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Editorial

The Responsibility of Educators

Zuzana Svobodová

Verses from a poem by T.S. Eliot were at the end of an email I just received; a poem about a dialogue, about care for the soul. The author of the email was reminded of this poem by texts published in our journal. This is one clear, concrete or specific proof that our journal finds its readers. Each author can feel joy on such occasions. When we help to connect authors and readers, we co-create something new. This newness, which was never before, is a possibility that we saw at the beginning of this journal. We saw this as a possibility; it means, in the future, as something that has been not here in reality yet, but can be-come. We have choices, *liberum arbitrium*, but we also have something more than that. We have a responsibility that comes to us. Where from? Responsibility comes as a response. As human beings, we have an opportunity to be *responsorial*: we can give a re-sponse (from Latin *re-spondeō*) or an-swer (see [etymology](#)). The more we are open to responding, the more we have chances to choose from choices.

Educators are beings who can educate, cultivate, or elevate those who are entrusted to them. Is this an exceptional responsibility? Yes, it is, because of trust given to them. Where there is trust, there is no fear. If the educational process contains fear, we are – or we should be – not trustful. Therefore, a special responsibility comes from the reality of being an educator because an educator was called – i.e., a word came to him with a meaningful purpose, in order to ... – namely to care, to be there for others who can and should learn. If students or pupils learn fear, they cannot trust. A community of cooperative and caring people cannot develop in a trust-less environment. Care for the soul is imaginable only if there is trust. Care for the soul is the superior responsibility that we have, especially if we are educators. Educators are responsible for the trust. But wait, T.S. Eliot exclaims for waiting: wait, because you do not know for sure, you are not ready to know in the fullness, you are the person on the way with the task to learn to wait on the ultimate.

Meanwhile, in between, that is, in this life, in our times, we are learners, although some of us are also educators or teachers. We are learners of how to be trustworthy. In the first text of this issue, Stuart Nicolson gives us a good orientation for such learning by drawing from the roots in his article *Original Apologetics*. In the second article, Jana Jičínská analyses the inspirational speech of Josef Zvěřina given at the University of Tübingen. Andrej Čaja follows with his article presenting John Henry Newman's *Idea of a University* as a critique of Bentham's thoughts on education. Lukáš Malý discusses the topic of how *paideia* can accompany a person throughout his life. Josef Hejný examines the possibility of reaching ontological closeness by

technology in his article about e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. How the curriculum needs to and could be up-to-date with the demographic dynamics of the classroom while incorporating different perspectives and cultures in its approach is explored in the article by Luke Fenech. In translation, the responsorial relation to the other is presented in the text written by the Czech theologian Josef Zvěřina (1913–1990).

The above-mentioned verses from T.S. Eliot were six verses from the poem “East Coker”, which was published in *Four Quartets*. The whole third part from Eliot’s “East Coker”, the second poem from the *Four Quartets* goes as follows:

*O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
 The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
 The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,
 The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
 Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees,
 Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark,
 And dark the Sun and Moon, and the Almanach de Gotha
 And the Stock Exchange Gazette, the Directory of Directors,
 And cold the sense and lost the motive of action.
 And we all go with them, into the silent funeral,
 Nobody's funeral, for there is no one to bury.
 I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
 Which shall be the darkness of God. As, in a theatre,
 The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed
 With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on darkness,
 And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant panorama
 And the bold imposing facade are all being rolled away—
 Or as, when an underground train, in the tube, stops too long between stations
 And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence
 And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen
 Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about;
 Or when, under ether, the mind is conscious but conscious of nothing—
 I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
 For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love,
 For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
 But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
 Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
 So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.
 Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning.
 The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
 The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy
 Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony
 Of death and birth.*

*You say I am repeating
 Something I have said before. I shall say it again.
 Shall I say it again? In order to arrive there,
 To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
 You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.*

*In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.*

Dear readers, I wish you to find in this issue of *Theology and Philosophy of Education* a risen dialogue and a meaningful silence to motivate you to good and joyful action,

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
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Original Apologetics

Stuart Nicolson

Abstract

It can be said that apologetics was superseded in and around the Second Vatican Council: the word, or any version of it, was not included in any of the sixteen documents. However, apologetics by the 20th century had become significantly different from the wide and general apologetics of the first century and a half of Christianity, and for the scriptural calls for it. This original apologetics, or Petrine apologetics, was replaced by a very specific approach which can be called Justinian apologetics. It was the latter that Vatican II more or less rejected, and 11 of the conciliar documents have either clear calls or content that seek a return to Petrine, that is, original apologetics. This is a call to be prepared, that is, through appropriate education, to respond to others who question or challenge Christianity, and to do so in an appropriate Christian manner, which in turn is a form of educating: removing obstacles to belief by explaining.

Keywords

apologetics; original apologetics; Petrine apologetics; Justinian apologetics; apologetical turn; apologetical calls; Second Vatican Council; renaissance

Introduction

It is often understood that the demise of apologetics took place in the middle of the last century (Geffré in Dulles 2005, 326-7; Nicolson 2018, 416-7). Without any inclusion of the term ‘apologetics’ or similar in the Second Vatican Council documents, it seemingly was at an end. However, original apologetics, according to Scripture, especially the clear Petrine call for all the faithful to be prepared to respond to others’ questions and challenges in a Christian manner, was quite unlike the way apologetics later developed, which was far narrower: more elite, intellectual, and often clerical. Looking through this Petrine lens, calls for and content consistent with a return to original apologetics can be found in 11 of the Council documents: preparation, response, in a Christian manner, and particularly for all the faithful. The Council calls for this to be developed in Christian education of the person to enable the faithful to engage with society, which reiterates Peter’s original apologetical call.

Original Apologetics is Petrine Apologetics

The word *apologia* was used by Peter in 1Pt 3:15 and it is usually given as an ‘answer’ or ‘defence’ in biblical translations. In Greek legal terms, it was originally the response to an accusation, *kategoria*. A decade after Philo brought together Jewish spirituality and Greek philosophy and wrote of the *Logos* (Philo 1854, XXVIII), Peter used *apologia* – etymologically a ‘speaking out’, a word that goes out (cf. Is 55:11). Peter’s call in 1Pt 3 is to

^{15b} Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶ and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.¹

The Petrine call can be separated into three elements. This can be seen by dividing the sentence into three parts:

1. 'Always be prepared to make a defense',
2. 'make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you',
3. 'do it with gentleness and reverence'.

These can be abbreviated into a short form: preparation, response, and a Christian manner.

This developing of logos into Christians speaking out or responding to another was not Peter's alone: the theme is also found in Paul and Jude and was developed in the next generation, the Apostolic Fathers. Paul calls on the new bishop of Ephesus, Timothy, his mentee, to 'avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers' (2Tim 2:14), that is, to avoid pointless arguments and show a good Christian manner, then states that 'the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness' (2Tim 2:24-5). Later, he calls for engaging with others, including explaining and responding in a Christian manner:

preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. (2Tim 4:2-4)

Paul reminds us that not all teachers are trustworthy regarding accuracy and quality of content. Earlier, regarding good learning, thus preparation, Paul calls Timothy to

continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2Tim 3:14-17)

Paul includes the three Petrine elements, developing them in Timothy's new context. He also makes a comparable call to the Church of Ephesus, suggesting apologetical concerns were developing in the Christian leadership: they should be

building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the

¹ All scriptural text in this paper is from the RSVCE Bible.

fulness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (Eph 4:11-15)

Paul shows the value of learning the faith to avoid being deceived, and helping others do so. This is, fundamentally, education. Paul is also shown to be apologetical in his defences (Acts 22-26) and debates (e.g., Acts 17).

The short Letter of Jude is clearly apologetical. He is very concerned about faithful falling away due to the influence of ‘ungodly people’ (Jude 4) and calls on the faithful to ‘contend for the faith’ (Jude 3). Preparation is important: ‘building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit’ (Jude 20), and, by inference, the more prepared, thus educated well, the more able one is to meet the different degrees of challenges: ‘convince some, who doubt; save some, by snatching them out of the fire; on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.’ (Jude 22-3). Jude is brief, clear, and direct in his apologetical calls to the faithful.

The scriptural calls to apologetics are significantly consistent regarding the key elements of preparation, response, and a Christian manner. These are intended to remove obstacles from others having or developing faith. Peter’s call is clearest and most succinct. It is often referenced as the scriptural source of apologetics. As the chief Apostle, it conceivably carries more weight.² Therefore, it is apt and economical to refer to the original calls to apologetics as the Petrine call or to Petrine apologetics.

The Universal Aspect of Original Apologetics Applied to All

Not only is the Petrine call the most succinct to identify original apologetics but it was also addressed to all the faithful. The letter of Peter was written to all (1Pt 1:1³), therefore, in real terms, to all the faithful. It is a requirement of the Christian to respond, not to be silent or avoid engagement which includes a question or challenge to the faith. To do so presents a faith that is not understood or that has little value, or perhaps even that one is embarrassed about (cf. 1Pt 3:14, 16-17).

It is arguable that Paul’s call to the new bishop Timothy is to one with apostolic authority, which translates forwards into ecclesial or clerical authority. However, this was not Paul’s first apostolic letter to a Church or individual. It was becoming established that Christians would share the words of the apostles, so Paul must have been aware that the text would be disseminated; without any request to Timothy that the text be to him alone, Paul surely knew his content would be understood as being inspirational for others, too. Later, by including the Letter in the scriptural Canon, the Church decided that the content, including apologetical calls, should be shared. Today, part of the Letter (2Tim 3:14-4:2) is the Second Reading on the 29th

² His granting of authority comes before the rest of the Twelve (Mt 16, 18) and he alone is given the Keys to the Kingdom (Mt 16:19, cf. Is 22:22).

³ Although specific provinces are named, it makes no sense to regard the addressees as exclusive to these, but that they are examples of locations.

Sunday in Ordinary Time in Cycle C in the Catholic Church, thus it is regarded as a call to all faithful.

Due to both canonical inclusion and being addressed ‘To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ’, Jude should also be understood as a universal call to the faithful.

Therefore, it is evident that the Petrine call to original apologetics was to all the faithful. Peter and Jude addressed their letters to all faithful, and Paul to Timothy, the Ephesus Church, and widely shared amongst others, which Paul would surely have expected. Original apologetics was not for certain individuals, such as leaders and the well-educated.

