

2024

Volume 4, Issue 1

ISSN: 2786-1996 | acta@pte.hu

Acta Cultura et Paedagogicae

journal for interdisciplinary studies in
culture and education

01

Robert Frigyes Hecker-Réz

*Resonant intuition as the driving force of
emotional education*

02

Zsolt Nemeskéri

*Zoltan Paul Dienes: A legacy of educational
philosophy and playful learning*

ACTA CULTURA ET PAEDAGOGICAE

2024

ACTA CULTURA ET PAEDAGOGICAE

2024

Authors

Robert Frigyes Hecker-Réz, Zsolt Nemeskéri, Rita Tóth, Zsófia Nemes-Wéber,
Zalán-György Ilyés, Viktória Kazinczy, Zsuzsanna Slezák-Bartos, Zita Kraszkó,
Tímea Fodor, Ákos Herth

Editor-in-Chief

Gábor Szécsi

Deputy Editor-in-Chief

Imre Bús

Editors

János Boros, Imre Bús, Zsolt Nemeskéri, Zsuzsanna Schnell, Tamás Szilágyi,
Iván Zádori, Fanni Dudok

Editorial Office Secretary: Tamás Szilágyi

acta@pte.hu

Publisher

Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development,
University of Pécs
Gábor Szécsi, Dean of the Faculty
7100 Szekszárd, Rákóczi u. 1.
+36 74 528 300

Cover Design

Tamás Szilágyi

ISSN: 2786-1996

Copyright © by Authors, Publisher

Table of contents

STUDIES

Robert Frigyes Hecker-Réz: <i>Resonant intuition as the driving force of emotional education</i>	7
Zsolt Nemeskéri: <i>Zoltan Paul Dienes: a legacy of educational philosophy and playful learning</i>	15
Rita Zsófia Tóth: <i>The philosophical foundations of music education – old and new</i>	23
Zsófia Nemes-Wéber: <i>The image of a preschool child in socialist Hungary</i>	33
Zalán-György Ilyés: <i>Language, childhood, mimesis – approaching childhood through the works of Giorgio Agamben and Walter Benjamin</i> 42	
Viktória Kazinczy: <i>Drama education and children’s philosophy in practice</i>	48

WORKSHOP

Zsuzsanna Slezák-Bartos: <i>Factors of community innovation in the life of settlements</i>	57
Zita Kraszkó: <i>Speech and improvisation - the importance of creativity development and communication training in the age of Artificial Intelligence</i>	64
Tímea Fodor: <i>The relationship between self-interest and common good in Hobbes’s philosophy</i>	83
Ákos Herth: <i>The method of interpretation as discovery</i>	105

Studies

Resonant intuition as the driving force of emotional education

Robert Frigyes, Hecker-Réz¹

¹ Kornelius EQ-Research Institute; E-mail: kornelius@korneliuseq.hu

Abstract

In my publication, the following terms are described and structured in their interaction: emotional education, education of the heart, exchange of ideas through recurring patterns, Descartes and the doubtful, self-confident person, Pietism as the body of thought of conviction of the heart instead of beliefs; conviction of the heart as a creative force, acquisition of knowledge versus bulimia learning, personal acquisition of knowledge through emotional attachment, transforming information into applicable skills, emotional attachment as resonance ability, promotion of resonance-capable intuition.

Keywords: emotional education, personal appropriation of knowledge through emotional connection, transforming information into applicable skills, promoting resonant intuition

Prototypes of emotional education

The concern for emotional education has a long history. This history is crucial for us because its accents continue to significantly influence the interpretation, application and objectives of this body of ideas to this day. In the following section, I will explore this history of impact in the context of heart education.

The interpretation of emotional education in the context of heart education

To better understand the interpretive framework of the so-called heart education, we must briefly discuss the phenomenology of interactionist constructivism. Stefan Neubert and Kersten Reich rightly state that in this interpretive framework, any exchange of ideas "shows a recurring pattern of rules, distributions and arrangements. In this respect, discourses are characterised by the fact that they

are not self-sufficient but strive for repetition in order to establish themselves and become a model for other discourses." (Neubert/Reich, 2000, p. 43). This position, therefore, assumes that stability in the interpersonal exchange of ideas is ensured by recurring patterns. Repetition is, therefore, an essential part of communication - including the development of the personality.

However, the question now arises: Is the development of personality determined by the infinitely varying patterns of interpersonal discourse? Is personality not formed much more from within, by the energy inherent in its emotions?

The concern of the education of the heart reflected this question, as its representatives placed the inner world at the center of their interpretation of the world. In the following section I would like to outline the development of this interpretive framework.

Until the Age of Enlightenment, in European culture, humans were defined largely by their social role. The Reformation had already shaken up this understanding considerably, but from an intellectual history perspective, the breakthrough only came with Descartes' philosophy. In his famous *Meditationes*, he consistently pursues two lines of thought: firstly, that the illusions of the senses and the fluid boundaries of the various states of consciousness justify doubting everything; secondly, that it is precisely this ability of myself to doubt that allows me to become a self-aware being. Leo Strauss formulates this connection as follows: "But even and especially under the assumption of this radical reason for doubt, it is absolutely certain that I, who doubt, exist, and indeed as a doubting, generally: thinking, self-aware being as a thinking being. In this absolutely certain knowledge of my being, which is the first absolutely certain knowledge of all..." (Strauss, 1948, p. 350). The programmatic "cogito ergo sum" formulation thus summed up two far-reaching ideas: firstly, that every external determination and its perception is doubtful; secondly, that the doubting person produces this quality of thought from within himself and thereby defines himself as a seeker.

The next significant stage in developing the education of the heart was the appearance of Pietism in 1600. This movement of piety placed piety of the heart at the center of religiosity rather than dogmas. Winfried Noack describes this turning point as follows: "Pietism placed piety of the heart against the one-sided, rational Protestant orthodoxy. It developed a rich culture of emotional life. Orthodox belief was no longer decisive, but inner light and feeling were the sources from which the relationship with God was fed." (Noack, 2007, p. 117). Having reached this point, we can ask ourselves why a phenomenon in the history of religion is significant in a secularised world. The answer is unavoidable: in

Pietism, the thinking doubt that Descartes put forward as proof of human existence was first transferred to the inner emotional world. Here, in this intellectual movement, it is first expressed and emphasised: the desired goal of human existence is not the acquisition of socially recognised and promoted skills but of inner, emotionally determined convictions of the heart. For example, a great representative of this intellectual movement, August Hermann Francke, describes his own career as follows: "Towards the age of 24, I began to reflect on myself, to recognise my miserable condition more deeply, [...] if I were to say what was first given me the opportunity to do so, I would have to draw on nothing more certain of external things apart from the ever-preceding grace of God than my Theological Studies, which I had so completely grasped in knowledge and in mere reason that I thought it would be impossible for me to deceive people, nor to allow myself to be put into a public office, to tell people of what I myself was not convinced of in my heart. [...] I had studied theology for about seven years, knew what our articles of faith were, how to assert them, what the opponents objected to them, had read the Scriptures through and through, and had read a good many other practical books as well; but because all of this had only been absorbed in reason and memory, and the Word of God had not been transformed into life in me, but I had allowed the living seed of the Word of God to be stifled and unfruitful, I now had to make a fresh start to become a Christian." (Francke, 1733, pp. 57-58). Francke, who enjoyed an unchallenged social reputation in society at the time as a pastor of the Protestant Church, concluded that he was deceiving people if his knowledge was based only on the acquisition of the rules prescribed for his profession and not on his heart's conviction.

This era then led to the cult of genius from 1740 onwards, which transformed this conviction of the heart into the classic concept of outpouring of the heart. The genius is the person who transforms the outpouring energy of feeling into a creative force. This creative force should then enable the outdated habits of human coexistence that are harmful to society as a whole to be exposed and transformed. The most important protagonists of this view were, above all, Klopstock, Jung-Stilling, Schiller and Goethe. Friedrich Schiller, for example, stressed the need to combat the "errors of education" - as he called them - through the education of the heart. As he says, "False concepts lead the best heart of the educator astray; all the worse if they boast of method and ruin the tender shoot in the greenhouse of philanthropies" (Schiller, 1978, p. 245).

This pedagogical approach, which was established in the German classical era, is still alive in the German-speaking world today as an element of emotional education. Before I formulate my proposal regarding the current objective, I

would like to briefly describe the most important areas of application of emotional intelligence today.

Areas of application of the education of the heart in the context of emotional education

As an introduction to this topic, I would like to call for help with the explanation of Dr. Charmaine Liebertz. In her programmatic text, she positions the education of the heart as a "key qualification of the future." (Liebertz, 2024, p. 27). This should be made clear to all teachers and educators: we are not talking about outdated, idealistic and ideologically tinged ideas. Rather, it is about skills that are particularly relevant in the context of the 21st century.

As a key question, I will first formulate my starting point by focusing on the core competence of knowledge acquisition. In this context, I would like to address the phenomenon of bulimic learning as an educational problem typical of our era flooded with digital information. First of all, the definition by Saskia de Velasco: "Learning bulimia" or simply "bulimic learning" is a neologism that arose in reference to the eating disorder "bulimia". [...] If you absorb facts like a sponge but do not understand the connections at all, the question naturally arises as to whether you have even acquired the necessary skills. In this sense, bulimic learning is not a form of learning that aims at acquiring knowledge - quite the opposite. [...] leads neither to a critical examination of the topic nor to deepening your skills or specialist knowledge." The basic problem with this acquisition of knowledge, which is favored in the digital age, is that the integration of knowledge necessarily falls by the wayside. The personality can only incorporate experienced and tested knowledge into its skills, but an emotional connection to this content is essential for this. And so, we come full circle: education from the heart enables this indispensable personal acquisition of knowledge, which is the basis of all core specialist skills.

