regulation of one's own mental states. Pupils should be able to better express their own feelings, apply appropriate methods of communication and be aware of stereotypes and prejudices. The ability of pupils to respond appropriately to difficult situations and the ability to apply healthy ways of managing stress should be improved (Fryč et al. 2020, 30).

The Education Method of Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

One of the possibilities of introducing character education is Positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS) is a schoolwide systems approach aimed at establishing positive student culture and individualized behaviour supports necessary to create a safe and effective learning environment for all students (Sugai & Horner 2009, 224).

PBIS is an evidence-based framework with multiple randomized control trials and real-world implementation effectiveness studies supporting the program's impact on reducing problem behaviours, reducing in and out of school suspension rates, enhancing school climate, and even improving academic performances (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf 2010). When positive behaviour interventions and supports is implemented correctly and with fidelity, negative student behaviours decrease because of the PBIS preventative framework (Otterloo 2021, 23). PBIS is implemented in schools in the USA, in Europe and around the world. It is backed by thirty years of research and development (Ross et al. 2009, 749). The goal of the project in the Czech Republic is to incorporate the principles of PBIS into the educational content of universities preparing future teachers and within the further education of teaching staff. The project is implemented in cooperation with experts from the USA and the Netherlands. More information can be found at <https://www.societyforall.cz/pbis>.

With the PBIS implementation framework, schools can respond flexibly to pupils needs and behaviours within three tiers of behavioural support (Kubíčková, Felcmanová 2021, 50). The student works on three target behaviours. He works on those skills, and if at the end of the day he achieves those behaviours as assessed on his report card, then the student gains a reward. In the first year, tier I. is implemented in the introduction of non-specific prevention aimed at supporting expected behaviour and the basic principles of a trauma-respecting approach to all pupils. In the second year, tier II. gradually introduces a level of support intended primarily for pupils with recurring mild difficulties in the area of behaviour and psychological well-being. These are several interventions that effectively use teachers' time in order to reduce the

proportion of pupils requiring individualized multidisciplinary support. In the third year, tier III. is implemented. This requires coordinated multidisciplinary collaboration and provides individualized support for students with complex behavioural and mental health needs (Kubičková, Felcmanová 2021). As part of the school plan there is the use of the Social-Emotional Learning component in the school curriculum. As far as consequences go it advises using solutions that serve two main purposes; keeping everyone safe and preventing the situation from happening again. PBIS uses Check In-Check Out (CICO) strategies to improve student behaviour in the classroom through motivation. Nurturing positive behaviour among elementary students can also be a challenging and difficult task. Teachers that set out to complete this task require a lot of careful effort and dedication to implement effective methodologies that support every child. It takes more than energy, time, and commitment to support students with behaviours (Marshall 2018).

Conclusion

Children enter the school with a diversity of attitudes and behaviour patterns that are the outcome of the environment of their family. School is a place where attitudes and behaviour patterns of tender minds are shaped according to the needs of society. The school teacher is the agent of the society in relation to other role performers in education to pursue this task. For that he and other role performers should be in the possession of desirable values (Durkheim 1973). Questions are being raised as to how Czech schools will implement personalized education. How will teachers focus on the goals of ethical education and what teaching methods will they choose? How are teachers prepared for the new era? Are the public and parents sufficiently interested in character education? Experiences with remote learning point to new educational needs in the field of emotional intelligence, empathy, consensus, and cooperation.

Are teachers open to new approaches that lead to collaboration and subsequent self-reflection? Teachers need the support of school management to devote themselves to character education with the current workload, with the growing content of the curriculum. Schools should provide an important place for activities developing cooperation, democratic agreements and education for respect and decency. The PBIS is only one of the ways how to implement a school value system.

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Mgr. Michaela Pachelová, Ph. D.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7750-9364>

Charles University, Faculty of Education

Department of Pre-primary and Primary Education

Magdalény Rettigové 4, 116 39 Praha 1, Czech Republic

michaela.pachelova@pedf.cuni.cz

Selected Representations of the Phenomenological Orientation of Polish Pedagogical Thought

Jarosław Gara

Abstract

This article indicates the basic premises and differentiating contexts that underlie the conceptual specificity of phenomenological pedagogy. In this context, three original positions of phenomenological orientation in Polish pedagogical thought have been presented. In accordance with their specific features, the first position refers to the phenomenological problematization of issues related to pedagogical axiology in a particular way, the second position refers to issues associated with pedagogical teleology, while the third relates to matters connected to pedagogical anthropology. Each of these positions is based on original theoretical solutions that have raised interest and initiated discussion on phenomenological pedagogy in Polish literature, beginning in the 1980s.

Keywords

Polish pedagogical thought; phenomenology of education; pedagogical axiology; pedagogical anthropology; pedagogical teleology

Introduction

In the relevant subject literature, a distinction can be made of different receptions of phenomenology with regard to sciences of education and different motives of phenomenological philosophy,⁸ which became a central point underlying the receptions. However, when we mention various receptions of phenomenology, we can mean different types (concepts) of phenomenology and also their interpretation from the perspective of specific social sciences. In the first case we can differentiate, for example, eidetic phenomenology, transcendental phenomenology, existential phenomenology or hermeneutic phenomenology (Spiegelberg 1994, 696–699, 111–113, 380–386; see also Spiegelberg 1975, 54–71). The other case should cover psychological and social receptions of phenomenology,

