# PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN POSTMETAPHYSICAL THINKING

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Aim.** The aim of the article is to define the possibilities of education in the concept of postmetaphysical thinking. The definition takes into account the need to understand education as an open process of developing an authentic personality.

**Concept.** The article is built around a comparison of metaphysical and post-metaphysical thought. It describes the fundamental differences between both types of thinking, with a focus on the importance of others and openness in the interpretation of fundamental pedagogical categories.

**Results.** Creation of a basic framework for the innovation of pedagogical practices. The proposed framework views pedagogical success as a means of finding a sense of self, leaves room for alternative solutions, and emphasises the importance of students' individual abilities.

**Conclusion.** It allows for pedagogy based on acceptance of otherness. Through the pedagogy thus interpreted, it creates a path for creative solutions to educational problems while developing not only the individual abilities of students but also their capacity for tolerance, which is a prerequisite for the functioning of a democratic society, through the pedagogy thus interpreted.

**Cognitive value.** The article presents problems that arise when using classical pedagogy, i.e. pedagogy based on metaphysical thinking. The aim of classical pedagogy is the passive passing of knowledge and the production of graduates with the same abilities and knowledge.

**Keywords:** postmetaphysical thinking, innovation of educational process, educational goals

#### INTRODUCTION

The conceptual foundations of the philosophy of education are determi-L ned by the methodological approach that is tied to a particular philosophical trend or school. For this reason, in our article we define the space as so-called postmetaphysical philosophy, that is, a school of thought that characterises itself as a school of thought whose essential characteristic is that it is not metaphysical. We will now attempt to express the other characteristics of this mode of thought descriptively in order to do justice to the rejection of metaphysics. An important feature of non-metaphysical thinking is the perception of process and motion as essential elements of being. Not that this philosophical category did not exist before Nietzsche. It existed, but it had a limited field of application. In the context of Euclid's and Newton's conceptions of physics in our world, and in part we can add the Christian conception to this, motion has set more or less precise lines along which it can proceed. In the case of unfree objects, this is acceptable, but in the case of man, if we consider him free, it can be a problem. We cannot prescribe every step and force him to follow a detailed path if we accept that man is free, but we can force him to go towards a goal we have determined. Metaphysical thinking singles out the one who walks in the middle of the marked path; non-metaphysical or post-metaphysical thinking, on the other hand, singles out the one who crosses the boundary and sees the world differently, from a different perspective. Keeping human behaviour within the boundaries of normality within certain limits has been important for all cultures and civilizations that resemble our own. It was and is important for society to function, for people to cooperate with each other. Cooperation is only possible if people realise that they have common goals, or that they cannot achieve their particular goal without the help of another person. However, cooperation is difficult to achieve, especially if we find ourselves in a large society, in a larger whole, where we cannot imagine how and why we should cooperate with someone at the other end of a large empire or in a globalised world (Marcelli, 2018). It would be ideal for one to realise this and manage one's actions wisely, but it has not worked. It would be ideal to have everyone walking towards one goal, and they did not need boundaries within which to move. But people not only did not want to move forward, they did not even want to follow the goal that the wise had determined was good. This was already realised by Plato, for whom, out of all the calculations, the only option that finally came out was to control those who did not understand, that is, to create totalitarianism.

What is good and right is predetermined. We hope that this determination is objective and the only one, and that education should be directed towards it. In his interpretation of Deleuze, Petr Prášek (2018) points out that

it does not matter what starting point we choose for our thinking, it does not matter whether it is a subject, an object, a being, or some significant essence, because this understanding already determines in advance how their roles will be distributed (p. 24).

In the case of philosophy of education, this means that we already know in advance what education is, what its goal is, and we adapt the whole process to this idea, no matter what the conditions are. The goal of educational theory is to find friends who will say the same thing, who will have the same view of education, and to dream together with them about education as a means to establish the reign of truth and of course to deny others who do not share the same meanings with them and want to cross boundaries (Prášek 2018).

# ATTEMPTING TO DEFINE AND UNDERSTAND EDUCATION

Defining education from the point of view of pedagogy (Králik & Máhrik, 2019a; Reimer, 2020; Tkáčová et al., 2021) is as complicated as it is from the point of view of philosophy (Martin et al., 2020; Pavlíková & Ambrozy, 2019).

It is the diversity of views that creates this complication. This confirms the assumption that embedded in any definition is both a certain experience and a certain assumption and expectation of those who create that particular definition. It is a question of the starting point that we choose, as has just been mentioned.