Given this background, it is now understandable that those involved in education and the various support professions should be prepared or equipped to build this emotional bond with competence-enhancing knowledge. Unfortunately, this insight has been largely ignored. Nevertheless, I consider Liebertz's admonishing statement to be groundbreaking, and in this sense, I would like to describe the objective of emotional education in the context of heart education in the following section. Liebertz astutely points out that it would be a dead end if people as knowledge mediators felt their position and competence were threatened by digital information mediators. The opposite is actually true! These devices should emphasise even more the unique possibility of heart education that can only be communicated from person to person! But now, the quote mentioned: "It is

therefore high time that we as educators reflect on our core competence - holistic education - and put heart education back at the forefront of our educational endeavors. The new media are now able to convey factual knowledge in a much more appealing and up-to-date way than we can. The departure from the role of knowledge mediator should not make us lament but rather rejoice." (Liebertz, 2024, p. 28).

Objectives of emotional education in the context of education of the heart

In a society flooded with information, education of the heart should enable information to be transformed into applicable skills. The emotional education of professionals should therefore have a transformative goal in mind. They should be able to transform ineffective, empty factual knowledge into cooperative behavior patterns. Nowadays, this goal has already been achieved in many ways, namely in the approach of resonance ability.

The following areas of application and research should be briefly listed in this regard: in psychotherapy, which we will describe in more detail later; in neuropsychology, where the mirror neuron theory focuses on interpersonal, emotionally determined cooperation patterns; in ecology, where it was introduced as a key term in sustainability; in art theory, where it is about creating that level of resonance that includes the artist, his work, and the recipient.

Now, I would like to go into a more detailed description of resonance. Resonance is fulfilled in the harmonious, complementary consonance between two sources of communication. Resonance is, therefore, much more than a reflection; it is much more based on the model of instruments, where the body and strings of the instrument are attuned to one another and work together to produce the sounds. Anton Perzy puts it this way: "In relation to human communication, we speak of resonance when one person causes a reaction in another person. In everyday understanding, we already assume that this reaction is more than a mere reflection of the stimulus that caused it [...] This more in the reaction [...] accordingly contains a personal component emanating from the person reacting, a kind of communicative more." (Perzy, 2024, p. 56).

So, let's summarise: Resonance can only arise when the recipient reacts to the external communication stimuli with personal involvement. It is precisely this personal involvement that creates emotional bonds, which in turn generate cooperation. In order to describe this personal involvement in more detail, I introduce the term intuition here, in the last part of my publication. My thesis is, therefore, that intuition is capable of resonance. Intuition is essentially personal

involvement in the communication stimuli of my environment, which generates effective cooperation through emotional bonds.

Promoting resonant intuition

In order to better describe the promotion of resonant intuition, I would like to use the concept of resonance described above. This concept of resonance, introduced by the German sociologist Hartmut Rosa, has been spreading rapidly since the publication of his book "Resonance: A Sociology of World Relations" in 2016, which has now been translated into 15 languages. Specifically, he describes the starting point of resonance as an impulse that jumps from the resonating partner to the resonating partner and causes an interaction through the resonating partner. According to Rosa, this resonance has a prepossessing emotional character that creates a bond. However, bonding is always articulated in the resonating partners' willingness to engage in dialogue. According to Rosa, this willingness to engage in dialogue also causes a change that arises from the living experience of being together. It is also important to note that resonance cannot be created but can only be made possible through the openness and willingness to want to experience it. Rosa describes these qualities using the example of a fictional person as follows: "When we love her, something like a vibrating wire is created between us and the world. On the one hand, this wire is formed by what social psychologists call intrinsic interests: Anna loves her family, her work and playing volleyball; she is interested in these areas for their own sake. [...] On the other hand, Anna's connection to the world vibrates because her self-efficacy expectations are intact: she has the feeling that she can reach her family, her work colleagues and her volleyball friends and that she can achieve or make a difference in the respective spheres. As a result, she also experiences herself as flexible, as touchable" (Rosa, 2022, pp. 24-25).

Well, I thought this clarification was important for this reason, so that I could highlight the essential characteristics of resonant intuition: it is the vibrating wire between us and our environment, which generates self-effective cooperation through the emotional bond of personal involvement. Now the question arises: how can we promote this quality?

Procedure for strengthening resonance-promoting intuition

Resonance-promoting intuition is therefore essentially an inner connection to everything we experience and create. For this reason, however, strengthening this ability should not be the privilege of individual, special personalities... And yet it

is so often a foreign body in our personality universe. Where does this alienation come from?

In my therapeutic experience, this alienation stems from the fact that, while we are trying to open up, we also feel defenseless and unprotected. Taking personal interest means, in concrete terms, not hiding our self-messages but communicating and representing them. However, this self-revelation is particularly difficult in the wake of the lie of invulnerability. Our social environment literally indoctrinates us with the idea that our own weaknesses should not be perceived but, at most, hidden. In my therapy sessions, I mainly meet clients who are suffering in their relationships and urgently need support from one another but who are afraid to articulate their needs. And what are they afraid of? Being humiliated, being labeled a weakling by the other person and pushed aside. However, in my therapeutic experience, personalities who desperately try to assert themselves at the expense of their hidden weaknesses will inevitably collapse sooner or later.

For this reason, I would now like to list four such areas of practice that will help you regain your resonant intuition:

- Start every morning with a 15-minute meditation. This should consist of two parts: reading an inspiring text and then keeping a diary. The diary should answer the following question: "What do I want to implement today based on what I have read?"
- During the day, we should try to share the experience of this morning's meditation with at least one person and respond to their reflection with an I-message - not with theoretical explanations!
- Every day, try to notice a silent need in your environment - including animals and plants! - that you have previously ignored- and respond to it.
- Every evening, end your day with a 15-minute meditation. This should consist of two parts: firstly, carefully reading the morning notes, and secondly, answering the question: "How was I able to put what I read this morning into practice today?"

As a fitting summary, I would like to quote Andrea Hötger, who underpins the above ideas as follows: "The good news is that as humans we are fundamentally capable of resonance. It is not a question of having to acquire the ability to resonate but of consciously deciding at crucial moments not to close ourselves off to resonance. However, this closing off often happens unconsciously. There are both cultural and individual motives for this. Culturally, in some places, we experience a clear message of invulnerability and absolute relevance.

Individually, we learn - and for good reasons - to protect ourselves from injury, insults and embarrassment. Then, we close ourselves off from the outside world through our defenses. So, if we want to be consciously open to resonance, the first thing we need to do is become aware of our demarcation and closure from the outside world (this is often a long road, as it can extend back to our early childhood attachment). Only then can I consciously control whether and to what extent it is appropriate to open up or to protect myself – whereby in the latter case I decide against resonance.”

References

- Francke, AW (1733). *Des seel. Herrn Professoris Franckens zu Halle Bekehrungs-Historie. In Altes und Neues aus dem Reich Gottes und der übrigen guten und bösen Geister, Bestehende in glaubwürdigen Nachrichten von allerley merckwürdigen Führungen Gottes, sonderlich in dem Werck der Bekehrung, erbaulichencklicheners, letzchröcklicheners, Lebens-Beschreibungen, mancherley Erscheinungen und vielem anderem, so zur Befestigung in dem guten und Verwahrung für dem bösen dienen kann* (Dritter Theil). Metzler u. Erhard. BFS: THOL: XII A 8 (1).
- Hötger, A. (nd). Resonanzfähigkeit. <https://www.andrea-hoetger.de/blog/62-resonanzfaehigkeit>.
- Liebertz, Ch. (2024). Kinder brauchen Herzensbildung: Vom Wert der érzelmi intelligencia. In *ZUKUNFTS-HANDBUCH Kindertageseinrichtungen*, 1(2024), 27–32. Walhalla Fachverlag.
- Neubert, S. & Reich, K. (2000). Die Idee des Diskurses: Interdisziplinäre Annäherungen. H. Burckhart et al. (szerk.), *Die Idee des Diskurses: Interdisziplinäre Annäherungen*. Eusl.
- Noack, W. (2007). Herzensbildung als Erziehungsaufgabe. In J. Hartlapp & S. Höschele (szerk.), *Geschichte – Gesellschaft – Gerechtigkeit*. Frank & Timmele Verlag für wissenschaftliche Literatur.
- Perzy, A. (2024). Resonanz als psychologisches Phänomen und Bedingung menschlicher Entwicklung. In J. Müller & T. Wahne (szerk.), *Resonanz erfahren – mit der Welt in Beziehung stehen: Vielfältige pädagogische Zugänge zu einer kindheitspädagogischen Praxis*. Verlag Julius Klinkhardt.
- Rosa, H. (2022). *Rezonancia: Eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung*. Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Schiller, F. (1978). Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet. In *Schillers Werke in fünf Bänden* (Bd. 1). Aufbau-Verlag.
- Strauss, L. (1948). Religionskritik des Hobbes: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Aufklärung. In *Die Vernunft und Offenbarung*.
- Velasco, de S. (2020). Wie funktioniert Bulimielernen: Pro und Contra der Lernmethode. <https://www.brain-effect.com/magazin/bulimielernen-pro-contra>

Zoltan Paul Dienes: A legacy of educational philosophy and playful learning

Zsolt, Nemeskéri¹

¹ University of Pécs, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development; E-mail: nemeskeri.zsolt@pte.hu

Abstract

Zoltan Paul Dienes's contributions to educational philosophy and mathematics pedagogy emphasize the significance of playful, experiential learning. His games serve as tools to enhance mathematical understanding by fostering active engagement, creativity, and conceptual development. This study explores the philosophical and pedagogical foundations of Dienes's approach, particularly its alignment with constructivist theories and child-centered education. Drawing on the works of Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, and Matthews, the research highlights how structured play supports cognitive growth, problem-solving, and intrinsic motivation. The findings suggest that integrating Dienes's methodology into contemporary education fosters deeper learning and innovation in mathematics instruction.