⁸ Wilfried Lippitz specifies five such motives identifiable in sciences of education in the German literature, connected with different „variants” of phenomenology-oriented pedagogy and its representatives. The motives include: 1. „descriptively depicted experience”, 2. „reinforcement of the philosophical mind”, 3. „transcendental consolidation of the unity of the sense of experience and cognition”, 4. „experience of the world of daily life”, 5. „discursive and critical motif of the genealogy of interpersonal human diversity” (Lippitz 2005, 1123).

which from the perspective of these sciences has been interpreted and applied under specific attitudes and research procedures. Those field-related – psychological and social – receptions of phenomenology, merging with pedagogy immediately arouse the problem of mediation of phenomenology and its interpretation which is specific from the point of view of a specific field of knowledge. The manner of exploring phenomenological issues can be also considered taking into account its specific conceptualizations demonstrated by different philosophers, such as Martin Heidegger, Max Scheler, Roman Ingarden, Alexander Pfänder, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Nicolai Hartman, Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jan Patočka, Emmanuel Levinas, Bernard Waldenfels, or Jean-Luc Marion, who – identifying themselves with specific findings of the phenomenology precursor Edmund Husserl, and polemicizing with others – have given to it specific features and understanding. The first representatives most closely related to Husserl and attempts of referring phenomenology to pedagogical issues include Aloys Fischer, Friedrich Copei, Edith Stein and Eugen Fink. The full bloom of phenomenology-oriented pedagogy in the German language literature was connected mostly with pedagogical and anthropological studies and the so called “anthropological breakthrough” which was chiefly inspired by the Dutch pedagogue and psychologist Martinus Jan Langeveld and the German pedagogue and philosopher Otto Friedrich Bollnow. Moreover, the stances of Werner Loch, Käte Meyer-Drawe, Wilfried Lippitz, or Max Van Manen (Krüger 2005, 97–102; Meyer-Drawe 1997, 157–162; Danner 1998, 141–169) can be also considered as representative for the broadly understood phenomenological studies in the relevant subject literature – various forms of phenomenology in pedagogy and specifications of research issues made within its scope.

In the Polish subject literature, receptions of phenomenology, not to mention even the research attitudes of phenomenology identified at the source, are rare (see Przybylski 2007; Gara 2009; Sosnowska 2009; Ryk 2015; Przanowska 2019; Krupska 2021; see also Gara 2015; 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2019a; 2019b; 2020). Similarly, the manner of talking about phenomenology, if at all, comes down to a few slogans and statements that are as enigmatic as superficially comprehended. In most cases the receptions do not differentiate any statements and postulates of phenomenology considering its conversions, development and different variants being their product. Therefore, sources of phenomenological thinking and phenomenological investigation techniques are to a great extent insufficiently identified. Despite the evident gaps in the Polish subject literature, it is important to note some significant attempts to make references to different phenomenology motives connected with its diverse “forms”. Remarkable works include among other things the works⁹ of Władysław Cichoń (axiological orientation of the “pedagogy of the life-world”), Jacek Filek (teleological orientation of the “pedagogy of the life-world”) and Krystyna Ablewicz (anthropological orientation of the “pedagogy of the life-world”).¹⁰

⁹ The following presentation of selected concepts is based on parts of the work published in Polish (Gara 2009, 28–36).

¹⁰ An assumption can be made that the works of the authors mentioned here is linked, considering specific elements and emphasized issues to the circle of the „Cracow philosophers” such as: Roman Ingarden, Józef Tischner, Władysław Stróżowski, Jan Galarowicz, Adam Węgrzecki, Andrzej Połtawski, or Tadeusz Gadacz (see:

Axiological orientation of the “pedagogy of the life-world”

Władysław Cichoń (1924–1987), philosopher and pedagogue, involved with the academic circles of the Jagiellonian University, performed his analyses referring to phenomenological stances of Roman Ingarden and Max Scheler. His scientific works did not go unnoticed, winning recognition in the philosophical and pedagogical circles in Cracow (Adamski 1996, 5; see also Ablewicz 2001b). Theoretical studies undertaken by the author in his postdoctoral dissertation are focused on stressing the importance of axiological issues for the theory of education. Values are manifested both in specific contents, methods, and aims of educational impact, which represents a prerequisite for considering axiologically (Cichoń 1980, 123–125) the issues of the theory of education and the process of education. At the same time the theory of values represents for him a point of departure for the theory of education and an unquestioned foundation, which constitutes the “identity” of education. The issues of the theory of values and the theory of education should be thus treated inseparably as “axiological and educational” issues.

Values are something for which an educationalist should undertake his/her activity, and also something s/he tries to cultivate in an alumnus. They are also something that on the one hand arouses human dilemmas and conflicts, and on the other hand – makes it possible to overcome them and represents a basis of the ability to live a full and artistic life, the ability which should be acquired with the help of the educationalist (ibid., 5).

This “axiological and educational” perspective of research attitudes of the author is based on the assumption that “a human being as a subject and object of education” has his/her own specific characteristics, of which their presentation allows for looking more closely at a human being and the process of his/her education.

Therefore, the formulated pedagogical ideals and the design of the pedagogical practice must derive from “the understanding of the axiological specificity of the human nature” (ibid., 6). This understanding makes the knowledge on human education in its fundamental axiological intentions touch upon anthropological issues. Identification and understanding of the “pedagogical sense of axiological issues” opens thus the way to look for an answer to the question on the *conditio humana* and the ontic structure of a human being (ibid., 6; see also Cichoń 1987). In response to questions phrased in this manner, W. Cichoń attempts to search for “constituted moments” of a human being and his/her personal dimensions of being for which the concept of a person plays a role in the “discretionary centre of a human being” (Cichoń 1995, 212; see also Ablewicz 2020, 5–9). Even the mere term of the “process of education” – according to W. Cichon – reveals “some non-pedagogical features and aspects”, revealing before us its specific intentions which do not fall within the narrow (mono-

Gara 2009, 29–36). Of course, the most influential figure should be considered the disciple of Edmund Husserl, the original and important for the development of phenomenology R. Ingarden. (See: Cichoń 1995; Ablewicz 2020).

