

## Editorial

# Hope in Education as Hope in Love

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*May there be kindness in your gaze when you look within.*

*May you never place walls between the light and yourself.*

John O'Donohue, For belonging

*Theology and Philosophy of Education* is a journal dedicated to education. But in what sense do we want to be concerned with education in this journal? The explanation of the acronym of the journal, which is TAPE, has already been indicated, namely, that our endeavor is to contribute to the extension of life, to the healing of wounds, to the healing of pains, just as taping nowadays also means a connection that is intended to heal and to cure. Therefore, we have deliberately taken an interdisciplinary path in our journal, not only through the topics we want to open up in the articles we publish, but also by opening up different paths or methodological approaches, because we are convinced that nature also teaches us a great deal here, because nature also does not heal in one single way, but often for the same disease or diagnosis it is necessary to develop several methods of treatment in order to find out in the end which one is the best possible in a particular case. We are, therefore, responsible for the plurality of methods we learn and develop.

This means in practice that published articles in our journal have to go through a peer-review process, which is by no means a formality, and so far there has not been a single case where an article has been published in the same version as it was uploaded into the editorial system. I dare say that this will not happen in the future either, as we strive to have a creative dialogue with all authors in the peer review process. That is why not one author has yet published his or her text as his or her own monologue, but as the result of a dialogue to which the suggestions, criticisms, comments, questions of the reviewers and editors of our journal have also contributed. We respect this dialogue as the seedbed from which words grow which can hopefully support the healing of the situation in education.

What is the situation of education? In the first place, with the acceleration of the transmission of information, something associated with education has accelerated, but it has not created proximity or nearness, as Martin Heidegger already knew from his knowledge of the implications of technology: “Yet the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance.” (Heidegger 2001, 163) Since generations

are now forming faster than before, when it was true that one generation meant those born during a period of about 20–25 years, the time when women first give birth, contemporary families have also changed significantly. If today we speak of a much shorter period of time as one generation, it is quite common to find people of three generations in one nuclear family with parents of approximately the same age and three children. If we then include relationships with grandparents, we are already talking about at least four generations. And that in itself is a call or challenge to more pluralistic openness than any previous generation has experienced. That is, we have more and faster information thanks to technology, but we are in many ways more distant from each other than before. If we are to live in harmony, to form harmony between at least four generations, we must learn harmony more than before. Here, Aristotle already knew this was the challenge for any quality community or *polis* formation (Polit. 1263a 15, 1331a 25).

Perhaps intuitively, we have begun to look for help in nature, where many different species also interact and co-create life, in many places new, surprising, and in many ways different from life before. We recognize that we are part of nature, and even with our advanced technology we do not cease to be part of nature. Thus, we logically seek help in a better, improved, more detailed understanding of natural processes. And that includes cognition and understanding related to education.

Opening up to plurality is only one possibility, which can be pursued in different ways. The other option in response to plurality is closed-mindedness. It is logical that this closedness does not lead to the multiplication of life, because it is a way of defence, a way of escape from reality, a way with a preference for survival in the way we have been used to (as opposed to the way of transformation, *metanoia*). Again, the great philosophical thinker Plato could be named here, who knew about this way of responding to plurality and described it very well in the most famous philosophical text we find at the beginning of book VII of the *Republic*, the so-called Allegory of the Cave, or Myth of the Cave (Rep. 7.514a–520a). It is a speech about those who respond to the call for change (Rep. 7.516c) by fleeing to what they have hitherto mastered and in which they have hitherto felt at home.

However, if today we have transformed homes precisely because plurality is more at their core than before, we are already facing this challenge not only in the society outside the home (*polis*) but also in the households themselves (*oikos*). Marriage breakdowns can be seen as one of the consequences of these changes. That these changes are challenging was already evident to Plato (Rep. 7.515d–e). But he sought a way out of the crisis (for him, the crisis of the state – *polis*) in a better, deeper awareness of the meaning of social coexistence: in the awareness of what life in society is directed towards (Rep. 7.519e–520a).