Keywords: playful learning, constructivist pedagogy, mathematics education, experiential learning

The adventurous life of Zoltan Paul Dienes came to an end on January 11, 2014, at the age of 97, in Nova Scotia, Canada. Eight months later, two suitcases arrived in Pécs, containing a portion of Dienes' legacy—books, studies, documents, photographs, and, of course, original games. The battered suitcases, which had traveled the globe multiple times, captivated the university staff. From the scattered fragments, the image of Zoltan Paul Dienes emerged as a teacher, educator, and professor dedicated to his fellow human beings (Zádori et al., 2021).

Dienes believed in the power of playful, experiential learning and in mathematics and logic as universal languages—transcending age, geography, and culture—that often serve as a prerequisite for effective communication. The Faculty of Adult Education and Human Resource Development, and later the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education, and Regional Development at the University of Pécs, proudly undertook the stewardship of the renowned professor's intellectual

legacy. Dienes's connection to Tolna County is through his mother, Valéria Dienes, who was born in Szekszárd. An elementary school in Szekszárd bears her name, and a memorial room dedicated to her is located in the Babits Mihály Memorial House (Klein et al., 2021c).

The Dienes games are playful educational tools associated with Zoltan Paul Dienes that aim to enhance children's mathematical conceptual thinking. The central idea behind these games is that learning should be experiential and exploratory, allowing children to shape their knowledge creatively and freely. The games developed by the professors of the University of Pécs (Klein et al., 2021a; Klein et al., 2021b; Klein et al., 2024a; Klein et al., 2024b) address various mathematical principles, enabling children to draw on their own experiences to understand abstract concepts.

This study aims to illustrate how the philosophy of Dienes games connects to the principles of constructivist pedagogy and child-centered education, how these games facilitate the development of children's cognitive structures, and what philosophical foundations underpin playful learning as an educational method. The "Dienes method" is not merely about the mechanical acquisition of mathematical knowledge; it seeks to foster children's intrinsic motivation and exploratory drive. This approach aligns with modern educational philosophies emphasising the active role of children in the learning process.

Educational Philosophy and Its Connection to Learning Tools

The Dienes games are innovative educational tools designed to enhance children's understanding of mathematical concepts. These games prioritise experiential learning and the joy of discovery, motivating learners intrinsically and fostering their creativity. Zoltan Paul Dienes's educational philosophy aligns closely with the principles of constructivist pedagogy and child-centered education, which emphasize active learning and the unique experiences of students.

Educational philosophy connects to the application of Dienes games in multiple ways, particularly in the development of critical thinking and creativity. John Dewey, a prominent figure in pragmatist philosophy, stressed the experiential basis of learning and the indispensability of children's active participation for genuine education. According to Dewey, play and learning are not sharply distinct, as play develops problem-solving skills and creative thinking in children (Dewey, 1938).

Matthew Lipman also played a pivotal role in the field of philosophy for children, particularly in encouraging their philosophical thinking. Lipman argued that play

and discussion are effective means of fostering critical thinking and community dialogue (Lipman, 1980). Similarly, Dienes games promote children's cooperative skills and reflective abilities. In line with Lipman, Gareth B. Matthews highlighted that children's natural curiosity about philosophical questions is deeply connected to the learning processes experienced through play. Matthews contended that nurturing children's philosophical curiosity is essential as it serves as a fundamental driver of their learning process (Matthews, 1994).

Imre Bús articulated that play, as a central element of children's lives, fundamentally shapes learning and educational processes. The philosophical interpretation of play provides opportunities to develop students' reflective and ethical skills while fostering collaborative thinking and dialogue. This is particularly relevant to Dienes games, which aim to support children's independent thinking and decision-making abilities (Bús, 2022).

The theoretical framework of educational philosophy is closely intertwined with the practical approach of constructivist pedagogy. To understand the foundational principles underlying the functioning of Dienes games, the next section will explore the key concepts of constructivism and their significance in education.

Principles of Constructivist Pedagogy

The roots of constructivist pedagogy trace back to theories such as Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory and Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural approach. Piaget asserted that learning emerges through the interaction between existing knowledge and new experiences, while Vygotsky emphasised the critical role of social interactions and cultural environments in the construction of knowledge (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978).

Constructivist pedagogy is based on the premise that learning is not a passive process but an active engagement by the learners themselves. Knowledge is not simply transmitted; rather, it is constructed by students through their experiences and prior understanding. The essential components of this process can be summarised as follows:

- **Experiential Learning:** Learners develop their understanding through direct experiences.
- **Active Participation:** Students' active involvement lies at the heart of the learning process.

- Individual and Collaborative Learning: Students grow at their own pace while benefiting from community interactions.
- Reflection and Autonomy: Learners refine their thought processes through feedback and self-reflection.

The principles of constructivist pedagogy align closely with Zoltan Paul Dienes's approach, which underscores the importance of experiential and playful learning. Dienes not only articulated his educational concepts theoretically but also contributed practical tools that revolutionised mathematics education.

Zoltan Paul Dienes and Playful Experiential Mathematics Learning

Zoltan Paul Dienes selected mathematics as a pivotal subject and sought to reform its teaching worldwide (Klein et al., 2023a; Klein et al., 2023b). He believed the prevailing approach to mathematics education was untenable, as described by George Pólya in *How to Solve It* (1945): "Future teachers learn to despise mathematics in primary school; then they return to primary school to teach a new generation to do the same" (Pólya, 2000).

Dienes envisioned mathematics education as a tool for fostering thinking skills, particularly mathematical reasoning. He proposed a learning environment that stimulates students' personal development and social interactions. This required not only a significant reform of the subject matter but also a transformation of teaching and learning methodologies. While he acknowledged the occasional necessity of frontal teaching or individual learning, Dienes placed special emphasis on cooperative small-group activities.

His theories on mathematics learning rest on four key principles:

1. The Principle of Constructivity: Mathematical concepts must be repeatedly constructed. During play, children "see" and discover structures within tools, "reading" the rules from them.
2. The Principle of Mathematical Variability: Abstracting mathematical concepts requires exposure to multiple models.
3. The Principle of Dynamics: Opportunities must be provided for transformations within models and for transitioning from one model to another.
4. The Principle of Perceptual Variability: The same structure should be presented in various ways.

Like other advocates of constructivist pedagogy, Dienes observed distinct phases in mathematics learning (Klein et al., 2023a; Klein et al., 2023b):

- Free Play: This phase introduces children to the elements that later form abstract concepts.
- Rule-Based Play: Games with defined rules are introduced, ensuring the rules are seen as guides rather than rigid constraints.
- Recognition of Common Structures: Children engage in multiple games sharing a common structure.
- Representation of Structures: Representations help highlight the shared aspects of games embodying the same structure.
- Description of Represented Structures: Symbolization introduces mathematical notation.
- Formalization: Progression from axioms to theorems.

While Dienes's method—often referred to as the “Dienes Method”—is theoretically well-founded, its true value is revealed through its practical application, particularly the numerous games he designed. The core of his approach is creating an environment where children learn primarily through personal experience. This contrasts sharply with traditional methods, which often attempt to “pour” pre-digested symbolic content into children's minds and test their ability to produce “right answers” on demand (Klein et al., 2023a; Klein et al., 2023b).

Dienes emphasised integrating the natural environment into the process of mathematical abstraction. However, he also argued that developing structured, playful educational tools was essential for cultivating abstract thinking—a hallmark of mathematics. Among his enduring innovations are tools and games that foster the formation of abstract concepts. “Play is a wonderful thing. It compels activity and makes us forget we are tired. It can draw adult-like effort from a child and awaken the dormant child within an adult. While playing, we can learn difficult concepts joyfully and almost imperceptibly, concepts we might otherwise struggle to grasp or even close our minds to in fear” (Klein et al., 2023a; Klein et al., 2023b).

One of his early works (Holt & Dienes, 1973) explores mathematical games for children aged 4–5, while his later books (Dienes, 2003; Thomas, 2009) offer intellectual challenges for “mature youth” and the young at heart. Throughout his life, Dienes shared his playful ideas with what he described as a “rich nonchalance,” many of which found their way into school practices in some countries about 50 years ago. Although much of this has faded from regular use, his pedagogical innovations remain noteworthy for their theoretical grounding and practical implementation. By employing Dienes games, learning becomes a

method grounded in both philosophical and pedagogical principles, offering a playful and experiential approach to education.

The Pedagogical and Philosophical Connections of Dienes Games

The Dienes games uniquely integrate the principles of pragmatist child philosophy and constructivist pedagogy. These games provide children the opportunity to explore mathematical concepts at their own pace, fostering the joy of discovery and experiential learning. For example, the board game "Who Goes to the Castle?" (Klein et al., 2021a) engages children in solving various tasks to advance in the game while intuitively acquiring new knowledge and skills related to logical operations.

One remarkable characteristic of Dienes games is their emphasis on encouraging social interactions. Through group activities, children experience the power of collaboration, communication, and collective thinking, which not only develop mathematical skills but also enhance their social competencies. Additionally, the games facilitate reflection, enabling children to revisit their decisions, learn from past experiences, and deepen their understanding. A notable example is the game "Forest Adventures" (Klein et al., 2021b), where children must cooperate and communicate to solve challenges while uncovering set theory and number system concepts. This collaborative activity strengthens their social competencies and provides an opportunity for reflection, fostering a deeper sense of awareness and understanding.

As previously demonstrated, the fundamental aim of child-centered teaching methods is to consider students' individual needs, interests, and abilities. Dienes games perfectly align with this paradigm. Their adaptability to different difficulty levels ensures that each child can progress at their own pace. The exciting and engaging tasks keep students motivated while providing joyful learning experiences. In the game "True(?)Pearls" (Klein et al., 2024a), participants solve logical puzzles with varying levels of difficulty. This allows each child to advance according to their abilities and developmental pace. Meanwhile, the playful environment reduces math anxiety by treating mistakes as natural parts of the learning process rather than as failures. This approach fosters a stress-free environment where children develop confidence along with their logical and problem-solving skills.