)disciplinary logics of approaching pedagogical problems. Such a state of affairs makes it necessary to go beyond the point of view of pedagogy in analyses of the process of education, reaching sciences which both formally and materially determine its philosophical fundamentals (Cichoń 1980, 117–122).

Axiological interpretation of the process of education by W. Cichoń is tightly linked to him exposing the axiological stance inspired by the phenomenological theory of values by Max Scheler. Paths of the theory and practice should include the objective and hierarchical order of values and personal uniqueness of a human being, which is called upon to transcend environmental dimensions of his/her being in order to make himself/herself a personal being.

To be a human being [argues the author in this manner] is above all to act in the name of the highest values considered to be specifically human. This gives rise to an important and exceptionally responsible task for the theory of education. Education is to help an alumnus to become as good as possible, it is to make it easier for him/her to realise his/her own humanity and achieve goals resulting for him/her from the perfection of the choice of positive social and moral values (Cichoń 1996, 164).

Justifications of postulates and goals referring to the theory and practice of education become in this case a resultant of the “axiologically understood idea of a human being” (ibid., 170), for which only the spiritual dimensions of life (“sphere of spirituality”) make it possible to fully experience and cognitively explore “higher levels” of universal values: “The educationalist, cooperating creatively in the development of the alumnus’ personality, should enter with him/her – in the ongoing process of common efforts – newer and newer walks of spiritual life opening the way to new forms of values” (ibid., 165).

Teleological orientation of the “pedagogy of the life-world”

Jacek Filek (born in 1945), philosopher, related to the Jagiellonian University, has aptly, as it seems, operationalized in his work (Filek 2001; see also Filek, 1984a; Filek 1984b) phenomenological assumptions for specific research uses, via which he has carried out eidetic analyses of the phenomenon of education by negatively contrasting it with pseudo-education. Basing on the method of making such analyses it is possible to identify some similarity to the analyses of Adolf Reinach, connected with the theory of negative judgments. In the attempt of “thinking into the nature of the act of education” J. Filek makes an assumption that “education as education” always has a structure of “acting-and-experiencing”. A point of departure for his deliberations is the issue of the structure of education, which is composed of the “subject of action” and “subject of experiencing”. In the case of each of the subjects there is a phenomenon of “cleaving” into direct and indirect subjects. Education understood from the perspective of somebody who acts seems to be also different from the perspective of somebody who experiences it. The subjective position of the person acting and experiencing determines the specific way of feeling and perception of one’s participation in educational situations. Potential

tension occurring here reveals at the same time the educational necessity of constituting the unity of the time of “acting” and “experiencing” (Filek 2001, 86–87).

J. Filek, referring in his analyses of the phenomenon of education to the theory of (pseudo)objects by Aristotle,¹¹ strives to throw some light on the general theory of education from the perspective of negative ideas. At the same time, he makes an assumption that both discovering the essence of the object, and discovering the *pseúdos* of the object are complementary to each other, and each of these activities, undertaken in isolation from the other one, is doomed to failure. Therefore, it “is not possible to find out what pseudo-education is, not knowing, what education is, but it is not possible either to get to know what education is not identifying pseudo-education” (Filek 2001, 102). In this context the author differentiates four types of pseudo-education: inadequate education, fictional education, alienated education, hobbling education. Inadequate education is defined by not considering specific situations in which there is precise adequacy of undertaken educational interactions. Fictional education should be understood in the sense that the link between acting and experiencing one’s own actions, and also feedback to the actions is broken up. Alienated education is expressed in the manner saying that its aim is something different from the development-related wellbeing of the subject experiencing it. And finally, hobbling education consists in the domination of the experiencing subject by the acting subject by using his/her material or formal advantage. Forms of pseudo-education distinguished in this manner seem to be education, but by nature they are not any education as they do not fulfil the functions education should implement. The first type of pseudo-education implies the interactions which do not make allowances for their situational contexts, the second one emphasizes the disintegration of the unity of “acting” and “experiencing”, the third one puts stress on the fact that educational interactions do not serve the goals of education and are treated instrumentally. And finally, the fourth type makes an assumption that education is a method of securing the interests of the authorities and is used by stronger ones to gain control over weaker ones. According to J. Filek the issue of illuminating the forms of pseudo-education should be considered as a key issue for the phenomenological theory of education, as simulated education which remains unidentified can occupy the place of authentic education and displace it (ibid., 100–115).

Anthropological orientation of the “pedagogy of the life-world”

The works of Krystyna Ablewicz (born in 1957), like in the case of W. Cichoń and J. Filek, a pedagogue linked to the “Cracow circles” and the Jagiellonian University, have contributed a great extent to the introduction and popularization of general phenomenology ideas and phenomenology-oriented studies in the Polish pedagogical literature. In this sense they represent significant and pioneering achievements for Polish pedagogical thought and the theoretical

¹¹ “Contraries [proves Stagirite] falling under the category of relation explain themselves by relating to each other or in any other way; for instance, the double is double in relation to something else for it is the double of something else (...) Those terms, then, are called relative, the nature of which is explained by reference to something else” (Aristotle 1990, 55).

extension of research horizons. K. Ablewicz represents hermeneutic and phenomenological studies in pedagogy inspired by O. F. Bollnow and M. J. Langeveld and other representatives related to the “anthropological breakthrough” and phenomenological profile of “anthropological pedagogy”. Beyond any doubt her works display also a link with the philosophical stance of R. Ingarden and his phenomenological results of studies.