However, in the second century, Justin Martyr, a lawyer and philosopher, wrote apologetics that was very lengthy, elite, and intellectual. This was certainly within the wide definition of Petrine apologetics. Many later apologists followed in his style and presented similar content. After Christianity was legalised, most of the Christian writings that survived did so due to inclusion in the library and writings of Eusebius of Caesarea, who had focused on collecting (thus preserving) intellectual Christian literature, therefore, any non-intellectual apologetics written down was now lost:⁴ absence of evidence is indeed not evidence of absence, but we will possibly never know whether there were more early, ordinary apologetics produced written texts.

As Peter shows in his to-the-point manner and call, preparation comes first in apologetics. It is the foundation, the necessary preparation that comes before performance, in this case, responding and explaining the faith to others who have questions and/or challenges. Preparation is key to good performance generally as a rule.

The development of the original idea of apologetics, that is, responding about the faith as a theme in the later Apostolic years, from around AD 60, indicates both that the Apostles were ‘passing on the baton’ to others regarding engaging with non-faithful about the faith, and also that there was more engagement taking place as Christianity spread. This particularly was the case, as per the addressees in 1Pt 1:1, because the Christian diaspora meant the faithful were increasingly in unstable situations, and that they should engage regarding the faith rather than hide it. To do so, they needed to be prepared, to ‘Always be ready...’ to speak out.

Preparation of the faithful was taking place, as evidenced by extant sources from the period. Significant parts of the *Didache* (ch 1-6) and the *Epistle of Barnabas* (ch 18-20) from the second Christian generation included the Two Ways code. This was a binary way of learning: good and evil, light and darkness, sheep and goats, etc. Originating as far back as Deuteronomy, it had been used also in Isaiah, Sirach, and the Gospels.⁵ It was used later⁶ also when a clear

⁴ The *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus*, showing Christian apologetical engagement with a Jew, probably written by Aristo of Pella c. 140, was regarded to be of inferior quality by several Church Fathers and has survived only in fragments: see Bovon and Duffy 2012, 465.

⁵ For example, sheep and goats (Mt 25:31-46), those invited or not to the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-14), the servants who make a return on the talents or not (Mt 25:14-30), or the servants waiting or not for the master or the maidens ready or not for the bridegroom (Lk 12: 35-40; Mt 25:1-13).

⁶ For example, by Augustine, in the Rule of Benedict, and since the High Mediaeval period when Confession was required annually by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215).

understanding and foundation of the faith needed to be developed, and is still presented in some Sunday Church readings today. Clayton Jefford regarded this as a kind of pre-apologetic (Jefford 2006, 88) because he does not recognise original apologetics, but it rather beginning properly with Justin.⁷ However, Jefford is really recognising the Two Ways as apologetical because this way of thinking about the faith underpins the development of Christian education and understanding, that there is a right and a wrong: God's way and the worldly way. In the first century, in the pluralism of pagan thinking, converts in particular needed to understand their new faith in simple terms, and in turn could explain this to others who questioned or challenged them. The Two Ways code is present also in the *Shepherd of Hermas* while problems in the young Churches also needed to be solved apologetically-pastorally, such as in the *Letter of Clement* to the Corinthian Church. Thus, apologetical preparation was embedded in what might be called catechesis, but it needed to enable the faithful to explain why it was important to believe, to follow Jesus Christ.

Preparation for explaining the faith developed. Later in this generation, in the early second century, the Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom in Rome, wrote seven letters along the way: to Churches, a young bishop, and to the Roman Church. He develops certain recurring themes in the letters, especially the importance of the faithful being united with their bishop, avoiding those who teach that Jesus was spirit only (Docetism), rejecting those who try to develop Christianity by returning to Jewish teachings, and why martyrdom is holy, not a curse (Louth 1987, 56-7). These themes and many others in the letters explain to the faithful important information about their faith, and in turn this is preparation for them explaining the faith to others who question or challenge it.

Ignatius wrote also to Polycarp, a young bishop, who later wrote to the Philippian Church. Again, apologetical content is included in both. And later, Polycarp's student Irenaeus wrote in the 180s a pastoral apologetics, *Against the Heresies*, explaining to his flock the many present temptations and why they were wrong, then explaining the faith to them at length. But before then, in 125, the Christian philosopher Aristides wrote an apologia to Emperor Hadrian, explaining why Christians should be tolerated, and even valued. Interestingly, he used an extended Two Ways style, with three 'bad' types (Barbarians, Greek/Egyptian pagans, Jews⁸) against the 'good' Christians; he was responding to Christians being maltreated and he sought to introduce the Roman leadership to the reasons for tolerating Christians, and did so by trying to educate using the foundational method of the Two Ways code.

The only direct report of actual ordinary apologetical activity in the second century is in Origen's later (intellectual) apologia *Contra Celsus*, which responded to Celsus's AD 178 accusations that Christians were engaging with uneducated people as they could not successfully do so with educated ones (Origen, 3.44, 3.55). Quite possibly polemically-skewed, Celsus at least showed some engagement taking place, which would have included responses to questions and challenges.

⁷ As do some others, including in many ways a key modern historian of apologetics, Avery Dulles (Dulles 2005, 27).

⁸ His main issue with Jews was an overly strong focus on angels and the lunar calendar.

Early apologetical activity occurred to at least some extent, and preparation was presumably taking place as well as recorded in texts. The apologia to the emperor was the first recorded non-canonical apologetics, with a non-Christian addressee. A few decades later, the lawyer-philosopher Justin developed this approach and apologetics was narrowed, becoming elite, intellectual, and clerical. This Justinian apologetical turn meant that original apologetics, in the Petrine way for all faithful, had been superseded.

Vatican II Calls to Original Apologetics

It was only in the 1960s that there was a genuine call to return to original apologetics. At the Second Vatican Council it is fair to say that apologetics, as it had developed since Justin, was rejected. However, viewing with a Petrine lens, there are calls for a return to original apologetics, and content connected with this, in 11 of the 16 documents.

The general historical path of apologetics had followed Justin's approach – intellectual, elite, and addressed to non-Christians – often using direct apologias, which became the norm by the third century. Apologetics was now not for ordinary Christians. After Christianity was legalised, the faithful were generally catechised to follow liturgy and law: to be good faithful and good citizens. From Augustine, it was the norm that apologetics was for clergy. This redeveloped again after Rome fell by the High Mediaeval period, particularly supported by the advent of the universities. Although Lateran IV called for education of all, which might have developed into apologetical preparation, this was not sufficiently implemented (Wayno, 2018). Post-Reformation apologetics became increasingly academic and rarely was there evidence of it being used by ordinary faithful beyond problematic sectarian polemics. There was an organic development of apologetics in the English-speaking world in the first half of the twentieth century (Chesterton, Lewis, etc.) but this was overtaken by the idea that the Council had moved past apologetics. However, this regarded the Justinian apologetics that had replaced the wider Petrine form. In recent decades, a more organic development of apologetics (including New Apologetics; see especially Levada 2010; Nelson 2022) has taken place, particularly in America, which is a move towards more Petrine apologetics.

Ressourcement was a theme of the Council and there are two distinct calls to original apologetics in the Vatican II documents, with two and three of the elements evident, respectively. In *Lumen Gentium* (LG) 10: 'Everywhere on earth [all disciples of Christ] must bear witness to Christ and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them.(105)'. Footnote 105 reads 'Cf 1 Pt. 3:15', linking back to original, Petrine apologetics. The term 'bear witness' denotes particularly the third element: a Christian manner. And a stronger-worded call is in *Dignitatis Humanae* (DH) 14:

The disciple has a grave obligation to Christ, his Master, to grow daily in his knowledge of the truth he has received from him, to be faithful in announcing it, and vigorous in defending it without having recourse to methods which are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.

Preparation is clearly called for in ‘grow daily’, the Christian manner is unambiguous at the end, and the ‘vigorous in defending [the truth]’ is strong. Moreover, this is no request but a ‘grave obligation’. Regarding to whom it is addressed, the ‘disciple(s)’ refers not to an elite like Jesus’ Twelve but is ‘one who follows another for the purpose of learning ... from the Latin *discipulus*, “pupil, student, follower”’ (Harper, n.d.). It is addressed to the faithful, the Christian, that is, all Christians. Furthermore, in *Dei Verbum* (DV) 8, the Council calls ‘the faithful [...] to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3)’. The Jude reference and addressing ‘the faithful’ again indicate a call to return to original apologetics.

Elsewhere, these calls to original apologetics are consistent with content regarding bishops (CD 13), priests (OT 4; PO 4, 9, 19), missions (AG 39-40, etc.), inter-faith dialogue (NA 2-3), and theologians in academia (GS 62). Each of these are consistent with original apologetics, that is, the three element call to all of preparation, response, in a Christian manner.

Notably, *Gravissimum Educationis* (GE) ‘calls on the person to develop through education to become an active Christian who grows in his relationship with God while reaching out to others in this world’ (Nicolson 2022, 37) and GE 2 calls for the faithful to be educated in their faith. Titled ‘Christian Education’, GE 2 covers both children and adults learning their faith. It brings together theology and anthropology within the education of the person, to become able to ‘help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society’ (GE 2). Especially regarding original apologetics, this is possible by learning ‘how to bear witness to the hope that is in them (cf. Peter3:15⁹)’, which again links ‘bear witness’ to apologetics.

The laity are particularly called to develop and participate in original apologetics in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA), with the term ‘bear witness’, established in LG 10 and GE 2 as including apologetics, used several times. Lay activity ‘at the very beginning of the Church’ (AA 1) is recalled and AA 2 describes how ‘their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men’. The document thus begins with ‘original’ and ‘apologetics’ coming together, here connected with evangelisation, with which apologetics is often connected (cf. LeJeune). Peter called the faithful to engage, and AA 14 calls the faithful to do so in society because ‘in a worthy manner they can both further the common good and at the same time prepare the way for the Gospel’. This requires preparation through a ‘diversified and thorough formation’ and the ‘continuous spiritual and doctrinal progress of the lay person’ (both AA 28). The preparation should not be a standard achievable only by some but ‘In addition to spiritual formation, a solid doctrinal instruction in theology, ethics, and philosophy adjusted to differences of age, status, and natural talents, is required.’ (AA 28) This theme continues in AA 29. Therefore, all the laity are called through preparation to maximise their apologetical capability, that is, for all to be able to respond to others appropriately to the best of their ability. This then becomes cyclical and spreads organically as the fruits of preparation are communicated and spread when the faithful speak out; this in turn becomes the preparation of the faithful who hear it, or seeds sown in non-faithful. Thus, the goal of apologetics is to remove

⁹ This typo in the English translation should read ‘1Peter’, not ‘Peter’.

obstacles to believing as well as doubts from others (and ourselves), thus to help develop the faith in them.

