

Editorial

Education and Human Bonds

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“It’s difficult to tell the truth, since there is only one truth,
but that truth is alive
and therefore has lively, changing face”
Franz Kafka to Milena, on June 23, 1920

“...even though truth is of course singular ...,
nevertheless it expresses itself – as truth – in life entirely differently,
and even differently on the stage”¹
“The order of Being has many facets”
Václav Havel to Olga, on May 1, 1981

Questions of theology and philosophy are as old as those about education. The former may even be more recent compared to formation as activity to mold someone according to the imagined shape. However, where the activity involves more than formation and discipline, where education stems from the critical reflection of our incapability and incapacity more than from power and strength, there is shared understanding, i.e., culture, in which one connects to values and virtues in a service to common good.

Both labor and work could be complemented by action, as Hannah Arendt recommended to us thanks to her reflections of Aristotle’s *Politics* and on the times of crisis she lived in. Games and plays have been with humans from the time we can speak about culture, because “culture itself bears the character of play” as Johan Huizinga (1950, ix)² described.

Once we stop asking for rules of a game, instruction manuals, methodology guidelines, once we start asking new questions that start not with the word *how*, but *why*, it is then that we start living as human beings who experience freedom. Freedom that allows people to live in a humanly manner even if they are imprisoned. Freedom which no imposed system, political

¹ Havel 1961: 3. The typical repetition of the same sentences in one and the same theatre play by Václav Havel should prompt the audience to see what are the differences between truth and information. Havel expressed the same principle in one of his letters to Olga: “... history has adequately demonstrated that the more people who succumb to the illusion that truth is a commodity that may readily be passed on, the greater the horrors that follow ...”(Havel 1989: 224 – letter number 92, from September 6, 1981).

² This is what Huizinga explained in the foreword to his *Homo ludens*:
<https://archive.org/details/homoludensstudyo1950huiz/page/n15/mode/2up>.

or other, can take away and which can thrive in the life of people who live asking questions of *why*, for the rest of their days. If, eventually, the ancient question of *why is there something and not nothing* (cf. DK B 6³) comes to be posed, one has arrived at the spring and source. Their thirst will not be quenched fully, for they will keep asking this question, but at least they know that they need this source, and they will be willing to care for this life-giving spring till the end.

Of course, we can always return to games, labor and work, and a long time of our lives can be spent in them, however the otherness of our relation to the world as a whole, which was aroused by the question of *why*, will have already made our relation to the world a cosmic one (Havel 1989: 230), even if we lived in a prison cell.

This brings us to an equally important question: What is a human person really after? What are we really after?

In *Theology and Philosophy of Education* we want to ask these questions. Those who ask questions not only on methods but also on the goals that affect us as human beings will be able to find in this journal a platform for their publications.

Theology, in its questions concerning human life, relates to the One whom we call theos in Greek, to God. Theology seeks its answers in a reflection on faith as a relationship of belief to God, and it does so also on the basis of other, earlier, written and unwritten reflections, often based on the reflection on the text perceived as sacred, i.e., inspired by God, and also on what is called tradition. Since the term theology is commonly associated with the three Abrahamic religions, i.e., Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, it is not difficult to understand which sacred texts and traditions associated with them are most often the focus of such reflections. What are these sacred texts really about? What is the driving force of those who link their lives to a reflection of faith? And should it somehow be of interest to those who have not linked their lives with the reflection of what or whom they believe?

In the 21st century, many universities no longer have a faculty associated with the term theology. Instead, however, one may find a faculty associated with the term “divinity”. Let’s consider the difference between what theology and divinity stand for. Surely there will be differences. The journal *Theology and Philosophy of Education* was founded at a time when this state of affairs was already quite evident in universities and in various scholarly and library databases (even there, the term theology is often no longer present). Nevertheless, in our e-journal, we have decided to reflect on theology of education more explicitly than religious education (while, on the other hand, as practiced in primary and secondary schools, religious education is paradoxically more specific). We are well aware that the two areas are interlinked. However, we are also aware of the limitations of both these areas, i.e., theology of education and religious education, and the related approaches. That is why we have introduced the term theology in the title of our journal. We want to develop a critical dialogue on our platform about the issues that also arise when thinking about the differences between these approaches.

³ Parmenides’ words can be seen as a response to this question.