In her doctoral dissertation K. Ablewicz identifies herself with hermeneutic and phenomenological research attitudes, assuming at the same time that they cannot come down to methodological issues (Ablewicz 1992). The hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches, treated jointly, have to express something different (Ablewicz 1998, 25–26, 41) – a specific attitude to a human being, e.g., empathy and understanding (Ablewicz 2006, 183), which can finally be reduced to the issue of responsibility:

The act of responsibility [proves the author] gains a specific meaning in the situation when a human being is interpreted as an experiencing being. The educationalist becomes somebody who experiences themselves, but at the same time is responsible for experiences of the alumnus and for the reflection resulting from them and built above them. This understanding of educational situations does not fulfil even the merely functional role of the method – the tool of learning, but becomes [an understanding attitude] deeply rooted in the educating person. It expresses his manner of being-in-the-world, and more specifically in the world of educational situations (Ablewicz 1992, 95).

Central categories, around which K. Ablewicz focuses her attention, and which structure the character of her studies, can be believed to include “natural experience” and “educational situation”. Raising the issue of the “natural experience” she makes an assumption that it should be differentiated both from experiencing something and also having information about this. This experience is not tantamount to the perception, as perceptions cannot be separated from the subject, and therefore, the object-related aspects merge completely with the subject-related aspects, exist for themselves and do not constitute any prerequisite for learning anything. However, experience involves intellect, and this makes some specific changes in the life of a human being happen, constituting at the same time a basis for learning something or understanding something. Experience cannot be reduced to having knowledge about something because given the fact that such knowledge can be transferred to somebody, while transferring it, it is not possible to automatically transfer experience. Experience involves the subject’s presence in something that is the object of the experience, and information can be acquired “over a distance”, and the direct character of the participation in something which relates to the knowledge is not a condition for having it. In this sense knowledge about experience is not tantamount to experience: “My experience is not directly constructive for any other, as everybody has to repeat them on their own, feel [them personally] and live through them on their own. It is not the case that I can replace somebody, e.g., a person related to me in experiencing them” (Ablewicz 1993, 71–72). Experience understood in this manner becomes a basis of reflection on the “educational reality”, and the creative role of “educational situations”,

because the sense of the situations has to be checked in relation to the specific type of experiencing – related to maturing and development of a human being. Participation in an “educational situation” – the subject’s presence – becomes a source of experiencing education both by the person educating and the person being educated. This participation gives rise to a specific relation which based on the common experience of an “educational situation” constitutes different types of perception of this situation. In the case of the person educating, it is the perception and experience of bonds of responsibility for the person being educated, and in case of the alumnus it is the perception and experience of bonds of trust towards the educationalist (Ablewicz 1992, 95–98).

The character of the studio research undertaken by K. Ablewicz in her doctoral dissertation (Ablewicz 2003b) seems to be a natural consequence of studies undertaken previously. Referring to the achievements of anthropological phenomenology-oriented studies it is believed to be justified to separate them from two other basic ways of analysing anthropological issues basing on pedagogical fundaments. In this manner the profile of phenomenological studies (called “*anthropological pedagogy*”) has to be distinguished from “*pedagogical anthropology*”, becoming the profile of “integrative” studies (“*pedagogical and empirical anthropology*”) and the profile of studies which uncovers “hidden concepts of a human being” (“*pedagogical and philosophical anthropology*”) (ibid., 55–79. See also: K. Ablewicz 2002b). The profile of studies of “*pedagogical and empirical anthropology*” is based on the integration of results from various scientific disciplines (e.g., biology, psychology, sociology, history) into the “comprehensive knowledge” on a human being, revealing at the same time the assumptions of the empirical nature. The profile of studies of “*pedagogical and philosophical anthropology*”, revealing the prior assumptions relating to a human being (his/her “example”, “picture”, “model”), becomes at the same time “frontier knowledge”. Thus, it is assumed here that as much as empirical knowledge about a human being becomes a reference point for the development of philosophical anthropology, the philosophical knowledge about a human being becomes an autonomic source of the knowledge, which cannot be expressed and identified by empirical approach (Ablewicz 2003b, 55–61). In contrast to that the profile of studies of “*anthropological pedagogy*” is expressed in the intentional orientation to the specific phenomenon of the human existence treated as a single representation. A key issue is also the fact that it is not any specific conceptual understanding of a human being that is a point of reference and the object of the research focus, but it is just starting to deal with anthropological and philosophical issues in order to refer them to processes of growth and educational development of a human being as a source of knowledge about human things (ibid., 67; see also Ablewicz 2001a). “*Anthropological pedagogy* – explains K. Ablewicz – is characterized in the first place by taking some cognitive perspective (and also specified methodological stance)” (Ablewicz 2003b, 68). In this sense a human being and the adequacy of observing him/her from an appropriate cognitive perspective and also methodological attitude are the basic issues: “The issue of the possibilities of getting to know a *human being in the process of education* becomes the basic pedagogical task” (Ablewicz 2002a, 86). What is more, it should be believed that the basic “methodological rule says that it is the object demonstrating to the researcher the appropriate method of getting to know it” (ibid., 87).

Therefore, it could be said that the approach is a reflection “astride” generalizing philosophical judgments and practical knowledge, to be seen in the process of education, “[interested] in the experience of life and world of life” (Ablewicz 2003b, 69; see also Ablewicz, 2003a).