The examples and principles presented highlight that Dienes games are far more than simple teaching tools. They are innovative solutions grounded in

philosophical and pedagogical foundations, providing a playful and experiential approach to modern education.

Summary

The pragmatist educational philosophy provides the key theoretical foundation for Dienes games. Dewey and Matthews emphasise the inseparability of play and learning, highlighting curiosity as a vital component in children's development. Dewey's pragmatist approach centers on experiential learning, while Matthews underscores children's natural interest in abstract concepts. These philosophical principles complement the practical application of constructivist pedagogy, where active participation and creativity are central to the learning process.

Zoltan Paul Dienes's legacy, as reflected in the educational tools developed by the professors of the University of Pécs, exemplifies how these principles can be harmonized. These playful teaching tools create a learning environment that supports both individual growth and the communal value of learning.

In our perspective, Dienes games are not merely mathematical instruments but comprehensive pedagogical solutions grounded in a broader educational philosophy. By integrating the core principles of constructivist pedagogy and child-centered teaching, they create a learning environment that fosters creativity, independence, and active engagement. Through making learning an enjoyable experience, these tools lay the foundation for lifelong learning in children.

References

- Bús, I. (2022). Chapters from the history of play pedagogy. *Kultúratudományi Szemle [Cultural Science Review]*, 3–4, 40–62. <https://doi.org/10.15170/KSZ.2022.04.03-04.03>
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.
- Dienes, Z. P. (2003). *I will tell you algebra stories you've never heard before*. Upfront Publishing.
- Holt, M., & Dienes, Z. P. (1973). *Let's play math*. Walker and Company.
- Klein, S., Klein, B., Nemeskéri, Zs., & Zádori, I. (2021a). *Who Goes to the Castle?* [Board game]. Piatnik Budapest Kft.
- Klein, S., Klein, B., Nemeskéri, Zs., & Zádori, I. (2021b). *Forest Adventures* [Board game]. Piatnik Budapest Kft.
- Klein, S., Klein, B., Nemeskéri, Zs., & Zádori, I. (2024a). *True(?)Pearls* [Board game]. Piatnik Budapest Kft.
- Klein, S., Klein, B., Nemeskéri, Zs., & Zádori, I. (2024b). *AbrakaDabra* [Board game]. Piatnik Budapest Kft.

- Klein, S., Kiss, J., Nemeskéri, Zs., & Zádori, I. (2023a). The student-centered school, competency development, and playful, experiential mathematics learning: Theoretical foundations. *Tudásmenedzsment [Knowledge Management]*, 3(Special Issue), 260–270. <https://doi.org/10.15170/TM.2023.24.K3.23>
- Klein, S., Kiss, J., Nemeskéri, Zs., & Zádori, I. (2023b). Student-centered school, competency development, and playful, experiential mathematics learning in Hungary. *Acta Cultura et Paedagogicae*, 1, 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.15170/ACEP.2023.01.0575>
- Lipman, M. (1980). *Philosophy in the classroom*. Temple University Press.
- Matthews, G. B. (1994). *The philosophy of childhood*. Harvard University Press.
- Piaget, J. (1970). *The science of education and the psychology of the child*. Orion Press.
- Pólya, G. (2000). *How to solve it*. Akkord Kiadó. (Original work published 1945).
- Thomas, M. O. J. (Ed.). (2009). *A concrete approach to the architecture of mathematics: Collected papers of Zoltan P. Dienes*. The University of Auckland.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Zádori, I., & Nemeskéri, Zs. (2021). The legacy of Zoltán Dienes: From the travel suitcase to the virtual museum. In S. Klein, J. Kiss, Zs. Nemeskéri, & I. Zádori (Eds.), *The joy of learning mathematics (The legacy of Zoltán Dienes)* (pp. 200–220). Edge 2000 Publishing.

The philosophical foundations of music education – old and new

Rita Zsófia, Tóth¹

¹ Philosophy Doctoral School, Pécs University; E-mail: tothritazsofia@gmail.com

Abstract

Music education may seem to be a matter of mere pedagogical practice at first glance, but in many essential respects, it also involves philosophical questions. Questions such as: is music something discovered or something created? Why do people make music, and why do they feel compelled to do so? What makes a musical work good? What is the role of music in society, and what is its place in education? Do children learn musical works intellectually, through thinking, or motor and mechanical exercises? Or both at the same time? And how? In the natural and social sciences, knowledge can be assessed throughout education through written and oral examinations and tests, but in the case of music, how can a child's understanding of works of art and general musical knowledge be assessed if it is not just lexical knowledge? What is musical knowledge? What is musical talent, which can be defined as a natural ability or skill in music? How many talents and skills constitute musical talent?

My lecture is part of my doctoral thesis. It deals with the philosophical aspects of music education, tracing its roots back to antiquity. Philosophical writings generally reflect on the purpose, meaning, value, and impact of music education on human development and society. As Dewey (1916) suggests, philosophy can be seen as a general theory of education. In my lecture, I would like to provide a general understanding of the philosophical questions, both ancient and contemporary, about music education and attempt to answer them. This theoretical inquiry aims to contribute to the development of a new philosophy of music education, which I believe will foster innovative trends and ideas in related disciplines by offering a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of music education. I hope that this new philosophy will inspire and guide future developments in music education.

Keywords: education, music, pragmatism, realism, aesthetics, praxial view

Introduction

Music has been present in every era and is still present. On the walls of ancient Egyptian buildings and on ancient Greek jugs and vases, we can see figures

playing instruments and dancing. In the Old Testament, we read that David appeased King Saul with music, and we know that the Psalms in the Book of Psalms were sung. Psychologist Oliver Sacks writes in his book *Musicophilia* that “it has no necessary relation to the world” (Sacks, 2010, p. IX). Lajos Prohászka, philosopher and educator, argues that „music cannot be excluded from our existence, it necessarily belongs to human existence, it is almost identical with our existence, [...] music itself is part of human life” (Prohászka, n.d. quoted in Zoltai, 2003, p. 13, transl. author). Making music is perhaps one of the oldest human activities.

People nowadays consider the arts and music important for a better quality of life; they invest time, energy, and money in enjoying music. Many people spend hours listening to music, while others go to concerts of popular and classical music, sing, dance, and learn to play an instrument. Many people spend huge sums on professional sound equipment and recordings, and it is not only musicians who buy instruments. Some play or sing professionally or as amateurs in musical ensembles and compose music; there are those whose profession is related to music—I am thinking of sound engineers, master instrument repair technicians, and music critics. “And yet,” according to Alperson, “questions about the nature and function of music and why music ought to be a subject of education remain for most of us as perplexing as they seemed to Aristotle, who long ago remarked that unlike reading, writing, and even physical training, It is not easy to determine the nature of music, or why any one should have a knowledge of it” (1991, p. 215).

According to Aristotle, musical education should be explored in more detail “in order that this may give the key so to speak for the principles which one might advance in pronouncing about it” (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1339a). These thoughts of Aristotle also suggest that musical education should be addressed not only in one's own time but also for the benefit of future generations.

Musical education has been an elementary part of human culture throughout history, and many philosophers (e.g., alongside Plato and Aristotle, Aristoxenos, Plutarch, Avicenna, St. Augustine, and many others up to the Renaissance) have researched and analysed its importance, its nature and its impact on humans. In the modern era and contemporary philosophy, relatively little attention has been paid to music education, even though other issues related to music, such as the ontology of musical works or the nature of the philosophy of music, the role (value, understanding, etc.) of music, have been written about by many thinkers.

If one agrees with Alperson's idea in another paper, *The Philosophy of Music Education*, that “If we grant the premise that education is one of the central means

by which human thought, beliefs, ideals, and practices are articulated, preserved, and transmitted from one generation to another,” then “questions about the nature and goals of music education ought to be of great interest to philosophers” (The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music, 2011, p. 614). Many philosophical questions arise in relation to education, such as what is the role of education in human development, whether the transmission of knowledge should be the purpose of education, whether social justice should be part of education, how the transmission of good habits and virtues is achieved within the framework of education, whether the discovery and training of different skills and talents should be part of education, etc. Alperson goes on to write:

In the context of a philosophical inquiry into music education in particular, one might expect philosophers to address themselves to more specialised questions: What is there to learn about music? What is it about musical practice that ought to be the subject of education? To what extent should music education be concerned with the training of musical skills and musicianship, or with listening skills and familiarity with a repertory, with factual information about historical musical practices, or with digital and electronic techniques for composing and performing music? Should music education include discussions of philosophical or music-theoretical issues? To what extent should music education focus on the formal aspects of music, its expressive or symbolic meanings, or the instrumental purposes that music might serve, such as entertainment, the facilitation of religious or other states of mind, the transmission of culture, virtue, or the education of the soul? (The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music, 2011, p. 615).

Likely, we will never be able to come up with a definitive answer to every question. Why do people make music? Was music first or language? We cannot give a single, unambiguous answer as to what music is. For over two thousand years, we have been searching for the answer to the question of what a human being as an intellectual entity is. If we get the answers to the questions about music, we can get partial or complete answers to the questions about the intellectual human itself. In order to get closer to the questions about music and us humans, I propose first to know and understand the roots and foundations of music education.