Through a Petrine lens, many Vatican II documents call for or refer to preparation, response, in a Christian manner, regarding all the faithful. It is clear that the Council calls for a return to original apologetics, and learning effectively about the faith is key in this.

Conclusion

Original apologetics, called for in Scripture by the Apostles, is consistent with the Petrine call to all faithful to be prepared, to respond, in a Christian manner, to those who question or challenge the faith. It is evident that this was being developed in the earliest Church by preparing the faithful using the Two Ways code – foundational Christian understanding – and then with content that was specific to the questions and challenges regarding the faith at the time. However, Justin Martyr’s legal and philosophical style became the norm as apologetics was narrowed to intellectual arguments and increasingly was reserved for clerics. This meant ordinary Christians were generally not being educated effectively on how to respond to others, which helps remove a lack of understanding about the Christian faith. This continued up to the Second Vatican Council, which called for a return to original apologetics, citing Peter’s call and reiterating the three elements being developed in the faithful’s activity. Christian education – here, preparation for responding – is recognised by the Council as key in a number of documents.

This return to original apologetics calls for the development of preparation of and engagement by all faithful, which requires the development of ‘ordinary’ apologetics. It is itself a form of education as understanding organically develops, obstacles to the faith are removed, and Christians bear witness to the hope that is in them.

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Stuart Nicolson, M.A.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8647-8176>

University of South Bohemia, Faculty of Theology

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

Kněžská 8, CZ-370 01 Č. Budějovice

snicolson@tf.jcu.cz

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Josef Zvěřina and Impulses for Theological Studies – Contemporary Issues

Jana Jičínská

Abstract

The presented article reflects the perspectives that can be observed in Josef Zvěřina, in his impulses for universities, mission, contribution and continuous spiritual formation of students. An integral part is the contribution and influence of theological thinking on science, culture, human society, and value orientation.

Keywords

God; ecumenism; faith; practical theology; scholarship; theology of agape

Introduction

Josef Zvěřina is an important Czech theologian who penetrated many scientific fields during his life. Among his most important works is *Theology of Agape*, in which he approaches the union of God and man, science and spirituality. This connection is the source and root of evangelization, mission, and thus also education in the field of mission and training of clergy. This fact is followed by a speech at the University of Tübingen. Science and spiritual practice go hand in hand and shape students across disciplines. Zvěřina emphasizes the role of the university as a free environment where students acquire not only knowledge and skills, but also tools for understanding life, its meaning and ultimate goal.

In the following contribution the author updates the content of the recording of Josef Zvěřina's lecture at the University of Tübingen. The aim is to point out the topicality of Zvěřina's statements and remarks, but also the overlap that is given by contemporary knowledge, ethical issues, and the transfer of knowledge of social sciences and exact sciences – clinical and natural sciences. The author points to the meaning and mission of the contemporary university, especially theology as a discipline that speaks of the Divine You, which can be known and experienced. The following article deals with current issues of theology at our universities. The importance of quality education and responsibility for the formation of a new generation that needs to be ready to face new challenges needs stimuli, impulses, a return to the original roots – namely to Christ. Josef Zvěřina very brilliantly connects the view of the field of natural sciences and the field of anthropological and spiritual sciences. The reason for the creation of this article is a certain imperative – that is, the knowledge that theology stands on Jesus Christ, and although other sciences also have their share of knowledge of reality, this reality is not complete if we only use a narrow methodological procedure or push some scientific disciplines out of the interest of scientific dialogue.

Impulses for the third millennium or the inspiration of Josef Zvěřina for the present time

Josef Zvěřina, an eminent theologian and educator of the 20th century, with his range of approaches and knowledge, offers a broad view of spirituality in the context of human experience and its intersection with the living God. In the presentation of his speech on the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate in Tübingen we can see an honest and diligent effort at synthesis, but at the same time also a deep recognition of God's uniqueness, love and respect for creation and creatures. Zvěřina reflects on the position of the natural sciences, which aim to know how things work, why they exist, what their characteristics are, what their purpose is. Zvěřina notes that this is only one way of knowing reality – it is not a reason for pride, academic superiority over the social sciences or humanities. Knowledge, as the encyclical *Fides et ratio* reminds us, has two sources – the source of knowledge from faith (revelation) and the source of knowledge from reason; both of these wings have their deep meaning in the beholding of Truth and cannot be reduced to the merely technician and reductive approach of rationality. The encyclical *Fides et ratio* also highlights the importance and relevance of universities, which remains relevant for the present time. Universities have their irreplaceable place in society, they are a place of free research, a place of encounter, and also a place of honest and demanding dialogue, which should be based on humility.

The ideal of the university and its mission cannot be diluted into one-sided utilitarianism, and the composition of individual disciplines should not be merely theorizing, but a profound understanding of human existence, its ethical, social, spiritual and biological framework. Each university discipline should seek how it contributes to fulfilling the requirement of service to society and how it contributes to the understanding of universality. The search for meaning is not possible except through searching and questioning. It is not about economic indicators and economic results – it is about trans-generational sharing, the formation of the young person, helping them to find themselves, to seek reality and the depth of knowledge of the Truth, that is, what tasks, challenges and questions are posed to contemporary theology and university education and what are the main challenges, threats and weaknesses. Nowadays we can see that the changing social situation opens up new questions and perspectives, and scientific progress also encounters ethical questions, whether what can be realized scientifically is also ethical, and on the basis of which pillar we can agree on general ethical principles and how theological ethics are in the light of Scripture, i.e., the experience of the Resurrected. Zvěřina asks similar questions as a contemporary man, but in a different historical and political context; some of them are the same, others less topical. Yet the dialogue between the natural sciences and the humanities should contribute to the cultivation of both sides, not only in the measurable gain of economic indicators. The question of eternity is also not measurable by material means, yet its value is incalculable. Zvěřina points out that a rationality that puts itself above God or excludes God altogether is a rationality that serves pride. True reflection fosters knowledge that can humbly acknowledge its limitations and shortcomings, and that all knowledge – technical, humanistic or practical – is a gift of the same Spirit. At the same time, as generations, we build on the foundations and experiences of past generations. Each discipline has its own foundations, questions, experiences, methodology and way of asking. In the technical sciences we can see

the delicate line of human inspiration, but also the danger of abuse against man. Likewise in the natural sciences, if the natural sciences are not cultivated by the Spirit, by the consciousness of God's gift, it is easy for mankind to commit errors, blunders and crimes against humanity. Zvěřina promotes knowledge that is multilayered yet respects universality. A university is meant to educate all-rounders, to shape them and to regard understanding this world. Theology is a space of attempts to know the Ineffable. It is a space of humble beholding of the Lord, an attempt to articulate the invisible, yet deeply spiritually and physically experiential. Zvěřina noticed in the speech for University Tübingen: "The theology of agape points to the profound Trinitarian love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This love gives priority to the other – it is like a dance. It promotes reciprocity and tolerance." (Zvěřina 1989, 20, my translation) Yet it does not lose itself, it is an ideal, a creativity, a being there for the other. Communication happens in the direction of the I-You. Personalistic theology discovers the I-You relationship as the key one. It is possible to find inspiration in authors: Martin Buber, Jacques Maritain, Franz Rosenzweig, Maurice Blondel. Zvěřina notices this. The communication between God and man thus takes place in humility, reverence, contemplation, receptivity and respect for the individuality in question. God does not violate human freedom and decision, but through experience slowly guides and tries to make man see in purity of heart the true state of himself and of reality.

For the sake of completeness, here are some quotations from Josef Zvěřina's speech on the occasion of receiving an honorary doctorate.

Josef Zvěřina – a selection of quotations from his speech at the University of Tübingen

"Doctor of Theology" is not only a title or an honour, it is also a challenge and a service, especially when this honour comes from a university that has played such an important role in the history of the spirit and still does today. ...

One hundred and fifty years ago, at the end of the Enlightenment, the Tübingen School not only emphasized the supernatural character of revelation, the Church and grace, but also evoked a sense of mystery against one-sided rationality and objectification. Here we see the risk of a purely positivistic approach to knowledge and its fruits. ...

This heritage is today surprisingly visible even where rationalism of the worst kind prevails – namely in the natural sciences. It is becoming more and more evident that the natural sciences, with their positivist and materialist outlook, do not respond to the ultimate truths'. There is a certain pride of growing knowledge, but there is a lack of humility of a certain provisionality and incompleteness. ...

Agape itself had to come to a fundamental validity in its various forms – hand in hand with revelation: as openness and expectation, as closeness, encounter and presence, as compassion and forgiveness, as participation and communion, as the unity and fullness of man, yes of being in general. Truth, freedom and love are the vehicles of my thought, my will, my struggle and also my theology. But the greatest is love. (1 Cor 13:13) ...

From below and above – Jesus will recognize, acknowledge, love and proclaim LOGOS in His word, in His signs and actions, in His death and resurrection, yes, in His divine-human

pre-existence as the supreme, absolute, irreplaceable revelation of agape, naturally with His mother Mary, the Church as a sign of love. (Zvěřina 1989, 18–21, my translation)

Radim Palouš said:

Nurturing is therefore the art of all arts, it is what is supposed to make a person a human being, a being endowed with an open soul. It is a matter of being nurtured, educated to accept openness as a human vocation: education, including erudition, goes higher than mere familiarity with the multitude of existences. Caring for the soul means caring for the good and the bad in the world at large. The world is a community by virtue of the fact that beings are evident, i.e., visible in their respective appearances. (Palouš 2008, 82, my translation)

Education and training (even in faith) is not just a tool for the individual to conform to society, to the Church – to the conventions of the time and to the needs of the state. It is meant to be a tool for development, cultivation, support in the context of the individual's quest. So what is important? It is humility of heart, knowing that the student or pupil are people who are on the journey with me, who enrich me, and I can enrich them. Too much self-control hinders surrender into God's hands – to be able to be open, to listen and to introduce the truths of the theology of agape is a lifelong endeavour for all, including theologians, catechists, clergy and, last but not least, all believers across continents. Radim Palouš submits:

People neglect the essentials and give preference to the secondary, betraying the main goals in favour of partial, immediate and short-term ones, concerned with momentary benefits and pleasures. Komenský emphatically reminds us that he did not write a didacticism of the art of baking or painting or speech or logic or any other particle of things worth knowing, but a didacticism of life. (Palouš 1991, 82, my translation)

Zvěřina also speaks of nothing less than God giving man space and entrusting himself into his hands, learning to love and rediscovering what God has placed in his heart. What is essential is the knowledge of the Trinity, the knowledge of God revealing Himself to man and how this knowledge directs and changes human existence, human attitudes, morality and scholarship.