Based on such assumptions, K. Ablewicz also initiates her own study of educational situations, taking into account in its scope the issue of the “natural experience”, issues related to learning the educational situation, its anthropological and axiological dimensions and the issue of experiencing and realizing the world of values. Experiences of daily life unveil above all before a human being the issue of the existential importance of values and choices made in their context, as the experiences are a specific “medium” of the values (Ablewicz 2003b, 137–267).

Conclusion

The discussed representations of the phenomenological orientation of Polish pedagogical thought also refer to the method and specific issues of the philosophical tradition of phenomenology to varying degrees. In a certain way, they may be considered classical representations in Polish pedagogy. They manifest the three basic areas of research interest and the theoretical solutions formulated within them. Each of these representations also appropriately concentrates on its own aspect of considering pedagogical problems. In the first case, we primarily consider questions of values and their meaning in the context of pedagogical interactions. Meanwhile, in the second case, we reflect on the goals determining the proper sense of pedagogical interactions. Finally, in the third case, attention is given to portraying a manner of understanding people and the role pedagogical interactions play in implementing the possibilities of human development.

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dr hab. Jarosław Gara, prof. APS

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6251-5972>

The Maria Grzegorzewska University

Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej

Szczęśliwicka 40, 02-353 Warszawa, Poland

jgara@aps.edu.pl

Teaching of Medical Students within the Provision of Medical Care in the Itibo Mission Hospital in Kenya Adra Czech Republic / Kenya Development Co-operation Project

Lukáš Malý

Abstract

The aim of this article is to describe the preparation of students who go to the Itibo development co-operation project. This includes how clinical practice and medical ethics are taught as part of participating in this project in Kenya. We will try to explain the possible benefits for students and the importance of understanding multiculturalism in the provision of medical care.

Keywords

teaching medical students; medical ethics; holism; development co-operation; transcultural nursing; clinical practice; Kenya

Introduction

The ITIBO project has been operating under the auspices of the non-governmental organization ADRA CR in Kenya since 2005 and is focused on providing health care and educating local personnel. Co-financing is realized through sponsorship donations, thanks to which it is possible to develop the area and increase the quality and standard of care. The founder and head of the project is the Czech nurse Aleš Bárta. Over 10,000 patients visit this facility annually. Local staff and nurses work in the inpatient outpatient department. The medical facility also includes an operating theatre, an intensive care unit, an X-ray machine and an ambulance for the treatment of HIV patients. The doctor is not permanently present. Students from Czech medical faculties regularly work here for several months a year and, together with doctors and local health professionals, participate in care. They work in specific conditions, different from those we know in Europe. A specific feature of the work in this facility is the close connection of medicine and nursing with a strong emphasis on transcultural care. Students always work under the supervision of experienced health professionals. The project is of great importance in the education of local staff, but also of medical students. Students must rely on basic physical investigation methods. They have very limited options for auxiliary examination methods (e.g., ultrasound, X-ray, basic laboratory examination, ECG). They work in a team of people with whom they have to work and cooperate 24 hours a day for 4 weeks.

They get into situations that many people don't have the opportunity to find themselves in in their lifetime. These include deaths of newborns, abortions, intoxication, large-scale devastating injuries, extremely tense psychological situations, etc. On the one hand, they can help many needy people here and, on the other hand, they have the opportunity to learn more about themselves, and consolidate and acquire new knowledge and skills.

Teaching students of medical faculties in Itibo

Around 25 students and approximately 8 doctors from the 3rd Faculty of Medicine participate in internships in Itibo every year. In the academic year 2018/2019, English curriculum students took part in the internship for the first time with an excellent response. In the academic year 2019/2020, only two internships were implemented (due to the SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic, doctors and students were evacuated from Kenya for security reasons), but from 2022, the trips have been renewed again. On average 25–35 students apply for one term (4 weeks). The capacity of one rotation is 6 students and 2 doctors. The selection of students takes place in several rounds; it is not only about the necessary knowledge and practical skills. The team must also be balanced in terms of gender, and the professional focus of individual members and their experience. It is not a classic internship, but real practice in extreme conditions.

At the faculty, as part of the preparation of students for the internship, we have introduced an optional subject: Work in developing countries – ITIBO Health Centre, Kenya (Seminar on practical internship in Kenya). Students are thus better informed about internships, and they have at least a general overview of what the stay entails. In addition, selected students attend pre-departure meetings where they receive additional information and prepare for departure. In the course of 5 seminars, students will become familiar with the issue of care in these conditions and will receive the necessary information in case they are considering going on an internship.

Optional subject syllabus:

1. seminar: Introduction to the issue of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. Ethics of humanitarian aid. Chapters in Multicultural Nursing. Introducing East Africa, Kenya. Geographical, cultural, economic and demographic differences of this country. Determinants of health – their influences and differences in the tropics and subtropics. Project Itibo, the history and functioning of the project. Mission safety issues, vaccinations, visas and practical recommendations before the trip. Culture shock, stress load on missions. Getting to know the basics of the local language of the Kisi tribe.

2. seminar: Patient in Kenya. Diagnostic–therapeutic process and its differences. Psychological and communication aspects and specifics of work in a different culture. Possibilities of laboratory tests, auxiliary examination methods, specifics of work in the ICU, gynaecology and obstetrics department.

3. seminar: Tropical medicine. The most frequently occurring diseases, their diagnosis and treatment in the context of tropical regions. The teaching is complemented by specific case reports of our patients with rich photo documentation and video recordings. Students themselves will design a diagnostic and treatment procedure. Linking theory with practice.

4. seminar: Following the previous seminar, case studies from gynaecology and obstetrics, internal medicine, paediatrics, surgery and other fields.