As an example of the diversity of approaches to the definition and understanding of education, we can mention the situation that occurred after 1989 and was reflected in the emergence of new workplaces that began to deal with pedagogy and education in Slovakia. Some workplaces emphasised the educational aspect of education and included education as a part of the educational process in schools, giving priority to the content of knowledge. Thus, the effect of education is education, which is identified with knowledge, and knowledge is identified with wisdom. An educated person is a wise person who knows what to do. This interpretation was mainly promoted at the Pedagogical Faculty of the Charles University in Bratislava. Other workplaces were more oriented towards the axiological dimension of education, which is focused on values and value orientations of pupils, on building and developing pupils' value orientations. This is an independent action on the object of education so that the pupil's behaviour does not have to be primarily based on knowledge of the truth, it is enough to have an experience of the truth which will be sufficient motivation for the pupil to do good, to behave as he is expected to behave. The practical way was taken, for example, in Prague, where they focused on personality (personal) or social education, which was also connected with psychosocial training, which we also have experience with in Slovakia, namely at the Faculty of Arts of the University in Nitra. The pedagogical faculties in České Budějovice, Plzeň and Banská Bystrica have translated this practical focus into the theoretical subject of personal and social development of the pupil, where practical training is added to this theoretical basis (Kosová, 2008).

The diversity of approaches to education in times of emerging freedom shows that different starting positions emerged among educationalists, emphasising different aspects of education (Akimjaková & Tisovičová, 2017; Hišem, 2009; Kobylarek, 2020; Kobylarek et al., 2021; Králik & Máhrik, 2019b).

There have been extensive debates about which approach is the most appropriate and which is ineffective. The problem of the metaphysical approach is illustrated in this example by the diversity of beliefs about the rightness of the path and about defining the boundaries that determine it. On the one hand, there is an emphasis on knowledge as the way to understanding the right path; on the other hand, there is an emphasis on training as training to do good. And between these boundaries lies a plethora of different sub-approaches. In general, it can be said that the authors and their followers are convinced of the correctness and functionality of the limits of education marked out by them. Others have to adapt to their limits. In the beginning, the goal was defined regardless of the variables that appear in the process and can change the whole process substantially and exceed the set limits.

# KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND THE MOMENT OF OPENNESS

Metaphysical thinking offers a belief in one truth for education. We may never arrive at it with our community of philosopher-educators, but belief in this truth gives meaning to our efforts. Belief in one truth rejects otherness. Not that otherness does not exist, but its quality is questioned and must be subordinated to the meaning of our goal.

Disputes about truth are always a problem in philosophy, and philosophers often take them personally. Not only philosophers, but parents, educators, psychologists, and teachers also do . (Petlák, 2020). The desire to be right seems to be anchored in the psychological structures of consciousness that lead people to be convinced that they are right (Ambrozy et al., 2018; Máhrik et al., 2020; Petrovič & Murgaš, 2020; Petrovič et al., 2021).

From a primarily biological point of view, knowing the truth is the boundary between life and death. An inadequate distinction between real risk and safety can cost a person his life if, for example, he mistakes a predator for a pet. But this is the truth of empirical experience, which is based on verification of a fact, a fact that is measurable, describable, and expressible in a scale. The problem arises when we bring the relative unquestionability of the measured fact into the plane of our experience and opinion. Metaphysical thought believes that just as there is a definite possibility of determining the intensity of sound, there is also a definite possibility of determining being.

Metaphysics and transcendental philosophy have in common, above all, a certain alternative which they impose on us: either an undifferentiated ground, a formlessness, a formless non-being, an abyss without differentiation or properties - or a sovereign individuated being, a strongly personalised Form. Outside this Being, this Form, there is nothing but chaos. In other words, metaphysics and transcendental philosophy agree that determinate singularities conceive of something that is enclosed in some sovereign Ego or some supreme Self (Prášek, 2018, p. 26).

Simply put, everything must make sense to us, while metaphysics believes in the power of a concept that carries meaning, in other words carries the essence of the thing to which it is bound. In this sense metaphysics is close to religious thought, especially those religions that are based on words written in a book. The word is the word of God, it is transcendent and carries timeless meaning (Akimjak & Račková, 2018; Binetti et al., 2021; Krupa, 2005; Lenciš, 2021; Šuráb, 2011; Trnka & Lorencová, 2022). The philosopher reveals the truth in the word, reveals eternal truths that are hidden in words with an eternally valid meaning, as we see, for example, in the Slavic saints Cyril and Methodius (Hetényi, 2019; Hetényi & Ivanič, 2021; Hlad, 2021; Ivanič, 2016; Judák, 2021; Judák et al., 2022).