Paideia

In ancient Greek society, musical education was part of paideia, which can also be called the methodology of education. Paideia was meant to educate and train the ideal citizen of the ancient Greek polis. This ideal citizen was a well-educated, intellectually, morally, and physically refined man in every respect. It was considered essential to educate the body, the mind, and the soul and to bring them into harmony. In education, music is aimed at creating moral beauty and developing the perception of aesthetic beauty. The unity of the beautiful and the good is the Greek idea of *kalokagathia* (sound mind in sound body). Plato, in his *Politeia* and *Laws*, and Aristotle, in his *Politics*, discussed musical education in detail. They both agreed that music had a character-forming power, that it played an important role in the education of moral, virtuous citizens, and that music, therefore, had an impact on many aspects of life: it affected society in general (not just the individual) because of its community-forming, community-generating nature. The pursuit of music was an activity worthy of a free, intellectual citizen.

Playing an instrument was considered important. According to Plato, “rhythm and mode penetrate more deeply into the inner soul than anything else does. They have the most powerful effect on it [...]” (Plato, *Republic*, 401e). It has a direct effect on emotions. Music, or *mousikē*, which at that time encompassed dance, poetry, and music, was not considered an imitative art like painting and sculpture. Both philosophers privileged the playing of musical instruments. Aristotle believed that it was important in the development of children to be actively involved in learning music rather than just listening to it because playing an instrument developed their powers of judgment.

According to Werner Jaeger, “the true representatives of paideia were not, the Greeks believed, the voiceless artists—sculptor, painter, architect—but the poets and musicians, orators (which means statesmen) and philosophers. They felt that the legislator was in a certain respect more akin to the poet than was the plastic artist, for both the poet and the legislator had an educational mission. [...] They considered that the only genuine forces which could form the soul were words and sounds, and—so far as they work through words or sounds or both—rhythm and harmony [...]” (Jaeger, 1946, p. XXVII).

The teaching of the moral values of music derives from the Pythagorean conception of music “as a microcosm, a system of sound and rhythm ruled by the same mathematical laws that operate in the whole of the visible and invisible creation” (Abeles et al., 1994, p. 7). Thus, music is governed by mathematical laws that operate in the order of the universe. This has been called the music of the

spheres in the Pythagorean tradition. Pythagoras' understanding of music based on mathematical proportions is still valid in music education and musicology today. With the advent of Christianity, music was elevated to the status of one of the seven liberal arts and, within it, to the quadrivium because of its mathematical value.

If we want to define music education, then regardless of the level of the educational fields involved, music education should refer to all activities and actions (e.g., music theory, composition, playing an instrument, and listening to music). Music educator and academic Charles Leonhard, in his study, *The Philosophy of Music Education*, writes that „a definitive philosophy is useful, even essential, for an operation as important and complex as music education because concepts, theory and practice rely on one another” (Leonhard, 1965, p. 58). Since different philosophical systems have a direct impact on music education and its theoretical and practical foundations, i.e., on the basic concepts and issues, it has not yet been possible to create a unified, comprehensive philosophy of music education. One reason for this may be the problem of compatibility between philosophical views.

In contemporary philosophy, we find several philosophical approaches to music and music education. Some try to answer questions about music from the perspective of rationalism, some from the standpoint of empiricism and realism, some from the perspective of pragmatism, a praxialist approach to music and music education, and some from the perspective of aesthetics.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the Western music education tradition has carried traces of several philosophical trends, including (mainly) idealism, realism, and pragmatism. A fourth approach to these trends can be added: an aesthetics-based approach. These tendencies have strengths and weaknesses, and it is not necessarily required to adopt only one or the other; they can be accepted together, or one can choose between their strengths. Below, I set out their main features.

Realistic approach to music education

According to the realist view, there is a supreme, ultimate reality that ascribes specific values to humans, and these must be honored at all times and in all places. The realistic philosopher seeks to define what this higher reality, the Good, consists of (Leonhard, 1965). One of the main flagships of the movement is Harry S. Broudy, who writes in *The Realist Philosophy of Music Education* that “a philosophy of music education, we submit, is to be assessed in terms of its

answers to certain questions” (Broudy, 1958, p. 68). Based on questions such as what constitutes musical experience or how musical experience relates to other types of experience, a kind of aesthetic experience can provide the answer. The material of musical experience is sounds, which have different properties; according to Broudy, these are the musical elements. The musical form is the arrangement of the elements which “attracts, holds, and directs the interest of the listener” (Broudy, 1958, pp. 70-71).

The recognition of form is, in his view, at the heart of musical education because music can express emotions, can refer to different kinds of human activity, and can express physical movement, which can be linked to a type of formalism that can be traced back to Baumgarten. In his realist view, music and aesthetic experience, in general, enable us to recognise the quest for self-improvement.

At the heart of music education is the concept of artistic understanding. “Growth in taste and appreciation has been held to be correlative with growth in musical skill, knowledge and the ability to comprehend and discriminate the musical qualities” (Broudy, 1958, p. 86). The only element that can be highlighted in the realistic view is the striving for self-improvement, which is similar to the pragmatist view.

A pragmatist approach to music education

According to the pragmatist view, the truth of an idea can be determined by applying it to reality by experiencing it. Despite the Platonist nature of this argument, it focuses more on the practical. It is the results of their practical test that determine the truth of an idea and its success in a given situation in which the test is carried out. The arts are valued because they are expressions of the feelings that come with experiencing life (Abeles et al., 1994).

Foster McMurray, a proponent of this approach, asks at the beginning of his paper *Pragmatism in Music Education* whether it is reasonable for educators to turn to philosophy as a source of basic concepts. He points out that there is no consensus among philosophers on this point, but he believes that a philosophical method can help us to judge correctly the conclusions that can be drawn from experience.

In his opinion, the first thing to do is to clarify the aims of education and to bring music education under these aims. He rejects the instrumental approach to music education and proposes to “find a broadly generalised statement of what is to be aimed for in general education and then to show in what manner education in music may be subsumed under the universal” (McMurray, 1958, p. 40). He goes on to write:

The aim of general education is to use our accumulated knowledge, values, and skills to acquaint everyone with those more subtle forces in his world which influence his life, with the hope that, if he learns of their existence and their force, he can control his relations with environment to gain more of good and less of preventable bad outcomes. (McMurray, 1958, p. 41).

He considers music education to be justified because those who come into contact with music find in music what they cannot find elsewhere and are thus able to consciously strive for a good life. This has strong parallels with the realist conception, whose main aim is to define the higher reality, the Good.

Aesthetics-based approach to music education

The word aesthetics is derived from the Greek word *aisthesis*, whose modern equivalent might be “sense experience” or sense perception. (Elliott, 1995, p. 21). According to Ralph Smith, “the term aesthetic [...] suggests the perception and contemplation of things rather than their creation—looking, listening, or reading rather than making” (Smith, 1989, quoted in Elliott, 1995, p. 21).

In its present meaning, the concept of aesthetics is associated with Alexander G. Baumgarten. In the 19th century, music was finally defined as a fine art. According to the aesthetic view, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry consist of aesthetic objects or works of art that are meant to be contemplated. But how? Traditionally, to look or listen aesthetically meant to focus on the aesthetic qualities of the art object and thus to have a particular experience, the aesthetic experience. Elliott (1998) summarizes aesthetics in this way and situates the aesthetic view of music on four basic assumptions: (1) Music is a collection of objects or works. (2) Music can only be listened to aesthetically, which means that when listening to music, we focus exclusively on aesthetic qualities, the types of qualities of the music that include rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, dynamics, and also on the musical processes that give form to these qualities, such as variation, repetition, etc. (3) The value of musical works is always intrinsic. According to many aestheticians, the value of music lies in the structural properties of musical works. (4) Music listeners have an aesthetic experience when they listen to a musical work. Here, it is important to stress the distinction between hearing and listening.

James Mursell was one of the first to interpret music education in terms of a music-aesthetic approach. He believed that “[music] must be taught and learned with a primary emphasis upon its aesthetic aspects” (Mursell, 1936, quoted in

Elliott, 1995, p. 27). Elliott makes a similar argument when he incorporates his aesthetic understanding of music into music education. He argues that the value of music lies in the properties of musical sounds that can recreate emotions. "Music education, then, is a means to the education of feeling" (Alperson, 1991, p. 228).

A praxial approach to music education

Elliott rejects the aesthetic view because, for him, such a view of music cannot be credible since at the heart of the aesthetic view is music as a form of *art*. In his praxial approach, he conceives of music as a diverse social practice that includes musical works (as art objects) and more. According to him,

Each specific musical style is actually a style-community: an integrated network of socially situated music-makers and listeners, who engage in socially situated forms of musical action (i.e., all forms of music-making and listening, depending on the musical community's priorities) toward the creation of musical products, events, and situations (performances, compositions, improvisations, rituals, ceremonies, and so forth) within specific social-historical-cultural-political-ethical- economic contexts and value systems. (Elliott, 2016, p. 21).

Alperson's *What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education* advocates and proposes a pragmatic approach to music and music education. A praxial approach seeks to understand music in terms of the diversity of meanings and values experienced in diverse practices of different cultures (Alperson, 1991). In his line of thought, he draws on the Aristotelian argument that there are three domains of knowledge: 1. *theoria*, which for the Greeks denoted speculative knowledge about pure and eternal truth; 2. *techne*, which denoted the knowledge needed to create something; 3. *praxis*, the knowledge that takes into account the kinds of reasoning and critical thinking needed to achieve the right results (Goble, 2003).

Given the diversity of views on music and music education, it is not advisable to follow only one philosophical view toward a general theory because music, in all its complexity, should not be analyzed within the framework of a particular period or culture. Music also demands uniqueness and subjectivity to be included in the theory, i.e., each case must be able to be assessed on its own merits, but it must also be linked to general cultural-historical structures.

Conclusion

Finally, musical education is an indispensable value, a vital element of every society and culture. In our age, when music is all around us, and digital technology allows all types of music to exist around us simultaneously: from Gregorian to popular music, from Palestrina and Bartók to folk music and rock music, the drum and the Hammond organ, for example, are now not a pressing of a button but a touch on the telephone; also a tap on the phone is enough to listen to the music you want with the artist you prefer.