Conclusion

The university has the enormous task of finding ways, tools and means of forming its students. And this task is not an easy one, because to navigate between the Scylla and Charybdis of freedom and dogmatism, to teach students to think critically and to give them the space to express themselves is a great task that we will not be able to accomplish without the help of the Holy Spirit. Let us hope that the theology of Josef Zvěřina will always be an inspiration and an arrow that points to Christ our Saviour, to the true *devotio moderna* in the context of Josef Zvěřina's speech to the scholars at the University of Tübingen (Zvěřina 1989, 21).

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PhDr. ThDr. Jana Jičínská, Ph.D., MBA

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5735-2165>

Hussite Theological Faculty, Department of Practical Theology

Pacovská 350/4, 140 21 Praha 4, Czech Republic

janajicinska@centrum.cz

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John Henry Newman's *Idea of a University* as Critique of Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarian Conception of Education

Andrej Čaja

Abstract

The main thesis of this article is that Newman's famous *Idea of a University* cannot be fully appreciated without the background of the educational programmes popularized in the first half of the 19th century, which have their matrix in the utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham. The comparison of these two thinkers shows that Newman built his system of education and arrived at its basic principles precisely by refuting the principles of utilitarianism and liberalism of his time. From this perspective, his work on education no longer remains a quiet prose, but can be seen as a moral and cultural struggle over fundamental values.

Keywords

Newman; Bentham; education; utility; value

Introduction

John Henry Newman's (1801–1890) classic work *The Idea of a University* on the nature and aims of education, which originally consisted of two separate parts – the first nine conferences delivered in 1852 and published under the title “Discourses on University Education” were followed in 1854–58 by ten studies named “Lectures and Essays on University Subjects” – developed historically in the context of the founding of a Catholic university in Ireland, of which Newman himself was the first rector. Formally, the work does not rank among Newman's polemical writings, yet the object of this essay is to show that it is deeply combative in its nature. Who and what, then, is Newman arguing against in his *Idea*?

It should be noted that Newman had been concerned with the issue of education while still an Anglican, namely in his letters sent to the editor of *The Times* in 1841. Therein he strongly opposed the educational reforms proposed by the politician Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850) who, as Prime Minister, sought to establish secular colleges (known as “Queen's Colleges”), which would fall directly under the control of the state and would be common to Catholics and Protestants, but without providing them with any religious education. Newman, however, was farsighted enough to see that behind this plan was not an ecumenical motive, but a particular philosophical tradition, of which the English philosopher and father of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), was the chief exponent. It is thus Bentham who becomes one of the main targets of Newman's criticism when he defines him as the “master” of one school of philosophy and characterizes his view on education as follows:

Mr. Bentham would answer, that the knowledge which carries virtue along with it, is the knowledge how to take care of number one—a clear appreciation of what is pleasurable, what painful, and what promotes the one and prevents the other... Useful Knowledge is that which tends to make us more useful to ourselves;—a most definite and intelligible account of the matter, and needing no explanation (Newman 1899, 262–263).

Therefore, it is not inappropriate to assume that *The Idea of a University*, illustrating an alternative model of education to the secular proposals mentioned above, is a continuation and deepening of Newman's critique from the Anglican period, as evidenced by his scathing remark in *The Idea* about English philosophers, which includes Bentham, as well: "If we were to ask for a report of our philosophers, the investigation would not be so agreeable; for we have three of evil, and one of unsatisfactory repute. Locke is scarcely an honour to us in the standard of truth, grave and manly as he is; and Hobbes, Hume, and Bentham, in spite of their abilities, are simply a disgrace" (Newman 1891, 319).

So, what are the fundamental principles of Newman's and Bentham's philosophies of education? In fact, both English thinkers exhibit similar elements of interest, but at the same time differ diametrically in their basic views, which I wish to illustrate briefly.

1. The issue of the primary scope of education

It is noteworthy that Bentham, like Newman, devoted himself passionately to the question of education, which resulted in his most important work *Chrestomathia*, first published in 1816 for the proposed Chrestomathic Day School. However, already around 1800–1801 he compiled "An Outline Scheme for Irish Education," which exists in manuscript form at University College, London, where he addressed the issue of the education of the Irish, especially of the poor and working class. Since Bentham's entire philosophy was based on the simple principle of utility, by which he meant that principle which "tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness" (Bentham 1843, vol. 1, 1–2), he also saw education as a useful means of achieving this goal. This implies that education "was to be at all times both useful and practical," because as such it would give people capacity to control their own environment and their own lives (Taylor 1980, 20).

Turning to Newman's *Idea*, what first comes to the fore is his central principle, utterly antithetical to Bentham's, according to which the scope of education lies not primarily in utility but in the fact that education has a value in itself:

I am asked what is the end of University Education, and of the Liberal or Philosophical Knowledge which I conceive it to impart: I answer, that... it has a very tangible, real, and sufficient end, though the end cannot be divided from that knowledge itself. Knowledge is capable of being its own end. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it be really such, is its own reward... I consider, then, that I am chargeable with no paradox, when I speak of a Knowledge which is its own end, when I call it liberal knowledge, or a gentleman's knowledge, when I educate for it, and make it the scope of a University (Newman 1891, 102–103, 111).

Although Newman is well aware that benefits can be derived from education, yet he finds it imperative to emphasize that the primary goal of the university is to impart knowledge for its own sake and not to tailor education to some external ends or to lead students merely to acquire practical skills useful in society: “That further advantages accrue to us and redound to others by its possession, over and above what it is in itself, I am very far indeed from denying; but, independent of these, we are satisfying a direct need of our nature in its very acquisition.” And the reason is that knowledge “is valuable for what its very presence in us does for us after the manner of a habit, even though it be turned to no further account, nor subserve any direct end” (Newman 1891, 104). His pointed critique of the utility principle is understandable and quite relevant even today, for once the intrinsic value of education is lost, the result is that “standards external to the central life of the university soon make their way into the driver’s seat of university practices. Pressures are put on professors to prove to outside adjudicators that they are imparting useful knowledge to their students, and students begin to learn that what is really important about their university efforts is the passing of tests, the completion of courses for credit, and the establishment of a respectable GPA” (Sanford 2015, 43).¹

2. Liberalism versus liberal education

The distinctive feature of Bentham’s utilitarian programme was liberalism, which P. Kreeft defines as “the maximization of individual liberty” and which manifested itself especially in the area of ethics, since utilitarians “denied that any natural moral law, any objective, universal moral values could be known by man” and maintained that “ethics, like every other kind of human knowledge, must be based on science, on empirical observation and calculation, and not on religion, on the will of God or divinely revealed commandments” (Kreeft 2023, 116). One of the reasons for Bentham’s fascination with the natural sciences was that these seemed far more effective than some sort of metaphysics, which constantly revolves around the same questions, while the sciences, through the method of experimentation, offer ever new impulses and data.

As a thinker, Newman was also in this respect quite antithetical to Bentham, because his philosophy was explicitly opposed to liberalism. On the occasion of receiving his cardinal’s hat in Rome, in his famous speech he summed up his entire thinking as a struggle against liberalism: “For thirty, forty, fifty years I have resisted to the best of my powers the spirit of liberalism in religion... Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another, and this is the teaching which is gaining substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion, as *true*. It teaches that all are to be tolerated, for all are matters of opinion” (Neville 1905, 64–65).

It is paradoxical that at the same time Newman refers to his model of education as “liberal education,” understanding it in the above sense as “knowledge for its own sake.” According to Newman, this kind of education has its roots in ancient Greece and Rome and reached its peak in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in the form of the seven liberal arts of the *trivium* and

¹ GPA – Grade Point Average is an internationally recognised calculation used to find the average result of all grades achieved throughout a course.

quadrivium. Furthermore, by liberal education he understands the cultivation and expansion of the mind, which, however, is not identical with accumulating as many facts and information as possible. The acquisition of new ideas is undoubtedly an important aspect, but does not constitute the entire process of learning, in which the mind actively acts on the data it has acquired. As a consequence, authentic knowledge consists in the so-called *connected view* of all things, that is, in the ability to understand the relations between the various scientific disciplines:

And therefore a truly great intellect, and recognized to be such by the common opinion of mankind... is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these one on another; without which there is no whole, and no centre. It possesses the knowledge, not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge, not merely considered as acquirement, but as philosophy (Newman 1891, 134).

3. The question of the content of education

The utilitarian and liberal premises of Bentham's philosophy necessarily led to a reductionist notion of the curriculum in his educational system. To the question of what should be taught, he answers in the light of his principle of utility: "In determining the *quantity* of instruction to be administered within a given compass of time, *practicability*... should be the measure. In the choice of *subject-matters* of instruction, *utility*... should be the guide" (Bentham 1843, vol. 8, 397). It is not surprising, therefore, that if on the one hand he preferred the natural sciences as particularly useful, on the other hand he considered the humanities, especially poetry and classical languages, to be completely superfluous (Taylor, 22–23). Furthermore, as we have seen, the school reform promoted by Peel and based on Bentham's philosophy promoted the idea of omitting religious education from the curriculum altogether.

Newman dismisses these proposals as absurd, pointing out that the purpose of the university – as the very name *universitas* implies – is to teach universal knowledge and thus it must encompass all disciplines, both natural sciences and humanities, because "if certain branches of knowledge were excluded, those students of course would be excluded also, who desired to pursue them" (Newman 1891, 20–21). If, therefore, this institution is to convey all branches of knowledge, it cannot exclude such an important subject as theology. Newman explains this by means of the image of a circle: knowledge is a coherent whole, a kind of "circle" of sciences and disciplines, in which theology must also maintain its legitimate place, because if it were to be left out, the other disciplines would overstep their boundaries, occupy the territory of theology, and begin to interpret theological problems in their own way. Its abolition would result not only in the fragmentation of the individual sciences, but in the breaking up of the whole circle of knowledge:

I cannot so construct my definition of the subject-matter of University Knowledge, and so draw my boundary lines around it, as to include therein the other sciences commonly studied at Universities, and to exclude the science of Religion... If the knowledge of the Creator is

in a different order from knowledge of the creature, so, in like manner, metaphysical science is in a different order from physical, physics from history, history from ethics. You will soon break up into fragments the whole circle of secular knowledge, if you begin the mutilation with divine (Newman 1891, 25–26).

