

## 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 Hejny 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

### References

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- Harper Family LLC. 2001–2023. *Etymonline. Online Etymology Dictionary*. Douglas Harper. Accessed December 19, 2023. <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=answer>.

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