The complexity and diversity of musical experiences, the digital world, the influence of the internet, and anglicization, as well as the cross-cultural intersections, the use of concepts, and the transmission of ideas and thoughts, lead to ambiguity and misunderstandings. Music and music education, which is the basis for the existence of music and the creation and performance of musical works, are not immune to negative influences. In this modern intellectual multitude surrounding music, a philosophy of music education based on a clear foundation becomes even more important. According to Wittgenstein, “[...] what is the use of studying philosophy if all that it does for you is to enable you to talk with some plausibility about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., & if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life [...]?” (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 93).

Each of the above views can contribute to a new philosophy of music education. Clarification and explication of the concepts, the extension of arguments and ideas based on these concepts toward musical phenomena and to musical experience, the linking of musical practice and theory, the relating of aesthetic experience to more than just beauty, the incorporation of everyday aesthetic values (ordinary aesthetic values), including negative aesthetic values, into the philosophy of music education, and the consideration of the historical and context-dependent nature of musical practices and theories as a whole, can ensure the emergence of a new philosophy of music education. This could, not only theoretically but also methodologically, enable us to educate people about goodness and virtue, to develop our general ability to judge the beautiful, and, with its impact on our society and indeed on humanity as a whole, to live healthier and more fulfilled lives.

References

Abeles, F. H., Hoffer, C. F. & Klotman, R. H. (1984). *Foundations of Music Education*. Schirmer Books.

- Alperson, P. (1991). What Should One Expect from a Philosophy of Music Education? *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25(3), 215-242. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3333004>
- Alperson, P. (2011). Music Education. In Gracyk, T. & Kania, A. (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music* (pp. 614-623). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203830376>
- Aristotle (1944). Politics. In Rackham, H. (Transl.), *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 21. Harvard University Press.
- Broudy, H. S. (1958). A Realistic Philosophy of Music Education. In *Basic concepts in music education*. Yearbook of the NSSE, 57th, Pt. 1. pp. 62-87. University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan Publishing.
- Elliott, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. Oxford University Press.
- Elliott, D. J. (2012). Music Education Philosophy. In McPherson, G. E. & Welch, G. F. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education*, Vol. 1, Oxford Handbooks. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199730810.013.0005_update_001
- Goble, J. S. (2003). Perspectives on Practice: A Pragmatic Comparison of the Praxial Philosophies of David Elliott and Thomas Regelski. In *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 11(1), 23–44. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40327196>
- Jaeger, W. (1946). *Paideia: the ideals of Greek culture*. Highet, G. (Trans.). Blackwell.
- Leonhard, C. (1965). Philosophy of Music Education. In *Music Educators Journal*, 52(1), 58–177. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3390534>
- McMurray, F. (1958). Pragmatism in Music Education. In *Basic concepts in music education*. Yearbook of the NSSE, 57th, Pt. 1. pp. 30-61. University of Chicago Press.
- Murcell, J. (1936). Principles of Music Education. In *Music Education*. Whipple, G. (Ed.), Yearbook of the NSSE, 35th, Pt. 2. p. 6. Public School Publishing.
- Norman, M. (1958). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir and a Biographical Sketch*. Von Wright, G. H (Ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Plato (2000). *The Republic*. Griffith, T. (Transl.), Cambridge University Press.
- Sacks, O. (2007). *Musophilia*. Picador.
- Smith, R. A. (1989). *The Sense of Art: A Study in Aesthetic Education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315021034>
- Zoltai, D. (2003). Prohászka Lajos befejezetlen, cím nélküli zenefilozófiai írásaiból, III. rész. *Muzsika*, 46(3), 13. <https://epa.oszk.hu/00800/00835/00063/1063.html>

The image of a preschool child in socialist Hungary

Zsófia, Nemes-Wéber¹

¹ University of Pécs, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development, E-mail: nemes-weber.zsofia@pte.hu

Abstract

When examining the image of children, it must be kept in mind that there are two types of images of children in every era. One is the real child image, which is a knowledge construction based on the individual values of adults in the real world. The other is the ideal child image, which is the image of a child that is expected by society and proclaimed to be perfect. (Nóbik, 2000) The image of the ideal Soviet child, of a child with a strong collective spirit, fosters friendship with children of other nationalities, and last but not least, nurtures a strong love for the socialist homeland. The child can reach the goal and fit into society through education. The basis of their approach is the ideal they want to transform the child into. (Pukánszky, 2003) The miniaturized communist warrior child was therefore the goal of education during the period of socialism. (Kéri, 2003) The kindergarten became the primary scene of conscious education influenced by politics, and the kindergarten teacher became the mediator of the principles. A phenomenon typical of the era is the large-scale development of institutional provision, as a result of which in 1958 only 29% of children of preschool age attended kindergarten, while in 1972 it was already 62%. (Kurucz, 1970 és Kökény, 1983) The pedagogical environment has therefore changed significantly compared to the past. The ideology of all the nations of the socialist bloc was permeated by the theories of Soviet thinkers, norm and performance orientation, individual values and self-realization were replaced by the idea of conformism and collectivism. (Pálfi & Vargáné, 2023) My research covers the examination of the ideal of the preschool child, the transformation of images of children published in the journal *Óvodai Nevelés*, the regulations of preschool activities and the principles of education.

Keywords: pre-school education, preschool child, socialist

The conception of the child

Modern societies seem to have a clear definition of what childhood is, what characteristics characterize a child, and where it is placed between generations

and in the social value system. This awareness in the 19-20. It began at the turn of the century, when, in addition to doctors, psychologists and educators, the interest of the public was increasingly focused on the fact that questions and problems related to children received more and more attention from the adult society (Szabolcs, 1995). When examining the image of children, it must be kept in mind that there are two types of images of children in every era. One is the real child image, which is a knowledge construction based on the individual values of adults in the real world. The other is the ideal child image, which is the image of a child that is expected by society and proclaimed to be perfect. The existence of the latter presupposes that society considered the child as a person who can be educated and changed. The same connection can be said about the educational method implemented in life and the educational method considered ideal as a critique (Nóbik, 2000). A complete harmony cannot be established between the image of the child and the actual educational practice. Historical sources show how childhood was perceived and how adults saw the child, rather than accurately reflecting specific treatment and everyday events (Szabolcs, 1995). One of the starting points of the children's image is the ideal man, which in the examined era is the socialist ideal of man, which appears as a man who lives, works and thinks in a socialist way in the congress directives of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. More broadly, the ideal socialist man has such merits as devotion to the cause of socialism; love of the socialist homeland; conscientious work for the benefit of society; passionate interest in public affairs; moral purity, simplicity and modesty (Forgó, 1962). From the above, the image of the ideal Soviet child emerges, of a child who has a strong collective spirit, cultivates friendship with children of other nationalities, and last but not least, nurtures a strong love for the socialist homeland. Already in the XIX. the authors of 19th century pedagogical works also mostly treated the child as a future adult. The child can reach the goal and fit into society through education. The basis of their approach is the ideal they want to transform the child into (Pukánszky, 2003). Even during socialism, they were not seen as real children, but as minor communist fighters. At the beginning of the 1950s in Hungary, from the point of view of party ideology, the point was not the child itself, but the possibility of how they could be shaped thanks to the socialist pedagogy and the party state (Kéri, 2003). Under the conditions of a socialist society, new social and pedagogical conditions arise for the child's development and active participation in the process of education. In this society, not only does the child's activity and self-activity exist in principle, but it is also objectively in the interest of society to ensure this (Nagy, 1977). By this time, pedagogical theories and psychological trends based around institutional education almost

completely shape the opinion of the professional and lay public about children (Szabolcs, 1995). The 1963 document establishing the primary school curriculum did contain guidelines for the first four grades of the school, but at the same time it formulated expectations for the education of children, which in this way also affected the kindergarten. The purpose of elementary school is to shape the personality of children so that the communist ideal of humanity can finally be realized in them. In order to achieve this, they found it necessary to achieve uniform and modern general education, to convey communist morality, and to lay the foundation for a man who loves his country and peace and works for society (Tanterv és utasítás, 1963). From the above, we can also see that the creation of a socialist society began in childhood, which is well proven by the ideological background for kindergartens, as well as the ideas about elementary schools based on the curricula.

Educational principles

The 19-20. At the turn of the century, knowledge and views about children became research areas of modern sciences. As a result of the evolutionary theory, the appearance of the development principle in biology and psychology further expanded the knowledge related to the physical, mental and spiritual process of child growth. Freudism, which traces the foundations of personality and behavior from the past, from early childhood. Pragmatism, which considered adaptation to a given life situation as its idea, thus considered an active, active child in the learning process to be desirable. The main concept of behavioral psychology is that environmental influencing factors have a greater influence on actions, and on the actions of children, than genetic, inherited characteristics. So, by shaping the learning environment, it is possible for the child to actively and independently participate in the acquisition of knowledge. The increasingly clear theories of developmental and child psychology provided the scientific basis that led to multi-source pedagogical views. Summarized within the framework of reform pedagogy, these views still have an impact on the socialization of our children and the various elements of institutional education. The common characteristic of reform pedagogies is that they ultimately go back to Rousseau's understanding, rely on the scientific results of psychology and promote child-centricity. They wanted to create educational principles based on the child's nature, tendencies, and abilities, thus creating a new pedagogical method (Szabolcs, 1995). These reform movements tried to implement the new principles into educational practice, however, they only reached a very thin layer of children with their