4. The relationship between education and moral behaviour

Bentham's idea of education was based on the "social class bias" that resulted from his view of the condition of the poor (Taylor, 20). He believed that the poor posed a problem and a threat to the members of the middle class, as poverty often led to crime, laziness, and political discontent. At the same time, he was convinced that education would be an appropriate remedy through which the poor would become morally better, because "[n]umberless are the mischievous delusions to which a man is exposed by ignorance, against which knowledge presents the only preservative" (Bentham 1843, vol. 8, 12).

The idea that the university should combine knowledge and moral formation is equally present in Newman's vision of education, when he stresses that the university premises should be at once "oracles of philosophy and shrines of devotion," so that the intellectual layman may become religious, and the devout ecclesiastic may become intellectual (Newman 1857, 15). At the same time, he highlights the fact that knowledge and culture are not identical with moral goodness and that "being a gentleman" is not the same as "being a Christian", as he expresses it in the famous passage of *The Idea of a University*:

Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness and justness of view faith. Philosophy, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions, no influential motives, no vivifying principles. Liberal Education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman. It is well to be a gentlemen, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life;—these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects of a University; I am advocating, I shall illustrate and insist upon them; but still, I repeat, they are no guarantee for sanctity or even for conscientiousness... Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man (Newman 1891, 120–121).

Conclusion

The confrontation between the two thinkers shows that Newman's *Idea* cannot be fully understood and appreciated without the background of the educational programmes popularized in the first half of the 19th century. It is therefore equally likely that Newman constructed his system of education and arrived at its basic principles precisely by refuting the principles of utilitarianism and liberalism of his day. From this perspective his *Idea of a University* no longer remains a tranquil prose, but represents almost a moral and cultural struggle for fundamental values.

When Newman puts forward the idea that education is an end in itself, he is in reality suggesting that there exists a large system of objective facts that have enduring and transcendent values. In this light, the English scholar can be said to stand in continuity with that great tradition of thought wherein the first philosophical question is concerned with being as such, and upon which depends – and not the other way around – the question of its usefulness and practical applicability. In passing, it can be noted that one of the philosophers who in the 20th century developed in a special way the theory of values outlined by Newman was the Christian phenomenologist Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889–1977), who in his *Ethics* made an important distinction between the “value” and the “useful”, or more precisely between what is “important-in-itself” and what is “subjectively satisfying”, in order to emphasize the priority of the former over the latter (Hildebrand 2020, 66–76). The challenge that *The Idea of a University* poses to modern readers thus becomes very obvious: Will we accept Newman’s proposal about education as a vehicle of perennial values, or rather those proposals that regard education purely as a means of utility, benefit and short-term happiness? Are we willing to study, learn, and labour to attain knowledge because it is useful, or because it is primarily important-in-itself?

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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
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The Role of Educational Programmes and Their Effect on Self-Education

An Example from Practice in the Context of Encountering Different Cultural Influences

Lukáš Malý

Abstract

The role of educational programmes and their influence on personal development (self-education) is indisputable. The aim of this article is to reflect on my personal experiences from a summer school completed in July 2023 at Oxford University. Using a very specific example, I try to explain the motivations that led me to attend the summer school and the possible practical effects in my professional and personal life. Numerous discussions and debates with colleagues from very different cultural backgrounds were very beneficial during my stay in Oxford. As part of these debates, reflection of practice, sharing of experiences, but also guided activities within the educational programme, I will try to describe several areas in which I observe contribution and benefit. Finally, I will use a practical example (essay) to show how the discussions in this course influenced me in thinking about problems and stimuli in my professional life while working on a development co-operation project in Kenya.

Keywords

self-education; summer school; Oxford University; multiculturalism; self-knowledge; motivation; development co-operation

Introduction and motivation to attend an international summer school

During the summer of 2023, I did a week-long residency at the University of Oxford. As part of the summer school organized by the Department for Continuing Education, I chose the topic Ethics and Economics of Healthcare. External and internal motivations led me to this topic, which overlap each other. In my professional life, I work as a doctor and at the same time as a university teacher at the Faculty of Medicine. I teach medical ethics and within that I am more interested in the issues of the allocation of scarce resources in healthcare in times of scarcity. Since I also work as the head doctor of medical student internships in a small hospital in Kenya, and also as the deputy project manager of this facility, I encounter the issue of resource allocation and the need to make decisions about scarce resources in the reality of clinical practice (Malý 2023). Working in these positions requires continuous further education. I think that attending these courses and other educational programmes is an integral part of this work and therefore I complete several of them every year. As part of this year's summer school at Oxford, I chose the Ethics and Economics of Healthcare course due to the need to orientate myself in both areas separately, but at the same time to have a comprehensive overlap within the mutual interactions of these fields. During the course, I had the opportunity not only to

discuss problematic topics with the course leader, but also with the other students, who were mostly specialists in sub-fields (medicine, nursing, economics, etc.). This enabled me to look at problems in larger contexts and from different perspectives. The participants came from different parts of the world and from completely different social, cultural, and economic conditions. Part of the course was to write two essays on a given topic. So I had the opportunity to combine my knowledge, skills and experience from working as a doctor in Kenya, in the Czech Republic, and also from the position of a teacher at the Faculty of Medicine, and to reflect on everything. It was a unique opportunity to discuss the challenges I face in the allocation of scarce resources in Kenya. In this regard, the summer school had a very practical impact on my thinking and sorting of thoughts on a personal and professional level.

Ethics and economics of healthcare – Oxford University summer school

This course was organized by the Department for Continuing Education, under the guidance of the tutor Mr Edward Hadas. He is a Research Fellow at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford University and a tutor with the Stanford University programme in Oxford. The aim of this course was to explore the interaction of the ethical challenges and equally hard economic ones in contemporary healthcare. Learning outcomes were the following – to understand: why the healthcare system is so expensive; how hard it is to decide how to allocate healthcare spending; the complex social interaction between expensive and inexpensive care; the ethical challenges of “preserving life and cost”; and how to compare British and American healthcare. Over the course of eight days, I completed 12 seminars which were thematically very diverse and always related to the mutual connection and integration of Ethics and Economics in relation to Healthcare. The seminars were suitably complemented by lectures. For illustration, the topics of individual seminars were: Why is health care so expensive?; Public health vs. Clinical medicine; Birth, death, and life at all costs; Tender loving care in an atomised society; Matching expertise to needs and desires; Medical nemesis: Do we have it all wrong?; How to ration a precious good; Placebos, effectiveness, and the best practice; Why do poorer people die younger?: The NHS: monolithic care; The US exception: excellence (maybe) and failure (certainly); and The response to Covid-19. The topics were very extensive and led to many discussions within the seminars, but also within the individual study groups after the seminars. One external teacher and a PhD student were also invited to the seminars. Part of the course was to write two essays on a given topic. The topic was chosen based on consultation with the tutor, always individually with regard to the background and experiences of the course participants. The subsequent evaluation of the essays was carried out as part of consultations and there was an opportunity to receive adequate feedback. We also consulted and discussed essay topics with other participants.

The topic of my essay was: Approaches to the Allocation of Scarce Resources in the Project ITIBO (Development Co-operation Project on Healthcare) in a Small Rural Hospital in Kenya.

Practical impacts and benefits on a professional and personal level

The practical impacts and outcomes of this course can be divided into two levels: professional and personal contribution. I will further divide the professional level into two areas that I deal with in my professional life: teaching and medical practice.

Benefit for pedagogical practice:

From the point of view of the contribution in the field of my teaching activity, I mainly perceive the possibility of seeing a different approach to teaching than the one I am normally used to. At our faculty, we normally have 25-35 students, often more, at each medical ethics seminar. In Oxford, I personally experienced seminars where there were only 10-12 students and the teacher has a greater overview of his students. He has more time to spend with each student individually as part of consultations and has the opportunity to provide each student adequately with high-quality feedback. The benefit is also the possibility to follow a different style of lecturing and conducting discussions at the seminar, as well as methods of student activation with the possibility of their greater participation in the lesson. The course topic itself was very complex. It was necessary to approach both areas (Ethics and Economics) in a very differentiated but at the same time comprehensive manner. I will further develop the new information and ideas from this course in my seminars with our medical students. The interrelationship of ethics and economics in healthcare is a very current topic, sometimes containing significant controversies and dilemmas. It is a good stimulus for the content of ethics seminars also at our medical school.

Benefits for medical practice:

Here the benefit is very extensive. The main topic is the need for a comprehensive assessment of problems with the allocation of scarce resources – the need to consider not only medical indications, but also patient preferences, quality of life, and contextual characteristics. It is a method of consideration with regard to specific clinical situations. From the point of view of working for the position of deputy project manager in Kenya, the topic of adequate allocation of funds is very important. I will elaborate on this topic further below using a specific example from my practice.

Benefits on a personal level:

These were: knowing oneself; how a person reacts in a discussion and debate; how he reflects new views that he personally does not like; how one's own beliefs, worldview or personal faith play a role in arguing complex and dilemmatic situations. Personal conversations with some of the course participants were also very stimulating. I also came to know the Oxford University environment better, which is very inspiring in itself.

An example from practice in the context of encountering a different cultural influences.

In the essay below which I wrote as part of the course, I described how stimulating debates, discussions, and consultations have influenced my thinking and reflexion about the topic in the context of clinical practice in Kenya. Here, the professional and personal, as well as pedagogical and medical levels overlap.

“Approaches to the allocation of scarce resources in the project ITIBO (development co-operation project on healthcare) in a small rural hospital in Kenya”

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. 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.