5. seminar: Medicine of remote areas. Chapters on war medicine and disaster medicine. News from congresses. At the last seminar guests are usually present – doctors who participated in the internship. There is space for students to ask questions, guests reflect on their own experiences with providing care at Itibo.

In the Itibo, medical and nursing care are closely connected, they intertwine with each other. Treating patients is a moral art and morality is part of a wider cultural context. Students must have good knowledge and skills in the field of nursing care. In the vast majority of cases, clinical decision-making does not involve the use of recommended procedures in the mechanical sense of the word. Different social, cultural and economic contexts play an important role in the decision-making process. Theoretically possible versus realistically available options are in considerable disproportion here. It is always necessary to keep in mind that it is a specific patient, a suffering person, in a specific situation. A prominent theme is transcultural nursing – within the framework of a holistic approach to local patients. It is always essentially one and the same thing, the main principle of Hippocratic medicine: *Medicine subordinating expertise to ethics and the doctor's activity to the benefit of the patient.*

The teaching of clinical practice is inextricably linked with the teaching of medical ethics. Students of our faculty have the subject ethics and humanities as part of the compulsory curriculum for a period of 5 years. The students who are selected for the internship at the Itibo have a very positive attitude to ethical issues, they strongly feel the problems associated with development cooperation and humanitarian aid. This can be inferred from motivation letters and personal interviews as part of the internship selection process, but also from the essays that students write before leaving for Kenya. In them, they express their motivations, personal attitudes and also the expectations with which they go to Itibo. After returning, students also write an essay in which they reflect on the entire stay.

The close connection between medicine and nursing is reflected in Itibo by the holistic approach of patient care inherent in the local culture. Doctors and students often provide, in addition to medical care, nursing care. Medical care is always provided within the limits of the legislative framework. Additionally, there is a framework of ethics that pervades the aforementioned. When providing care in this facility, we reflect the Code of Ethics of ADRA Kenya and ADRA Czech Republic (this is a document containing basic rules and recommendations for providing care), and, furthermore, the Code of Ethics of the International Red Cross Movement and the Humanitarian Charter (documents that form a certain framework for the provision of aid, helping in decision-making in specific situations). The last-mentioned document strongly relies on human rights (it is a human rights approach). The fundamental document is of course the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as well as the ethical code of the WMA (World Medical Association). The approach of so-called principlism, developed at Georgetown University, is currently essential for clinical reasoning. Also important is the casuistic approach, which was developed in Antiquity and is flourishing today.

In the general approach in bioethics and clinical ethics, we basically see similar tendencies in Kenya as in the Western world. This can be inferred from the publications that are published here, but also from the study of the curricula of various medical and health faculties and secondary schools preparing for the practice of health professions. Specifically, in Itibo, local customs and the person of the health worker (local health workers who have the trust of the local population), as well as the priest, the mayor and other important citizens, also play a strong role. Patriarchy is quite prominent in this specific area and religious affiliation is also important. Around Itibo, most people belong to Protestant denominations – e.g., Adventists – and also Roman Catholicism. (In the whole of Kenya, the representation of individual religions is as follows: Protestants 45%, Roman Catholics 33%, Muslims 10%, indigenous, animists 10%, others 2%. Different sources roughly agree on the percentages.)

Ethical problems and dilemmas in the context of a different culture

Students who work in clinical settings encounter a variety of ethical issues and dilemmas. We solve a number of problematic situations by talking to the patient, family members, and the local health professional. (He is a practitioner who understands the local culture and will also help as a translator). In the field of clinical ethics, principlism and the so-called “4 boxes approach” serve us as a framework.

From the point of view of medical indications, we will evaluate the real possibilities that we are able to offer the patient. This is especially the availability of medicines, technical equipment, and knowledgeable staff. It is about evaluating what is indicated in the given situation and what we are realistically able to provide at the same time. We do not always have specialists on the given issue in our team. An important role here is played by the recommended procedures, the so-called Guidelines, which are issued by the relevant authorities (e.g., Médecins Sans Frontières).

Patient preference is a prominent area. It is necessary to explain everything to the patient so that he can make the right decision based on his desires and wishes. There is a need for constant dialogue, explanation, so that the patient’s wishes and expectations are realistic. It is an informed consensus – often implicit (oral consent), less often in written form (for particularly demanding, risky performances, the list of which is defined).

The quality of life is also taken into account, here even more significant cooperation with the patient and his relatives is very important.

The topic of contextual characteristics covers the previous three areas – it is an overall assessment of the situation in the light of medical indications, quality of life and patient preferences. A significant problem in this case is the lack and unavailability of resources (both qualified personnel and material resources). It is a fact that must be taken into account in a specific situation. There is a diametrically different social, cultural, economic and geographical context and conditions.

The ethos of the entire specific Itibo healthcare facility has a significant role and influence on decision-making and consideration. (It is run by a Czech and Kenyan Adventist organization, which is a Protestant denomination, and there is therefore a strong influence of the tradition of

Christian ethics). The social teaching of the church has an irreplaceable role, especially the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and personality should be mentioned.

Communication and a personal approach to a specific patient always play an irreplaceable role together with respect for a different culture. We reflect on given clinical cases with the students. There is an effort to facilitate the discussion of given clinical cases. First, evaluate all relevant facts and information within a descriptive approach. After that comes the normative part. Action reflection is an integral part of ethical decision-making within applied ethics. It is about mutual respect and respect for a different culture. Knowledge of a different culture is absolutely essential in this case.