innovative efforts (Nagy, 1977). During the period of socialism, however, the main goal in Hungary was therefore the reshaping of public thinking along the lines of party ideology. Erzsébet Bélaváry-Burchard, who actively participated in the creation of kindergarten pedagogy in accordance with communist principles and also contributed to the drafting of the 1953 Act on Kindergarten, translated several of Maria Montessori's books into Hungarian before 1945 and ran a Montessori-style kindergarten from 1927 to 1944, and from 1928 to operated a school from 1941 to 1941 in Budapest. He did not allow Soviet pedagogical views and practices to completely displace reform pedagogy from Hungarian kindergarten practice, therefore he ensured the retention of some elements of the Montessori educational system with his methodological recommendations (Báthory & Falus, 1997). Through her work, the "official" image of children also changed: they were increasingly seen as future members of socialist society, who should be prepared for life with purposeful education, strong ideological education, and persuasive conversations with daily political content. Politics infiltrated the kindergarten, and the child appeared in the new kindergarten laws and in the programs governing daily work as an ideologically prepared, politicizing little adult (Pukánszky, 2005). In this period, the communist system determined the main directions of education and upbringing, and attempts were made to transfer the socialist ideology to the kindergarten environment, whose scientific sources were the works of Soviet authors. The pedagogical environment has changed radically compared to before the war. From 1949, they began to copy the Soviet model, and the published literature was flooded with Soviet pedagogical thinking. The importance of preschool education was emphasized as follows: The period before school is very important in a child's life. Later, when the child goes to school, how we can organize the pre-school period and how we can raise the child during this period will have a significant impact (Barakonyi, 1954). The socialist philosophy attached great importance to the education of the rising generation, because it was seen as the key to the reproduction of the system. The ideology of all the nations of the socialist bloc was permeated by the theories of Soviet thinkers, norm and performance orientation, individual values and self-realization were replaced by the idea of conformism and collectivism. The typical educational practice meant ignoring the child's individual interests and needs (Pálfi & Vargáné, 2023). The adult-centered education of the era was not conducive to the individual enforcement of children's rights, even if the declared goal of socialist pedagogy was to ensure the same rights for all children based on equal principles. In the course of collective education, "the community that absorbs the individual was put at the center" (Golnhofer, 2004). The main objective of education is therefore to form community people of the next

generation, who are held together by the unity of the collective society (Bakonyi, Juhász & Tóth, 1965). In summary, it can be said that the complete copying of the Soviet educational philosophy and practice is typical of the early 1950s, which was primarily explained by the need for a political approach and social transformation. The capitalist society was replaced by the communist society, the durability and reproduction of which was seen in the education of the new generations in a communist spirit, for this purpose the education system, including the kindergartens, was radically transformed so that the old thinking and practice were replaced by the new, collectivist ideology (Lenin, 1953). The strength and intensity of the direct central efforts decreased by the end of the examined period, as a result of which the objectives also changed and the ideal of the "politicizing" child was replaced by the education of children "preparing for school" (Pukánszky, 2005).

Portrayals of children appearing on the front pages of the Óvodai Nevelés journal

The journal of the Ministry of Education, Óvodai Nevelés, is the primary press product of kindergarten affairs (Vág, 1964). As a continuation of the journal *Kisdednevelejs*, which existed since 1948, it was published in 11 issues a year from 1953, since two of the summer months were combined. During the examined period, its number of pages kept increasing. Although it was published as a continuation of the journal *Education*, with the significant difference that while its predecessor was the press product of the Free Trade Union of Hungarian Teachers, from 1953 it was under the care of the Ministry (Kéri, 2002). Ilona Szabadi, editor-in-chief of Óvodai Nevelés, summarized the difference between the two publications in the way that the Kindergarten mainly collected fairy tale, poem and song materials into a bouquet, while the Óvodai Nevelés already focused on Soviet theoretical and practical pedagogy, which were based on Soviet works (Szabadi, 1953). So it is clear that the magazine conveyed party ideological values. In her article published in 2002, Katalin Kéri researched the children's image in addition to the magazine *Nők Lapja*, some of the Óvodai Nevelés, more precisely 1953-1954. examining his grade and came to the conclusion that the ideal child in Kindergarten "is a worker and a fighter, and education for work as the main pedagogical goal was therefore the main, prioritized topic of the newspaper's articles". (Kéri, 2002:54) There is no data on the number of copies published in the entire period, because in the 1970s they already relied on the subscriber base and did not indicate the number of copies published. Its importance is exemplified by the 1962 publication entitled "A Guide to Leading

Kindergarten Teachers to Raise the Standard of Kindergarten Management" compiled by a kindergarten teacher, five kindergarten teachers, and three supervisors, which, in addition to the specialized books recommended for the kindergarten library, also covered magazines in its extensive material. First of all, the publication recommends the journal *Óvodai Nevelés* as a reading that every kindergarten teacher should order individually, but at the same time, it recommends that the kindergarten collect the magazine issues subscribed to the institution every year in order to avoid possible omissions. The publication only appears in the Public Education and Culture Gazette after Kindergarten Education, which is considered sufficient to obtain one copy per institution (Vincze, 1962).

At first, only drawn pictures appeared on the front pages of the *Óvodai Nevelés* magazine, mostly snapshots of kindergarten sessions. From 1955, the drawn front pages were gradually replaced by photographs, initially with only two cover photos, with drawn images still appearing, albeit only a few times. From 1956, only photos can be seen on the front pages, with the exception of the December 1964 issue, on which János Kas's drawing of a mother with her child is shown, and on the front page of the December 1967 issue, a picture drawn by Endre Bálint shows a kindergarten yard work. After that, at the beginning of the September 1968 issue, we can again see a depiction of a mother with her child, this time by Picasso, and then again with a mother with her children in the work of Ádám Wütz, who decorated the consolidated issue of February-March 1969. Finally, in January 1972, Picasso's work, with the child of another mother, appeared on the front page again. The subjects of the photographs did not change to a great extent at first, but by the end of the examined period, the overwhelming majority were almost entirely pictures of a child. It is noticeable that during the examined period, almost portrait-like images of only children increased greatly, and we can see that compared to 5% in the 1950s, they already show a value of 29% in the 1970s.



Illustration 1. The front page of the journal Óvodai Nevelés, May 1961 issue

Summary

In summary, it can be said that the examination of the image of children can be divided into two main aspects: the real image of children, which develops according to the values of adults, and the ideal image of children, which reflects the expectations of society. In socialist Hungary, the image of the ideal child was closely intertwined with collectivist values, where children were brought up in the spirit of community spirit, friendship towards other nations and love for the socialist homeland. The aim of pedagogy was not only individual development, but also the training of adults who represented the socialist ideal of a committed, moral and community-minded person. The kindergarten played a key role in this, as it was here that the education of children based on socialist ideologies began, the aim of which was to raise generations useful to society and in line with political expectations.

Examining Soviet pedagogy and its effects through educational principles, it can be established that it emphasized the development of children's personality and collectivity. The 19-20. at the turn of the 20th century, scientific approaches to child development (evolutionary theory, Freudianism, pragmatism) shaped pedagogical views, which led to the guidelines of reform pedagogy, but under socialism the emphasis on children's rights and personality was pushed into the

background. The aim of socialist education was to ensure the unity of the collective society, and education turned towards the community instead of the individual, with strong ideological influences. Soviet pedagogy therefore emphasized the social roles of both educators and children, as well as the connection between education and work.

The change in the front pages of the journal *Óvodai Nevelés* clearly reflects the strengthening of the central role of the child as an individual personality. Back in the 1950s, the front pages were dominated by pictures drawn in the 1950s, which mostly captured moments of kindergarten activities or family scenes. In the early years, the drawings showed more social, interactive images that focused on the relationships between adults and children. However, by the second half of the decade of 1955, photographs increasingly supplanted drawings, and visual representations gradually shifted to individual depictions of children. The photos began to highlight the portraits of individual children, and the visual focus shifted from the adults to the children's unique personalities. In addition to the increase in the number of photographs, the themes also underwent a subtle change: while initially social interactions dominated, later the portrait of a single child became more and more prominent. This process clearly reflects the change in social attitudes, which increasingly directed attention to the individual development, emotional and psychological needs of children, emphasizing the individual values and rights of children during preschool education.

References

- Bakonyi, P., Juhász, F., & Tóth, G. (1965). *Pedagógusok leszünk*. Egyetemi Nyomda.
- Báthory, Z., & Falus, I. (1997). *Pedagógiai lexikon (A-H, I. kötet)*. Keraban Könyvkiadó.
- Forgó, A. (1962). Óvónőjelöltek az óvodában. *Óvodai Nevelés*, 5, 174.
- Golnhofer, E. (2004). *Hazai pedagógiai nézetek, 1945-1949*. Iskolakultúra.
- Kéri, K. (2002). Gyermekképünk az ötvenes évek első felében. *Iskolakultúra*, 3, 47–59.
- Kéri, K. (2003). Gyermekkép Magyarországon az 1950-es évek első felében. In B. Pukánszky (Ed.), *Két évszázad gyermekei: A tizenkilencedik-huszedik század gyermekkorának története* (pp. 229–245). Eötvös József Kiadó.
- Lenin, I. V. (1953). Az ifjúsági szövetségek feladatai. *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1, 3–4.
- Nagy, S. (Ed.). (1977). *Pedagógiai lexikon (Második kötet, G-K)*. Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Nóvik, A. (2000). Kísérlet a gyermekkép fogalmának meghatározására. *Magyar Pedagógia*, 100(3), 367–376.
- Pálfi, S., & Vargáné, N. A. (2023). Ráhangelő gondolatok a szocializmus pedagógiai megértéséhez. In S. Pálfi & N. A. Vargáné (Eds.), *Tanulmányok a szocializmus pedagógiai gyakorlatáról* (pp. 5–9). Debreceni Egyetem Kiadó.
- Pukánszky, B. (2003). Tizenkilencedik századi magyar neveléstani kézikönyvek és tankönyvek gyermekszemlélete. In B. Pukánszky (Ed.), *Két évszázad gyermekei*:

- A tizenkilencedik-huszedik század gyermekkorának története* (pp. 27–146). Eötvös József Kiadó.
- Pukánszky, B. (2005). A gyermekről alkotott kép változásai az óvoda történetében. *Educatio*, 4, 703–715. <http://www.pukanszky.hu/Ovoda.pdf>
- Szabadi, I. (1953). A Gyermeknevelés ötödik évfordulójára. *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1, 5–7.
- Szabolcs, É. (1995). *Fejezetek a gyermekkép történeti alakulásából*. Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kara Neveléstudományi Tanszék, Pro Educatione Gentis Hungariae Alapítvány.
- Tanterv és Utasítás. (1963). *Az általános iskolák számára. 1-4. osztály*. Tankönyvkiadó. https://mandadb.hu/dokumentum/375717/Tanterv_s_utasts.pdf
- Vág, O. (1964). *Az óvodai nevelés története: Az óvónőképző intézetek számára*. Tankönyvkiadó.
- Vincze, T. (1962). *Útmutató vezető óvónőknek az óvodavezetés színvonalának emelésére*. Somogy Megyei Tanács VB. Művelődésügyi Osztály, Somogy Megyei Nyomdaipari Vállalat.