The search for a way out in our time may bring a similar question, but now posed not only in the environment of the state – *polis* – but also in the environment of the family, the household – *oikos*. And here, more than ever before, it becomes comprehensible that the solution cannot concern only a part of the members, only a special group, but that it must concern absolutely everyone, without exception, if it is to be a real solution to the crisis.

What is the role of the school in this regard? Anyone who asks this question today and knows the environment of today's primary and secondary schools understands that the role of the school is no longer that of contributing to employability and competitive skills. The role of the school today, more than ever, is one of acceptance, of welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds, of providing them with facilities, of giving them the opportunity to root themselves in the basic structures that can provide an environment conducive to a fruitful life. The role of the school today, then, is above all to provide an experience of the reality of the interrelationships and bonds that are the bonds that make life in society, but also life on the planet or life in general, possible. Without an understanding of these connections, any information about anything will not only be unnecessary, but this information can be harmful. Again, Plato could be mentioned here, who has already pointed out the difference between sharpness and wisdom (Rep. 7.519a).

Acceptance, rooting, embracing, is the basis for any possibility of education. Opening to the other, as opposed to sterile closure, is a challenge not only to all environments that want to nurture, but is related to the possibility of new life in general. We can call it friendship or love, i.e., a relationship, a relation. If this positive relationality can be cultivated, to the extent that friendship and love can flourish, so much hope is there that life will flourish. (Although I believe this is unnecessary for most readers of our journal, yet I prefer to express explicitly at this point that it is not just about biological fertility, but about mutual understanding and openness to otherness, which need not lead to biological fertility in the sense of new biological offspring.)

Hope in education is therefore hope in love. If there is to be true education, there must be a positive openness to one another, in an effort to develop, not destroy, the possibilities of life. The fact that many young people today, even very bright people, are facing destruction more than cultivation should be a challenge to all of us already strong enough to look for ways out. We cannot find them within the framework of only one discipline, that is already clear enough today, because even disciplines like theology and philosophy no longer pose the question for the meaning of life and for help to cultivate it in us and for us clearly, deeply and broadly enough. There is a need for disciplines like pedagogy, theology, religious studies, psychology, management, philosophy, and other helping professions to meet each other and to seek common ground, common ways to help us to live, to help us to be able to live in harmony, in joy, in happiness, in a meaningful life. There is hope in education to the extent that we are able to open ourselves to each other's otherness and to learn from each other, to educate ourselves, to learn to live in love, in friendship, in openness. Then this hope is also a hope for life.

The first issue of the third volume of *Theology and Philosophy of Education* opens under this statement with the article *Autonomous Learning in Religious Education in Slovakia* by Jana Kucharová. This is followed by a paper also on religion and education by Yusak Tanasyah, Bobby Kurnia Putrawan, Ester Agustini Tandana, authors from Indonesia, entitled *Religious Freedom in Indonesia: Worldview of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika for Multicultural Education*.

In his article *Deep Callings: The Will of the Heart*, Adhip Rawal writes about the creation of relatedness or belonging. David Krámský, Petr Nesvadba, and Tomáš Římský described *Shaming as a key factor in the process of personality disintegration*.

Dariusz Stepkowski considers *Learning from Negativity of Experience in School Moral Education*. Bert Meeuwssen shows orientation at the *Crossroads of Leadership, Ethics, Higher Education, and Worldviews*. What can be done in the *Crisis in the Life of Professionals in Pastoral Ministry*, is explained by Jana Jičínská.

Dear reader, we hope that you can find some relatedness in the words we prepared for you and that you will see hope in education,

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Places mentioned in the text available at:

- 514a: <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg030.perseus-eng1:7.514a>
- 515d: <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg030.perseus-eng1:7.515d>;
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- 520a: <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg030.perseus-eng1:7.520a>.

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