Transcultural medicine and nursing – different approaches in specific conditions

Medicine (in the sense of “*cure*”) and nursing (in the sense of “*care*”) are closely linked here. As part of the transcultural approach in the care of our patients at Itibo, it is about mutual interactions, transcending or crossing the boundaries of two different cultures (when students from a foreign curriculum are present at the internship, the situation is even more diverse, as they come from different parts of the world). As preparation before departure, we discuss the philosophy of multiculturalism (especially cultural plurality, nursing as a culture, and also the concept of transcultural nursing according to M. Leininger) at the seminars. The topic is also culture shock and its effects and methods that help to manage it. Some time is also devoted to the specifics of communication in local conditions.

At the Itibo site, we strive to nurture good relationships between the local health professionals, the community of residents, and our students and doctors. The emphasis is mainly on respect for differences, mutual tolerance. As part of interculturality in the team, we try to make it beneficial for all parties. In these conditions, the team of students and doctors must function flawlessly with each other, but also in relation to local health professionals and patients. As part of culturally congruent care, we try to provide culturally specific care with regard to local conditions and customs. Care must respect the given culture, values, customs, but also different methods of treatment. It is a two-way exchange of information, experience, and jointly facing challenging situations. Our endeavour is a holistic approach reflecting bio-psycho-socio-spiritual unity. It is also necessary to understand and respect certain cultural taboos, which are numerous in the local culture and are sometimes very different from what is considered taboo here in the Czech Republic.

In the students’ essays after returning from the internship, I also see references to the possibility of understanding one’s own life, contexts, but also language and culture. When talking to our medics in Itibo, I notice that they often describe a different understanding and expression of time in the local culture, a different approach to time horizons, agreed appointments for a given time (regular check-ups, wound dressings). In general, it can be said that multicultural nursing leads to and also requires an understanding of oneself, one’s own way of looking at another culture and penetrating the “imaginary skins of the cultural onion”.

In order to understand the patient from a different culture in nursing practice, Jana Kutnohorská makes certain recommendations in the publication *Multicultural Nursing*. We are also inspired by the recommendations for a long time when working at the clinic in Kenya and as part of preparatory seminars before departure:

- Recognize and appreciate cultural differences. There is a need to overcome cultural barriers and be aware of differences.
- Understand the patient's cultural reasons. This requires an active interest in the culture from which the patient comes. It is necessary to actively search for information.
- Be empathetic to a different culture. Information about the culture and trying to understand is not enough, you need to deal with egocentrism.
- Show respect for patients and their culture. I often teach students basic words, and they also have a dictionary. Local people are always happy when we start the conversation in the local language. Then, of course, we communicate in English.
- To have patience. It is a relationship of mutual trust and respect.
- Analyze your behavior. It's about realizing yourself and your own values.

Conclusion

When describing the way medical students are trained and taught as part of the Itibo development cooperation project in Kenya, we have pointed out the importance of gaining multicultural competence and acquiring cultural competence. These are important areas within the holistic approach of patient care at this medical facility. In this regard, we can see the importance for students in understanding multiculturalism as an integral part in the provision of medical care.

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MUDr. Lukáš Malý

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9716-5877>

Charles University, Third Faculty of Medicine
Department of Medical Ethics and Humanities
Ruská 91, 100 00 Praha 10, Czech Republic
lukas.maly@lf3.cuni.cz

To Have a Right to a Brave and Safe Space

An Interview with Prof. Bert Roebben

František Štěch (interviewer)

Hubertus Roebben (interviewee)

František Štěch (henceforth **FŠ**): Dear Professor, dear Bert, we have been friends for more than a decade now, so I will call you Bert as I am used to. I hope readers of the Theology and Philosophy of Education (TAPE) journal will understand. First, let me thank you, that you kindly agreed to give this interview for an emerging international journal providing a platform for theologians as well as philosophers who are interested in education (including self-education) to share their research. In relation to that, my first question is: “What do you think, is there a space for such a journal in contemporary European academia?”

Bert Roebben (henceforth **BR**): There is a long intellectual tradition in Europe that reflects on the purpose and conditions of education. The German term “Bildung” originated precisely in this enlightened tradition and points to the importance of moral integrity and agency in the formation of the person. Enlightenment philosophers including Jan Amos Comenius of the Czech Republic pointed to the simultaneously unique responsibility of the individual to become somebody and the universal role of communities as a connection between people. The philosophical aspects of this “project”, to be realized again in these complex times, are covered in journals such as “Philosophy of Education”. The theological aspects have been much less covered until now. The question is: What is the “semantic potential” (Jürgen Habermas) of religious traditions that can shed new light on this project and how can this be made intelligible in a philosophical and educational perspective. Lots of interesting work to be done, isn’t it?

FŠ: You are a professor of religious education. Where do you see the most relevant points(s) of such a discipline for contemporary church and perhaps also for contemporary society?

BR: My focus is indeed on the religious dimension of education, on learning processes that explore how existential questions of (young) people refer from themselves to perspectives, which are contingent and open for transcendent interpretation. Relying on transcendence is a specific feature of religion. Also, in non-religious worldviews people struggle with the question of an “ultimate perspective” of the complex realities they live in (climate crisis, pandemic, war, etc.). I believe that future generations have a right to a “brave and safe space” where such questions may be asked in all their vulnerability and where answers are sought together. Local

differences in Europe make this topic be addressed in the public realm of school and/or in the intimacy of the faith community.

FŠ: According to my knowledge, you are truly a global academic, with experience of working in Europe, Africa, United states... if you can compare, where do you see the largest potential for development in your discipline. What is the next “hot spot” for religious education?