The task of the philosopher is not to investigate the real environment of education, but to reveal the eternal truths towards which education should

24 Ethics

be directed. Philosophy of education in the view of metaphysical thought is thus not the projection of future goals towards which education is to be directed, but the uncovering of the content hidden in the concept and the formulation of this content in the form of an educational goal.

The teacher, thanks to his metaphysical approach to the understanding of truth, enters the classroom as a herald, as a prophet, as one who has come to defend the truth against the uneducated and the ignorant. He does not come in humility, as one who seeks and wants to take his pupils on his journey of seeking. The whole setting of teachers, whether in classrooms or congregations, reflects the pupil as an object, that is, as one who is to be formed, who is to be, socialised, who is to be educated. At the same time, the pupil is the primary element, the basic particle of which the classroom collective is composed, and therefore it is assumed that the pupil will fit into the classroom ensemble in such a way that he or she will not make trouble, will not require special attention, will not disrupt the homogeneous process of socialisation. This is the idealised idea of the pupil with which the teacher or educator enters the classroom collective. This idealised prior treasure is based on the theoretical definitions and conceptual foundations of pedagogy and educational theory. If the teacher enters the classroom with these assumptions, we must conclude that he is naive. Pupils do not come to school as blank slates, they are not vessels to be filled with our own wisdom; on the contrary, they are human persons who possess their own capacities and ideas, traumas, and prejudices. The teacher's task is to develop and fulfil these capacities and possibilities, or to offer a path of correction. The naive teacher who has come to pour knowledge and discipline into the heads of his pupils finds that he is faced with a very diverse group of personalities who certainly cannot be treated in the same way and measured by the same vardstick. Frontal teaching in education has very limited possibilities (Svobodová, 2018).

Students who are completing their teaching practice in primary and secondary schools reflect this fact, in seminars on teaching practice they point out the contradiction between the theory and the image of an educated and personally developed teacher on the one hand and the educational and educational practice on the other. The teacher does not have the time to pay attention to individual pupils, to find out their possibilities, their abilities and their competences. In practice, the teacher has a package of knowledge to impart to the pupils, a plan to follow and to carry out. The teacher's aim is to achieve an ideal classroom environment, which means that no one will be disturbed, that no one will interfere in the teaching process, that no one will ask questions outside the space designated by the teacher for questions, and so on. In classes so arranged, there is no space where the pupil feels that he is the one who is invited to search for the truth, because the truth comes from outside, it comes ready-made, it is not discussed. It is a truth that is more or less useless to the pupil, at least that is how he perceives it in his position as a pupil. The teacher praises those who are

silent and do not disturb the teaching process, that is, those who are well-mannered. On the other hand, he applies coercive means of power to those who disrupt the teaching process and make it impossible for others to teach and learn. These are the ill-mannered ones.

In the process of such disciplining, judging and motivating by punishment, there is no time for specific attention to be given to the problems and issues of each pupil individually (Pružinec, 2020). Education in this sense is understood as a socialisation process in which society or the group takes precedence over the individual. The whole educational process is set up in this way, so we cannot expect change in this respect. The only change that can be made is in the hands of teachers.

# **EDUCATION AS A PROCESS**

Postmetaphysical thinking emphasises the fundamental moment of movement and openness. Several authors developing the philosophy of personalism interpret processuality as the openness of existence. They use expressions such as contingency, incompleteness or openness of human existence (Petříček, 2018).

The basic starting point of the educational process should be the openness of openness, the acceptance of the child or pupil not only as an object to which we impose a certain form in the form of behavioural patterns, but also as a subject who is to develop his or her own gifts and abilities. Openness to developing one's own potentiality is also expressed in the basic definitions above. However, the authoritarian education that dominates the schools in Slovakia does not accept this attitude because it considers it liberal and does not have sufficient confidence in the child's abilities in terms of developing himself or herself. We must realise that accepting the openness of the future requires a personal approach to the pupil's personality, and the conditions for this are not created in our education system. If we want to develop the personality and qualities of the individual, it is not possible to use the process of classical socialisation, in which a pupil is perceived as good when he obeys the word, does not retort and does what the teacher sets as a task. In such an educational system, the dominant process is repetition, the adoption of already established patterns of behaviour, leaving no room for the development of individual abilities. It is a movement within boundaries. These boundaries, however, are not the boundaries of existence or the boundaries within which the self can reflect itself.