In this essay, I rely on available data from the World Bank, data obtained from the medical records of patients in Itibo, and my own experience from clinical practice in Kenya (10 years). The development co-operation project in Itibo is financed from multiple sources in order to ensure its sustainability. One of the sources is health insurance: in Kenya, according to various sources, about 20% of the population has insurance. Individual areas differ significantly (40% in Nairobi, but districts in the north of Kenya up to 0.2% by 2015). In reality, approx. 15-20% of patients who come to our hospital are insured. Another source is self-payers, being approx. 80% of patients (care cannot be provided for free due to sustainability reasons; the fee has a regulatory function and it is also an important source of income from which we pay local health workers employed in the hospital). ADRA Kenya and ADRA ČR also partially contribute to the operation of the facility. This is funding from donors in the Czech Republic. The use of these funds is fully under my control, and other income is decided by the local Clinical Officer. The aim of this essay is to describe how we try to work in this healthcare facility with scarce resources (personnel capacity, material and financial) with regard to the effectiveness of the care provided.

In this context, I understand by scarce resources not only financial resources but also personnel capacities and material equipment of this medical facility. As part of clinical practice in this healthcare facility, ethical issues can be viewed within the framework of the well-known four-level approach – medical indications, patient preferences, contextual characteristics, and quality of life. It is also necessary to mention the general framework in terms of the four principles of medical ethics – so-called principlism as a starting point, direction, and inspiration in clinical practice (Jonsen, 2010). The ethos of the entire particular Itibo health facility, with a strong influence of the tradition of Christian ethics, has a significant role and influence on decision-making and consideration. Communication and a personal approach to a specific patient play an irreplaceable role. It is about mutual respect and respect for a different culture. It is about goodwill, the good of the other person and the effort to help him. I therefore believe that it is necessary to emphasize not only the role of personal ethics, but also institutional ethics. The

two planes overlap and interact with each other. Economic issues are closely related to ethical ones. We place great emphasis also on the preventive area. We try to visit local primary schools, and educate residents in cooperation with local staff, all with a strong accent on the specifics and differences of the local culture. As part of the complex work with the local community, we strive for mutual reciprocity (help with health problems and education on the one hand, and on the other hand it is an opportunity to understand a different culture and approaches for our medical students and doctors).

Many patients (self-payers, approx. 80% of patients in our facility) do not really have the finances for adequate care. They seek funding from relatives and friends. Fees in our medical facility are low compared to surrounding facilities. On average, 2-3 times a week we have to decide whether we will provide care despite the fact that the patient has no adequate finances. We are trying to reduce the number of necessary tests and examinations. It is always a matter of providing the maximum possible that we are able to provide in the given situation and under the given circumstances. Very often we are forced to compromise in these situations. In exceptional situations, we will provide more funding from donors from the Czech Republic, knowing that this is an exceptional situation. This is often also a problem of a lack of specialists. It places high demands on doctors as they have to deal with situations and diagnoses that they do not know so well from other environments and that they are not used to.

We have a shortage of CRP tests (C-Reactive Protein, a marker of inflammation that can help us decide on antibiotic treatment). I know I have the last five tests, the new shipment will be in a week. The point is that we need to use these tests much more judiciously and, if possible, help ourselves with another method, which is not so sensitive and adequate (e.g., another blood test). If possible, we can refer patients to another facility where they have the tests. It is about adequately evaluating medical indications, quality of life, patient preferences, and contextual characteristics. This consideration is not always simple and requires a lot of knowledge, experience, attitudes. Mainly basic ethical principles play a role here, but also clinical experience, knowledge of local specifics, guidelines, and recommendations of the Kenyan Ministry of Health (see, for example, the list of literature below) and much more. This is often very complex decision-making, which can be very difficult to objectify in the sense of evidence-based, which is a big problem. In my view, in addition to widespread and popular ethical theories (e.g., utilitarianism), virtue ethics also plays a role here. I am aware of all the negatives and the positives that these arethological concepts have (see, for example, Beran, Cibik, Pacovská, 2022), but in a specific situation with a specific patient, there will always be a certain risk and a level of responsibility that the doctor will have to take on. There are many arethological concepts: virtue ethics is a very broad concept. Here I rely on the well-known classical concepts of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. There is no space here to focus on these approaches more deeply. From many points of view, the big disadvantage of virtue ethics can be precisely that it is based on trust and on who the *virtuous person* is, what he should look like. Critics therefore accuse these arethological concepts of ambiguity and tendencies towards so-called *situational ethics*.

The *Ethics of reverence for life*, as Albert Schweitzer perceived and testified with his life, is difficult to describe in words (Oermann, 2015). It is a question of a deeply human, lived experience, an essential dialogue. Here one touches something that transcends all models, methodologies, schemes, which transcends even himself. It cannot always be calculated, predicted, as our Cartesian model of the world is insufficient for this (the Cartesian model is about the principles of Descartes' philosophy; the main themes are clarity and precision as criteria of truth, a mechanistic interpretation of nature, dualism of spirit and body, rationalism). This too is an integral part of medical practice in Kenya as well as in the Czech Republic or anywhere else in the world. Ethics is a practical philosophy, it is about practice, but it is itself a theory (there is both theory and practice). I believe that if we try to adhere to the *Ethics of reverence for life* in situations where we make decisions about the allocation of scarce resources, we will eliminate the risk of making bad decisions.

"I wish none of this had happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

(J.R.R. Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings*)

In Oxford, 11th July 2023

Conclusion

Training, in the meaning of *paideia* (and education, as an integral part of it), are inseparable concepts that accompany a person throughout his life. Of the many influences involved in self-education, continuing education is a significant component. It can be said that it is an integral part of the "care of the soul" (from the Latin: *cultura animi*; Greek: ἐπιμέλεια περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς) which is so necessary nowadays. In this article, I wanted to point out the necessity and importance of self-education for personal and professional life, using a concrete example – attending summer school at Oxford University. I believe that it is the cultivation of virtues in the sense of *virtus viribus*, as A. M. Boethius writes in the book *The Consolation of Philosophy*: "shining with his powers, he does not allow himself to be overcome by difficulties". Just like training and education, which take place throughout life and are an integral part. I see the main advantages of attending continuing education and self-education courses mainly in the form of an inclusive and ethically complex approach to decision-making. It is about receiving feedback from other course participants and reflecting on your own thoughts and approaches to decision-making with a certain distance.

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MUDr. Mgr. 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

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E-learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic in a Philosophical Reflection

Josef Hejny

Abstract

This paper is part of a postgraduate research project examining the possibilities and limits of e-learning. The aim of this study is a philosophical reflection on e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic from the perspective of the Czech philosophy of education and phenomenology. E-learning has become an integral part of the educational process in recent years, especially due to the Covid-induced lockdowns between 2020 and 2022. Based on the background of the Czech philosophy of education, this paper examines the characteristics, possibilities, and limits of the e-learning method.

Keywords: philosophy of education; e-learning; phenomenology; Comenius; Covid-19

Introduction

The main distinction between the classical educational setting and the online setting is the absence of physical cohabitation among people while being part of educational activity. Being together online, without bodily presence, has many circumstances and implications that make online education interesting to researchers in the fields of sociology, developmental and social psychology, cognitive science, and pedagogy. But why think about e-learning philosophically? As a new phenomenon, the possibility of e-learning emerged in the background of advanced communication technology, apparently on the assumption that it is a useful and meaningful way of meeting and educating. The means of the educational process are always related to its meaning, which is always there, hidden or explicit, clear or unclear.

From a philosophical perspective, we ask whether online education, as we perform it, carries the essential meaning of itself. The question of the very meaning of education is a philosophical problem with a significant impact on society and every individual. During the most formative years of their psychological development, everyone must be a part of an educational system that is built upon a certain, actual understanding of the human being. In this text, we will briefly summarise the main ideas of the Czech philosophy of education and attempt to see the method of e-learning as a tool that can bring us closer to understanding the meaning of education.

The Czech philosophy of education – main ideas

Education, according to Comenius,¹ is a process of self-discovery. Comenius' work was dedicated to the creation of pedagogical approaches that would lead to, apart from gaining diverse knowledge, uncovering human beings' spiritual freedom. School is understood as a “workshop of humanity” (Patočka 2007, 395).

In the first place, all who have been born to man's state have been born with the same end in view, namely, that they may be men, that is to say, rational creatures, lords of other creatures, and the images of their Creator. All, therefore, must be brought on to a point at which, being properly imbued with wisdom, virtue, and piety, they may usefully employ the present life and be worthily prepared for that to come. (Comenius 1907, 66)

Jan Patočka² devoted a considerable part of his professional interest to Comeniological studies. He developed Comenius's ideas about education in the spirit of phenomenological philosophy. Patočka, following his teacher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), elaborated on the idea of the natural world of man (Lifeworld), which in the modern era of reason is overlaid by scientific abstraction and technology (Kohák, 1993, 55).

In his reflections on education, Patočka talks about the role of philosophy and the shock that is an essential part of the educational path. It is a developmental experience that shakes the pupil's unquestioned security and safety. He further notes:

The certainty of the original natural man must be shaken in some way, refuted. At the time when this happens, man feels something new, he feels a strange movement taking place within him, everything takes on a new meaning, the world suddenly opens up in wide horizons in which it has not appeared before. Something like this, a real breaking through of the everydayness, of dull normality, is the starting point of the actual process of education that has given meaning to European humanity throughout history. (Patočka 1996, 367)

Patočka's explanations are inspired by Greek philosophers such as Socrates. The essence of the shock is captured in Plato's *Cave myth*, where the prisoner comes out into the light of the world of ideas. He is blinded and shaken to the base of his being. The ground where he stands, which has been naturally taken over from the outside, is questioned (Plato 2007, 365). Patočka further describes the role of the teacher and the relationship that must prepare the pupil to withstand the uncertainty that comes with self-knowledge (Patočka 1996, 408–411).

In his works on the philosophy of history, Patočka defined the Socratic-Platonic inquiry as the “care of the soul” and as the foundation of the European spirit (Svobodová 2022). Patočka praised Socrates for revealing “the human being as originally imperfect but given into the hands of the self to grasp its essential will, to give meaning to its life” (Patočka 1996, 146).

¹ John Amos Comenius (Czech: Jan Amos Komenský, 1592–1670) was a Czech philosopher, pedagogue and theologian who is considered the father of modern education.

² Jan Patočka (1907–1977) was one of the most important Czech philosophers of the 20th century. Patočka's work and his personality greatly influenced contemporary Czech thought.