BR: We have long thought that the centre of the world and the point of reference for (research in) education was to be found in Europe. And yes, until recently a lot of funding could be released for cartographic work in religious education in schools in Europe (such as the REL-EDU project in Vienna) and for interreligious learning processes in these schools (such as the REDCo project in Hamburg). The focus however is now slowly but surely moving to the Global South. New projects arise in the world of Islamic education and human rights development, in post-colonial approaches to religion and education, and in projects on social justice and religious diversity. In the Global South religions are still a powerful tool for social change and development. Academic educational settings are developed to support these processes. The Faculty of Theology of Stellenbosch University for instance is a real African hub for research and education in ethics and spirituality, based on the local knowledge of people. I truly believe in the new inter-contextual learning process between communities worldwide, partly supported by digital media, partly in real presence.

FŠ: What do you think, what can be the most important contribution of theology and philosophy to education and vice versa? What could inspire theologians and philosophers from the realm of education?

BR: Theology can offer broad hermeneutical horizons with interesting performative resources and intellectual patterns of thought to the field of education. The Scottish practical theologian Heather Walton refers to *poesis* and *phronesis* as sources of public theology. The task of philosophy is to remind us of the questions to which religions try to give reasonable answers, according to Jewish philosopher of religion Abraham Joshua Heschel. Education then helps us put our feet back on the ground, look at everyday reality and consider how questions and answers can be made practical. These three – theology, philosophy, education – should be in dialogue with each other all the time. In that respect, the TAPE journal comes just in time!

FŠ: I know that besides you being a theologian and professor of RE, you are also a public figure in your communities. How do you combine your professional life with your public activities? Do you find these two “worlds” mutually inspiring?

BR: For me, practice and theory are closely linked. What I teach my students, I must also be able to verify in reality outside the aula. So, some time ago I stood in front of the classroom in

an elementary school as a “teacher educator in residence”. I myself preside regularly in the liturgy of our home parish. I am also interested in the connection of literature and theology, art and theology, performance and theology, mysticism and theology. If I have the opportunity to engage in these cross-connections, I will not miss it. And during the corona pandemic I went on a part pilgrimage on the Camino – 600 kilometres from my hometown Leuven to Vézelay in France – four weeks of experiencing the “real stuff” of the theologian: moments of perseverance, vulnerability, storytelling and encounters with fellow pilgrims and God.

FŠ: And now, I would like to ask maybe something more difficult. Is the current state of the Catholic Church’s relationship to education affected by the traumas that have been caused in the context of education and what way out lies before us?

BR: Education has everything to do with trust. Opening oneself to new insights, is based on a relationship of trust: of the child to the educator, of the student to the teacher, of young people and adults among themselves in peer processes. When this trust is betrayed or shaken, when the most intimate aspects of the trust relationship (such as faith and sexuality) are violated by abuses of power, deep wounds are inflicted, wounds that prove irreparable. In response, financial and moral reparations are needed, of course, but also much more than that. Openness, transparency and communication in education are vital. I personally value the virtue of courtesy, which has an important place in the lessons of everyday life (including in social media, for example). This virtue can help children and youth make a start with what is of value on their way to adulthood.

FŠ: Bert, I have the last question. What would you wish for the TAPE journal and what would be your message to the TAPE readers?

BR: Let me tell you a short story. My first experiences as a European religious educator were situated exactly in the Czech Republic! In the early nineties I was working on my dissertation on moral education. On that occasion I met in Belgium Dr Věra Bokorová who invited me as an international guest at a conference of the Union of Christian Pedagogues entitled “Christian Values and the Development of Man” in Kroměříž (Czech Republic) in the summer of 1992. I felt honoured and went there. The journey was by bike. With three friends, we went from Leuven in Belgium to Prague, 1000 kilometres in 10 days, from West to East, against all the contour lines in the Central-European landscape. I literally felt Europe in my calves. In Prague my friends returned home and I went deeper inland by train, from Bohemia to Moravia, to Kroměříž. I turned out to be the only foreigner at the congress. I was deeply impressed by the stories of the participants, all academics and teachers, who had lived underground during the time of communism and had to develop their philosophy, theology and pedagogy in secret. I learned with deep respect from them how life as a whole can be a pilgrimage. This turned out to be the root metaphor for me in understanding education, philosophy and theology. I wish the

TAPE journal such rich encounters when being “on the road” of theology and philosophy of education in Europe.

FŠ: Thank you very much for your answers!

Mgr. František Štěch, Th.D.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9540-9244>

Theology & Contemporary Culture research group
Charles University, Protestant Theological Faculty
Černá 9, 115 55 Praha 1, Czech Republic
frantisek.stech@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Bert Roebben, Ph.D.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3427-6190>

University of Bonn, Faculty of Catholic Theology
Rabinstraße 8, 53111 Bonn, Germany
hroebben@uni-bonn.de

Colophon

Editorial Team

Editor-in-chief

Zuzana Svobodová, Czech Republic, Charles University, ORCID, Web of Science ResearcherID, svobodova@tape.academy, zuzana.svobodova@lf3.cuni.cz

Editors

John Anthony Berry, Malta, University of Malta, ORCID, Web of Science ResearcherID, john.berry@um.edu.mt

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Carl Mario Sultana, Malta, University of Malta, ORCID, Web of Science ResearcherID, carl.m.sultana@um.edu.mt

Support

Stuart Nicolson (proofreading), Czech Republic, University of South Bohemia, ORCID, Web of Science ResearcherID, snicolson@tf.jcu.cz

Michal Zlatoš (administration), Czech Republic, Charles University, ORCID, Web of Science ResearcherID, zlatos@tape.academy

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Editor of the issue: Zuzana Svobodová, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5151-056X>, Charles University, svobodova@tape.academy

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