Accepting the pupil's openness requires that two basic conditions be met. The first condition is a personal approach and the second condition is the acceptance of otherness. Although the personal approach seems difficult to apply given the setting of educational institutions, it is nevertheless not an unfeasible option. By using cross-curricular relationships, it is possi-

ble to reveal the individual needs of pupils and to adjust the learning and educational opportunities to these needs. A personal approach means that we do not tell the pupil what to do and how to do it, but we are interested in what they want to do and what solutions they would suggest (Blaščíková, 2021). There are subjects where this approach has its limits, such as mathematics or physics, but in educational subjects this approach has its justification, indeed it is indispensable.

# **CONCLUSION**

Accepting openness does not fit the metaphysical way of thinking. The educational process based on metaphysical thinking is based on truth and its assertion. These are theories of education that are based on an axiological approach, which is based on proving that we strive for values and the rest has no value (Lesková, 2019). Theoretical concepts are presented as the goals of education; students know they are supposed to be good, but they cannot constructively solve the basic dilemmas they encounter in the family or with peers. The teacher is the bearer of the truth, which must be conveyed to the students' heads at all costs. This overuse of the concept of truth is not only part of the educational process, but logically also part of the daily struggles of adults. Whether it is the struggle for truth between parents, between drivers on the road or between employee and employer, buyer and seller, supplier of a service and its recipient, priest and believer, etc. Somehow, truth is always expected to triumph by whatever means. From factual evidence, to logical reasoning, to demonstrations of power, to threats of karma or the mills of God. Educators and the educated fight in a similar way. To be right is to win. It is easier to have a ready-made solution that comes in the form of truth, however verified. This simple solution freezes the process because the truth is already finished.

The postmetaphysical or non-metaphysical approach does not emphasise the priority of truth as an end. Man, within his existence, solves problems and makes decisions. The fundamental difference in the postmetaphysical approach to education is the identification of the problem and not the search for truth. The problem is often a conflict between persons. It is a conflict of opinion in which we are argumentatively inclined to draw the truth as a sword with which to defeat the other. But if we see the other not as an adversary but as a partner in solving the problem, our position is quite different.

In the first place, this attitude leads us to an analysis of the facts, in which we can become comprehensively aware of the situation in which we find ourselves. Accepting processuality is also accepting the possibility of making mistakes. We do not necessarily have to win, we do not have to be infallible, because some subjective truth does not matter anyway, it will not help us to solve the problem. The non-metaphysical approach does not use

general terms under which to subsume the problem and so find a solution. An example is the notion of will. Many "mistakes" in pupils are identified as a problem of their weak will or even voluntary inclination to do evil. The will can then be motivated or broken. Motivation or punishment does not work in the vast majority of cases, which only proves that bad behaviour is not the result of it.

What is described as a weak will to do good may well be the result of the nurturing influence of another environment, such as the family environment (Pekarčík, 2020). A child who has not experienced positive evaluation in a family environment does not have the experience of working with parents to solve problems, nor does he or she expect to be called upon to do so at school (Budayová et al. 2021; Reimer, 2016; Vivoda, 2011; Žalec & Pavlíková, 2019).

The uncooperative pupil is labelled as lazy and needs to be brought to act under threat of punishment, to squeeze his behaviour into boundaries. As a rule, this does not work and resistance only increases. It is very easy to classify pupils as problem pupils. They are put on the side of those who are not right and who need to have the truth beaten into their heads.

Accepting the otherness and diversity of pupils is the first step. Then comes accepting the category of otherness as equal to truth. A pupil who comes from a negatively adjusted family background sees the world differently. And it is natural for him. Seeing the world is not predetermined in the nature of man, which is another important metaphysical notion. The essence of man is formed, man is not born what he is. Man becomes what or who he is in the process. He does not become other by a miraculous rebirth or a revolutionary reawakening or a sudden conversion. One becomes other within a process in which one's interpretation of the world changes, in which one's understanding of truth changes.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The paper is the output of the project KEGA 032UKF-4/2021 Youth in Media Saturated Society. Project is supported by Cultural and Educational Grant Agency MŠVVaŠ SR.

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