Against the background of Comenius and Patočka's founding ideas, the latest Czech philosophy of education criticises education which is understood mainly as learning in the sense of passing on skills, competencies, and information. The critique sees the meaning of such education as determined mainly by the needs of the political system. The ultimate product of such an education system is a human being who is useful for the given hierarchy and, in the case of modern societies, for the economic market. Being well-educated in this sense means being well-prepared for the competitive environment. Czech philosophers such as Radim Palouš or Anna Hogenová (Palouš and Svobodová 2011) describe such an understanding of education as misleading from its meaning, as it rather diverts the student from the ability to see the essential, from self-understanding and independent, critical thinking (Hogenová 2008, 171). To be able to appreciate and care about the life direction oriented towards self-knowledge, a developing human being needs guidance, attention, kindness, and trust. According to the Czech philosophy of education, such characteristics should be the cornerstones of any school.

To summarise the main ideas of the Czech philosophy of education in a few points:

1. Education is a process of self-discovery and self-creation,
2. It is based on the European philosophical tradition of the "care of the soul",
3. It requires a shock that leads to doubt and independent thinking,
4. It needs relationships that create a safe and trustworthy culture,
5. It is a lifelong process leading to individuation and self-unity.

E-learning in a phenomenological reflection

E-learning is an educational process using information and communication technology. For the past two years, through the Covid-19 pandemic, it was also the only strategy for keeping the educational system going. It was due to the technological advancements of our time that we could carry on with the economic and educational life of our societies in the same structures, only remotely. The technology of online communication proved to be effective. Despite many lockdowns and restrictions, most schools and universities all over the world kept using alternative ways of online communication.

A part of our research involved interviewing teachers about their experience with e-learning during the pandemic. The phenomenological study of teachers' experiences is, in our opinion, irreplaceable, as teachers and students are the ones who participate in, encounter, apply, rely on, and have long-term experience with online education. We used a semi-structured interview with interpretative phenomenological analyses. This allowed us to reflect on the themes that emerge in such a way that the respondent has the space and time not only to talk about what they think about their experience but also to let the experience itself do the talking once they have exhausted their reflections.

The main findings about the nature of e-learning were the noticeable changes in the perception of the group dynamics of the classroom, the changes in the culture of the learning process due to the individual comfort and possibility of visual anonymity in e-learning, the problem of the flattening of the learning process, and the problem of closeness. Due to the limited scope of this

paper, we will elaborate mainly on the phenomenon of closeness, which seems to be the most important from a philosophical point of view.

In phenomenology, the essence of technology is understood as a way of revealing the truth. Heidegger's assertion that "the essence of technology is by no means anything technological" emphasises that technology is mainly a philosophical, rather than a technological problem (Heidegger 1977, 287). According to Heidegger, technology reveals and uncovers possibilities of things. People, thanks to their inventions, obtained the power to take more from the world than is given naturally by nature. For instance, with the mastery of mining, the earth opens up to produce iron or gold. Similarly, with the mastery of craft and the right tools, a tree can become a bowl or a boat.

Online communications have opened up the possibility to communicate, work and educate without the condition of shared bodily presence. From a historical perspective, such a possibility would be unthinkable for a medieval scholar. Yet, we have come to an age where bodily presence is not at all a condition for human communication. Without being together in the same room, we can see and hear each other. In this sense, Heidegger later wrote that technology bridged all distances but did not bring any closeness.³

Based on our theoretical presumptions and the interviews we have conducted with teachers, this insight has proven to be worthy of special attention. Our suggestion is that the phenomenon of closeness is the key to understanding e-learning from a philosophical perspective. One of the hints was the significant deterioration of children's mental health during pandemic isolation. The radical leap into the non-physical digital realm has shown that the consequences on the mental health of teenagers are not only a pathological reaction to stress caused by the pandemic situation but also a broader developmental problem that is correlated with the time spent online (Mesman et al., 2021).

We believe that the correlation between mental health and time spent online is a problem of ontological closeness.⁴ By closeness, we mean a feeling of relation and familiarity, dialogue, understanding, and authenticity. Closeness means the possibility of being in the world, a relation defined by M. Buber as "I-Thou", instead of "I-It". "Relationship is reciprocity. My Thou affects me as much as I affect it. Our students shape us, our works build our personality" (Buber 2006, 48). Being close to somebody or something applies to other people as well as to all other beings, things, or ideas. Closeness creates culture and shapes human beings' relationships with the world. It makes one's existence feel real, seen by the world and others. The feeling of closeness contains a dialogue with the other, which means mutual confirmation of realised existence. Ontological closeness is, therefore, a condition for human beings' growth towards the educational goal of self-discovery.

³ This popular quote is an abbreviation. The whole statement is: "But this liquid elimination of all distances does not create closeness; for a slight measure of distance is not yet closeness. What film and radio have brought within our grasp with their images may nevertheless remain distant. What lies in sight may be close to us. A small distance is not yet closeness. A great distance is not yet far. What is closeness if, in spite of the longest distances having been reduced to a minimum, it constantly escapes?" (Heidegger 1993, 7).

⁴ Ontological closeness is not a philosophically established term. We suggest this term to capture closeness that does not refer to the spatial and measurable distance of an object, but to intimate closeness, familiarity with the essence, with the being of a thing or the other.

In e-learning, the possibility of perceiving or building ontological closeness is limited. Online meetings change the character and conditions of human encounters. The senses of smell and touch are left out, as they are not yet technologically transferable. Teachers as well as pupils have experienced severe fatigue, problems with attention, and increasing doubts about the meaning of their efforts. The phenomenon of closeness relates mostly to point number 4 in the summary of the educational ideals: to the condition of relationships that create an open, safe, and trustworthy culture. E-learning, with its characteristics, makes this essential condition for education more distant. Indeed, in this case, e-learning seems to have bridged the physical distance in a fascinating way and enabled collaborative working, but it has not brought the perception of closeness an inch closer. It is possible that the deterioration of the adolescent's psychological state can be seen as a response to this progressive distancing.

If we take into account these findings and our personal experiences during our school years, we can conclude that it is moments of this ontological closeness that remain vivid in the memory throughout our lives. Whether it's a real understanding of a mathematical problem, understanding the essence of an idea or thought, an insight called the "aha moment", or the experience of an outdoor school or ski course where one feels fully accepted and part of a larger whole – these experiences of closeness shape a person's life in significant ways since they are the moments of encounter with the truth of being.

Conclusion

The pandemic situation was a life experience that could be characterised as shocking. The questions that have arisen for many pupils are of an existential nature. From the perspective of the Czech philosophy of education, the pandemic was an opportunity to bring not just youngsters but most people closer to themselves and the world. However, the great potential of online communication and e-learning was used mainly to continue the transmission of skills, competencies, and information. The questioning and the dialogue, which are the core of education, are nowadays located in the psychological or psychotherapeutic field. Such an approach creates a paradoxical problem when omitting the "care of the soul" tradition of education in schools and placing it somewhere else brings mental health problems for pupils, which often prevent them from attending the classes themselves.

Heidegger, when asking about the essence of technology, found that it was nothing technological. Technology is not something that inevitably leads us to objectivisation and framing of the world. E-learning could be, and in some cases we heard of it as the tool that allowed individuals and communities to take care of each other. It is surely possible to reach and keep the ontological closeness in the mode of being-together that is provided by technology. The technology of e-learning, with proper methodology, can support education in the pursuit of authenticity and self-discovery. To make e-learning truly useful and perhaps a transformative educational tool, it is necessary to include subjects that are dedicated to developing ontological closeness in the school curriculum. Our first suggestion would be a subject dedicated to the life of the community (class) itself. Such a subject creates time and space for the recognition and sharing of personal experiences while living and learning together. Other necessary subjects

are, for instance, emotional literacy, mindfulness, and philosophy. By philosophy, we primarily mean the guidance to philosophical thinking and questioning, not just the teaching of the history of philosophy.

With these insights, we would like to contribute to the understanding of e-learning and the creation of adherent educational strategies, knowing that these strategies are not only formed by institutions but also largely by each individual teacher, whose work and impact on our society are indispensable.

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Josef Hejný

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9334-5419>

Charles University, Faculty of Education

Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Magdalény Rettigové 4, CZ-116 39 Praha 1

josef.hejny@pm.me

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From Aesthetics to Awakeness

A Greenean Approach to Multicultural Narratives in the Classroom

Luke Fenech

Abstract

This paper explores philosopher of education Maxine Greene’s position on narratives in multicultural education. Moreover, this paper will look into notions of aesthetic education, social imagination, and “wide-awakeness”: three Greenean concepts that will be examined vis-à-vis multicultural narratives in educational contexts. This triad aims to help both the learner and the educator to emancipate multicultural narratives from the periphery, and to nurture an inclusive philosophy of education in class.

Keywords

Aesthetic education; social imagination; wide-awakeness; Maxine Greene; multicultural education; multicultural narratives

Introduction

All students ought to experience equity in their educational journey in schools. As inclusive as it sounds, the struggle with maintaining equity through multiculturalism in educational contexts has always been contested. As Banks states, there are characteristics within school institutions that “systematically deny some groups of students equal educational opportunities” (2013, 3). Further, Maxine Greene highlights that multicultural narratives, being pluralistic, are often marginalised, at times due to their assumed ‘provocation’. Such representation reminds us of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s plea to oppose the *Single Story*:¹ to release stories from socio-political bigotries, and ultimately, to be able to imagine the other.

Greene wrote extensively on the power of aesthetic education for social transformation, calling educators and learners to nurture a sense of social imagination, which in turn leads to what Greene calls a “wide-awakeness”. These three concepts, from Greene’s perspective, give hope for us educators (and learners) to strive towards pluralism in narratives, giving justice to every story. Also, and with reference to Arendt, Greene speaks on “the passions of pluralism” in class, “plurality” being the condition of human action: “Even though we are on a common ground, we have different locations on that ground, and each one sees or hears from a different position” (Arendt 1958, 57).

¹ See the full speech given by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, titled “The danger of a single story”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>.

For this paper, the main focus on multicultural narratives will be placed in classroom settings, i.e., exploring the dynamics between the educator and the learner. Moreover, factors such as education systems, curricula, teacher training, and socio-political dynamics may also increase or decrease the probability of having multicultural narratives present in the class.

Aesthetic education

For Greene, the term “aesthetics” refers to a specific branch of philosophy that focuses on the interaction of perception, sensation, and imagination concerning our knowledge, understanding, and emotional connection with the world. Additionally, Greene argues that the term “aesthetic” serves as an adjective used to characterise or highlight experiential being that emerges through encounters with works of art. Such encounters are educational, “enabling persons to become different, to enter the multiple provinces of meaning that create perspectives on the works” (Greene 2001, 5).