By using the term theology in the title of our scientific journal we have indicated that we are not afraid of dialogue and that we are not afraid of using terms that are not popular with a part of the wider academic community. We have done so precisely because we wish to advance academic reflection, refraining from merely benefitting from its solely pragmatic undertones. Having taken that avenue, we do not favor regressive attitudes that would oppose new approaches. Instead, we seek to critically examine our human bonds – even those to what is not always called *theos*, but to which human beings deeply subject themselves in acts of service. We want to reflect, cultivate, think about, care for those bonds. We committed ourselves to the mission of cultivating and caring from the very first issue of the inaugural volume. For this reason, education is a key word for us, this is why we are committed to developing theology as a theology of education and philosophy as a philosophy of education. It is because we are convinced that theology is theology only insofar as it is also education and philosophy is philosophy only insofar as it is also education, i.e., the cultivation of the human personality.

In the 21st century, many universities no longer require all students to take even a basic introduction to philosophy (cf. Nussbaum 2017, 30). While it is still possible to study philosophy in universities, it is often a matter of applying philosophical inquiry to a pre-defined area of practice. It might even seem that this is also the case with our journal. It might seem that here, philosophy is linked to pedagogy as the science of education. It might seem that here, philosophy is linked with didactics understood as the science of artificial instruction. (Comenius 1967)⁴ In our journal, however, we use the term philosophy of education to refer to the *why* of all pedagogy, didactics and education.

If we look at the current output of academic publications in philosophy, arguably, we will soon notice that today, many an author of a philosophical text is often not even familiar with the basics of theology. It goes without saying that this has a significant impact on the content of philosophical writings. Although a number of existing societies are described (not only by sociologists of religion) as (not only religiously) indifferent (Gn 4:9b; cf., e.g., Havel 1978: 4 – Danaher & Williams 2023, 280f; Zvěřina 1981, 34; Halík 1995, 122; 2008; 2021, 19; Kryl 2012; Quack & Schuh 2017; Loffeld 2020; 2024), a philosophy that fails to engage with the fruits of theology, developed over millennia (to only stay with the previously mentioned Abrahamic religions), undermines its own credibility. For when a philosopher ignores, for example, the theological tradition reflecting on the concepts of truth, being, time, essence, existence or person, they are often under the impression, in their own reflections, that they are formulating certain insights anew.

Precisely because today's university students and scholars live in a climate of religious indifference, their critical reflection should not ignore what is grown, what has thrived, what is about to sprout, flourish, and what has borne fruit in this climate as well as that what had caused it. This brings us to the need for collaboration with other scientific disciplines – for example,

⁴ The first sentence of *The Great Didactic* by Comenius (1592–1670) reads as follows: “Didactic signifies the art of teaching.” (<http://core.roehampton.ac.uk/digital/froarc/comgre/part2/pgs5-7.pdf>)

quite a few natural scientists or economists would probably understand such care better in the current climate. Interdisciplinarity is certainly nothing new. However, it is not only necessary for obtaining prestigious grants. Above all, it is needed to establish a common language among scientists – a precondition for critically sharing the outcomes of scientific work (cf. Tillich 1952, 70–73). For example, one can start by asking whether we all in the scientific community do indeed relate to truth? Is it possible at all to start with a relationship to the pursuit of truth that takes the form of an open question? (Picht 1969, 317) I am confident that such questions about our human bonds are pertinent not only to philosophy.

We are convinced that the development, cultivation, education of oneself and others is precisely the activity (not just labor or work) by which human beings fulfil their humanity. Even though there are people who are not explicitly, critically, in a reflective manner related to God or truth and most people today will not find it necessary for their lives to reflect on what or whom they believe, cultivation of humanity concerns everyone. If human life is still possible only as a life in relationships, then the cultivation of these relationships or bonds concerns the basis of life as a human life.

Not only the question of *how*, but also the question of *why* our humanity, which is always relational, should be cultivated shines through in the article *Creative Love in Education: Integrating traditional and critical theological approaches*, authored by Pinhas Luzon. Hans Mendl reflects on the current situation in the field of religious education in Germany, including challenges and opportunities, in the following article. *A Response to the Signs of the Times* in the form of *Religious and Cultural Mediation* is offered by Mária Spišiaková in the third article. Karel Sládek reflects *Leadership Styles and their Influence on Ethical Behaviour in the Education of Healthcare Professionals*. Mutual connections between inspiration, feeling and thinking clarifies Bert Meeuwsen in his article *Worldviews, Virtues, and Education* as continuity and deeper development of meaning-oriented reflections. In her *Framework for Aesthetic Appreciation in Addressing Global Challenges Within and Beyond Art Education* Samanta Viziale concentrates on *Unity-in-diversity*. Roland Urbain opens with his text *Ethics at the Heart of Teaching in Higher Education* a new format of papers in our journal, which we have called “discussion.”

Dear readers of *Theology and Philosophy of Education*, thank you for your reflective co-existence and I wish you valuable inspirations from the first issue of the fourth volume,

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