Greene perceives aesthetic education not merely as the transmission of facts, but as a means to foster empathy and awareness through the arts. Additionally, if the educator includes multicultural narratives through different artistic pedagogies, such as literature, visual arts, music, and theatre, it can be a way of politicising the classroom to be open and exposed towards the other. Together with their students, educators can decipher political messages in lyrics or literature, analyse the storylines of performances and filmography, or immerse themselves in visual art or satire, creating spaces for understanding and critique.

By engaging with diverse forms of artistic expression, students can develop a more profound appreciation for the richness of cultural diversity and, in turn, contribute to a more inclusive and empathetic society. For instance, the street artist Banksy² along with other artistic visuals can be a good example of using socio-political art to release multicultural narratives in class. As an Ethics Education teacher of 14- to 16-year-old students, I have personally introduced such artwork in the classroom. Since the class is both multicultural and multinational, it was quite interesting to see the dynamics in analysis between students. For instance, there was a particular artwork portraying a man throwing a bouquet, presumably to a crowd or a building. In interpretation, the same artwork is usually interpreted as ‘violent’, since the same stance that the man is depicted throwing the flowers is typically associated with a “terrorist throwing a hand grenade”, as one of the students remarked. Afterwards, the students managed to pinpoint the hidden intentions that the artist conveyed in his work.

As the different artworks were presented in class, the students were free to express their interpretations and interact with each other’s reflections. It was intriguing to witness the differences in interpretation between students coming from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and students coming from Western European backgrounds. Moreover, students coming from geographically Eastern countries were more likely to engage in artworks portraying war or violence, whilst students coming from Western European countries stayed more attentive to what the other students were commenting on. Further, while some students tittered about the artwork depicting warfare, others showed discomfort. While some students looked at the centre

² See Banksy’s official portfolio website here: <https://banksy.co.uk>.
<https://tape.academy>

of the picture, others gazed at its periphery. In any case, the use of Banksy's artworks provoked a lot of expressions and lengthy conversations in the class. Students were also sharing experiences and asking questions to each other. This is in parallel with Greene's view of using such pedagogical means, allowing students to view each other as *who* and not *what* they are (1995, 155).

For Greene, aesthetic education can face the persisting challenges of multicultural narratives when "representing 'lesser' cultures and ways of life" (Greene 1993, 215). Moreover, Greene criticises "political correctness", arguing that it is invoked by "those who want things to stay as they have been" (*ibid.*), referring to the misrepresentation of multiculturalism in the curriculum – which consequently affects the class.

Social imagination

Spector et al. (2017, 1) note that Greene's concept of aesthetic education is to cultivate what she proposes as social imagination, being: "Artistic ways of knowing to allow for people to see beyond their worlds and beyond 'what is' into our worlds of 'what was' and 'what might' be someday." Inspired by the poet Emily Dickinson, for Greene, social imagination is the capacity to see beyond what is immediately present and to imagine alternative ways of being and thinking. Greene argues that it is through imagination that societies can transcend the limitations of their own experiences, engage with the perspectives of others, and "find its soul" (Miller 1998, 78). Greene states that social imagination is paramount in the context of multicultural education, helping students and educators to challenge dominant narratives and stereotypes, and envision alternative ways of doing politics.

When imagining the other, teachers (and learners) ought to take a "stranger's point of view", as Greene holds: "To take a stranger's point of view on everyday reality is to look inquiringly and wonderingly on the world in which one lives; it is like returning home from a long stay in some other place" (1973, 267). Adopting the "stranger" lens will make it difficult to view the world again as it was, as "the stranger is one who has become wilfully estranged" (Block 2005, 18). Greene's pedagogical vision of social imagination is not essentially to initiate progress or resolve concerns; it is to "awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected" (Greene 1995, 28). As Fenech & Colombo argued, social imagination is a "very powerful pedagogical tool for the educator, supposing that individuals in the community of inquiry may include the 'unseen, unheard, and unexpected' that Greene is speaking on" (2023, 109).

To conclude with Greene's plea for social imagination within multicultural narratives, I propose that *ethics of curiosity and imagination* ought to be further explored in the philosophy of education, in tandem with issues of privacy, power, sensitivity, and artificial intelligence, for instance. As highlighted, adopting the "stranger's point of view" by imagining the other involves Greene's notion of critical consciousness or "wide-awakeness", as will be discussed in the next part of the paper. The use of art and aesthetic education (such as portraying Banksy's artworks) helped to bridge these stages, having students being invited to be curious about the experiences of the other. In other words, the pedagogy chosen by the educator (in this case the use of artworks) is going to affect the point of view of the students in adopting empathy and

“conscience” towards others. Due to their social justice and democratic approach, other pedagogical means (which are not discussed in this paper) such as a pedagogy of “discomfort” (Boler, 1999) and an “engaged pedagogy” (hooks, 1994) can also help bridge Greene’s concepts of social imagination and wide-awakeness.

“Wide-awakeness”

Greene’s idea of wide-awakeness isn’t merely about awareness; it embodies a profound state of critical consciousness, a call to engage with the world. It encourages individuals to transcend passive observation and actively engage with the realities surrounding them. To foster a sense of “wide-awakeness”, educators are tasked with creating learning environments that not only acknowledge but actively celebrate diversity. They must instil in students the desire to seek understanding, embrace empathy, and respect differing perspectives. It calls for a shift from mere tolerance of diversity to a deep appreciation and active engagement with it. It urges individuals to move beyond mere recognition of differences towards a genuine understanding and celebration of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs.

Within multicultural narratives in education, “wide-awakeness” prompts educators to design curricula and pedagogical approaches that incorporate diverse perspectives. It encourages them to infuse literature, arts, history, and other subjects with narratives that represent a wide array of cultures and experiences. For instance, when depicting families, educators can include various family dynamics apart from the ‘typical’ heterosexual ones, or make sure that the variety of students’ religions and countries are part of the class’s discourse. However, “wide-awakeness” cannot be expected to happen just by including narratives of same-sex parents for instance; the class needs to actively engage with the politics and ethics of why such stories were depicted otherwise in the first place – if we strive not to repeat the same mistakes. Further, in European education systems, challenging a Eurocentric curriculum can be a step forward in combating stereotypes and assumptions, linguistic barriers, and neoliberal ideologies (Apple et al. 2009).

“Wide-awakeness” also brings forth the recognition of communities, realising that everyone is in a state of sameness: “where we are all the same because we are all different ... as beings of the same, we are beings of otherness” (Baldacchino 2009, 12). This highlights the educator’s role to both acknowledge the other in class and actively engage with them. Lastly, in Greene’s view, there is a connection between morality and “wide-awakeness”, i.e., morality can start to be nurtured through the ‘awakening process’ (Greene 1978), which can be used to be conscious about multicultural narratives in class.

Conclusion

At the heart of Greene’s approach was the idea that education should be a transformative experience that enables individuals to develop a passion for pluralism and social change. However, it is worth noting that in spite of plurality and diversity in education, albeit they are encouraged (as was the case in this paper), the student ought also to acknowledge their identity and human dignity – which is inherent in every being. By recognising one’s identity, issues of

pluralism and diversity can be better intertwined in educational contexts. For instance, to navigate tensions which might arise from pluralism vis-à-vis students' religious beliefs and backgrounds, educators can opt for inclusive examples when teaching (such as acknowledging various kinds of family dynamics apart from the predominant 'heterosexual' that exist in society). Also, the curriculum needs to be up to date with the classroom's demographic dynamics, asserting that it caters for a variety of perspectives and cultures in its philosophy and application. For the latter to be effective, sufficient teacher education needs also to be a requisite, ensuring that educators themselves are prepared to be pluralistic in their teaching – despite religious, cultural, or political differences.

Ultimately, from the use of the arts and aesthetics in pedagogy, invoking a sense of social imagination in the learning process, and the urgency of wide-awakeness through active learning, the restraints placed on multicultural narratives in the class are at a better chance of being exposed, discussed, and ultimately, liberated.

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Luke Fenech, B.Comms (Hons.) (Melit.), MTL(Ethics) (Melit.)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9612-8022>

University of Malta

Ministry for Education and Employment

Floriana, Malta

luke.fenech.18@um.edu.mt

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Josef Zvěřina on Friendship

My Friend, the Unbeliever

He is a strange guy. If he says he will be then and then there or there – rest assured he will be there, even if it were raining buckets. Unlike my believing friends – some of them – who will definitely not be there even if the buckets were not raining.

He is somewhat of a bear. He will never hurt, but sometimes he feels he has hurt, so he apologizes, clumsily and tenderly, and is ashamed of the triad of things in the process. In contrast to some of my religious friends who take it for granted that I must forgive them for everything: “I implore you, if you don’t, who should forgive?”

I don’t remember him talking about anyone or all the less so slandering anyone. It is as if people represent some vague whole that he likes and would not like to take apart as he would be unable to put it back together. And that would make him unhappy. Unlike some of my believing friends who are very fond of taking things apart and not only can they not put them back together but they do not even consider it.

The unbeliever is – imagine that – pious! He has this strange reverence for all that is good, a reverence for truth, and something touching in the face of things unknown. Does God belong there? I do not know. I have some religious friends who have known everything for a long time and have infallible recipes for everything. How could they not? They are in cahoots with the Lord God!

He never told me he liked me. I must not tell him either: I would be under the impression that he would be under the impression that I was trying to bribe him in some way. And so we are like a pair of stars, circling each other as they are attracted by a force that at the same time divides them. That force is freedom. And I have other friends who assure me they love me, but they flash by like a comet. They appear irregularly, usually when they need something from me.

He is an unbeliever. He knows I believe; he knows I long for him to believe as well. He does not mind because he is extremely good. But here, he is particularly sensitive: I am simply not allowed to talk about this matter. I do not even try. My believing friends reproach me: “That is religious indifference or cowardice on your part! – Give him a hard punch to wake him up. – Are you so little afraid for his immortal soul? – after all, we must urge in time and out of time. – See how belligerent they are” (and now, they name some religious communities). So and so on they advise me. I cannot act on this advice. I think of Christ – and somehow, it does not rhyme with his patient love, his wisdom, and his sense of “the convenient time.”

But I wanted to ask: do you not see such friends around you, too?

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Translated from Czech by Ondřej Svoboda

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2025-6228>

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Colophon

Editorial Team

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