Language, childhood, mimesis – approaching childhood through the works of Giorgio Agamben and Walter Benjamin

Zalán György, Ilyés¹

¹ Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary; E-mail: ilyes.zalan-gyorgy@edu.pte.hu

Abstract

As the title of the paper suggest, in this study I will examine a conceptual constellation that can be complemented by other concepts (idea, voice, image, writing) in addition to those mentioned in the title. Following Walter Benjamin, one could even say that this constellation is in fact nothing other than the idea of childhood. There is no doubt that this approach to childhood leads us toward a concept of childhood that is quite far removed from our everyday conceptions of it. Yet, its significance lies precisely in the problem which I reconstruct in the opening of my paper and which we might briefly call the problem of the crisis of tradition. The author of this paper agrees with those interpreters who look in the figure of the child for elements of a “new barbarism” that can lead us out of this crisis of tradition, but he believes that before we can adopt these elements, we must clarify what childhood is. He therefore undertakes to do so, drawing on the philosophers who have identified or developed the aforementioned problem. As he tries to demonstrate, this exploration leads through the philosophy of language and aims at the concept of transcendental synesthesia that conditions and generates the images of childhood.

Keywords: Walter Benjamin, Giorgio Agamben, childhood, language, mimesis

Introduction

As a starting point for my study, I have chosen Giorgio Agamben's essay *Childhood and History*, in which the Italian philosopher undertakes an archaeological exploration of the concept of experience. Agamben's essay is ultimately prompted by the problematic of the loss of experience diagnosed by Walter Benjamin, which the German critic expounds in his 1933 text *Experience and Poverty*. In this, Benjamin links the fact that “experience has fallen in value” to the world war, one “of the most monstrous events in the history of the world”.

As a result of the experience of war, people “returned from the front in silence”, “[n]ot richer but poorer in communicable experience” (Benjamin, 2005a, p. 731). We also learn that the “completely new poverty” brought about by war is linked to the “tremendous development of technology” and thus does not merely affect our individual experience – the experience of humanity is as (or perhaps more) exposed to its effects as the old man on his deathbed, trying to fool his sons into believing that there is treasure buried in his vineyard (Benjamin, 2005a, p. 731). We can say, then, that the First World War inaugurated a new age: an age of loss and poverty of experience.

The problem and concept of experience in Benjamin and Agamben

But what is the experience? – one might legitimately ask. The legitimacy of our question is guaranteed by the fact that, according to Benjamin, “everyone knew precisely what experience was”, that is, we should experience that experience is what “older people had always passed [...] on to younger ones” (Benjamin, 2005a, p. 731). Let us for a moment overlook what it entails to accept this response/experience and pretend that transmission, that is the essence of experience was not (permanently?, irreparably?) damaged a hundred and ten years ago: if the crisis Benjamin diagnoses is a crisis of transmission and transmissibility of experience, it is not incorrectly stated that “the war has shown that all past knowledge is utterly useless, that tradition itself has been invalidated”. As a result of the “tremendous development of technology”, tradition is rendered impossible, the “authority of age” becomes weightless: “in modern societies, there is no role for the elderly [...], because the world itself is not what the elderly have experienced and have knowledge about. »What they have seen is no more.«” (Kőszeghy, 2024). The latter realization also determines the direction of his response to this epochal (and at the same time unepochal!) crisis: our impoverishment leads not to a longing for new experiences, but to a desire to be free of experience. We must not forget that the advent of the age of experiential poverty makes possible the advent of “a new kind of barbarism”, which in turn offers the possibility of a new beginning: the answer is therefore to introduce a “new, positive concept of barbarism”, which can guide people in the discovery of a “world in which they can make such pure and decided use of poverty – their outer poverty, and ultimately also their inner poverty – that it will lead to something respectable” (Benjamin, 2005a, p. 734). If we add to this Nicola Gess's observation that the utopianism of the figure of the child in Benjamin's work must be understood in terms of the “»barbaric« and »primitive« tendencies that children display”, we begin to approach the problem of childhood (Gess,

2010, p. 683). But let us not run so far ahead. First, let's examine how Agamben confronts the situation outlined by Benjamin.

One of the most important questions we can ask in this situation is obviously how much the value of the experience has fallen. Agamben answers this question as follows: there is only one possible experience left for us, and that is the experience of infancy. We must quickly add, however, that in this text he has a very particular conception of childhood, for he sees infancy as the original or *a priori* limit, the transcendental source that conditions and makes possible all historical knowledge (Agamben, 1993, p. 50). In short, infancy is the source of history. I will not attempt to outline how Agamben arrives at this notion, as I cannot do so for reasons of space. For now, I will say that it is basically through his philosophy of language (which is not surprising, given the etymology of "child" or "infant", since we know that *in-fans* means, first of all, "speechless", "mute") and also because – true to its etymology – infancy can be seen, from both a philo- and ontogenetic point of view, as a pre-linguistic state, the grasp of which may lead the philosopher to explore the sphere of pure experience: a sphere that precedes the *linguistic* constitution of the subject (Agamben, 1993, p. 47). However, we must add immediately that, according to Agamben, infancy is not some pre-linguistic psychic substance or reality which – as a result of speech – ceases to exist at a certain point (if Humboldt is right, we cannot speak of such a reality, because there is none). We are closer to the truth if we consider it as an origin co-existing with language, without which the linguistic constitution of the subject is simply unthinkable (Agamben, 1993, p. 48–50). Childhood is thus an origin that is present in every moment of historical languages and that permanently determines the event of anthropogenesis (which is also not some past event that has already taken place) as a constitutive difference that separates man from language. The experience of infancy cannot, therefore, be seen as "an oath of silence or mystical ineffability": if childhood is the origin of anthropogenesis and language, it is not a verdict of silence, but "the vow that commits the individual to speech and to truth" (Agamben, 1993, p. 51). The experience of childhood is indeed the experience of the boundary of language, but at the boundary of language we do not experience silence. But what then?

Benjamin's theory of ideas and philosophy of language – some brief reflections

In his youth, Agamben's master, the previously mentioned Walter Benjamin, wrote an extremely influential essay, entitled *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*. At the beginning of this, he argues that "we cannot imagine a total absence of language in anything. An existence entirely without relationship

to language is an idea" (Benjamin, 2004a, p. 62). So, to get closer to childhood, we must first learn something about Benjamin's concept of idea. Benjamin perhaps develops his rather elusive theory of ideas most systematically in the *Epistemo-Critical Foreword* of his habilitation paper entitled *Origin of the German Trauerspiel*, but if we turn to this *Foreword*, we already run into difficulties, for Benjamin states in it that the name is that "being that determines the givenness of ideas". Luckily, he immediately adds that ideas "are given [...] not so much in a primal language as in a primal hearing", but somewhat later he repeats his apparent contradiction by writing that "[t]he idea is something linguistic and, indeed, in the essence of the word it is in each case that moment in which the word is symbol [...]. It is the concern of the philosopher [...] to reestablish in its primacy the symbolic character of the word, wherein the idea comes to a self-understanding that is the opposite of all outwardly directed communication" (Benjamin, 2019, p. 13).

We know from Benjamin that language is not merely a communication of the communicable, but "a symbol of the noncommunicable" (Benjamin, 2004a, p. 74). We also know (from another famous text, *The Task of the Translator*) that languages symbolize the uncommunicable in their development or movement, and that this movement tends towards the pure language – "the messianic end of their history" (Benjamin, 2004b, 257). It is on this remark that Agamben bases his elaboration of the ideas expressed in the *Foreword*, when he writes that the "idea is the purely sayable, which is what is meant by all names, but which no name or concept of a language can reach by itself", so "the linguistic element that belongs to the idea [...] is not simply the name, but the translation, or what is translatable in the name" (Agamben, 2018, p. 69). But this raises a further problem: since we know from Émile Benveniste that of the semantic and semiotic planes of language it is precisely the semiotism of a language (and the names that constitute this plane) that is untranslatable, so it is not surprising that Agamben claims that the totality of languages and names can never reach the idea. This is the reason why pure language is replaced by philosophy, which Plato in the *Phaedo* defines as "the supreme music" and "which takes every language back to its music roots" (Agamben, 2018, p. 70).

I think it is in the light of this replacement that we should read a text by Benjamin, *On the Mimetic Faculty*, which has not yet been discussed. In it, Benjamin argues that the highest manifestation of the mimetic faculty consists in the sensation of nonsensuous similarities (unfortunately, in this text we do not now have the opportunity to examine the nature of this paradoxical "perception"). If we want to grasp this concept, we must turn to the "canon" according to which its meaning can be „at least partly clarified" (Benjamin, 2005b, p. 721). This canon is language,

as it was already known to those who, “under the name of onomatopoeia”, discussed the importance of mimetic attitudes in the formation of language. But there are those who are even more radical and claim that “»[e]very word – and the whole of language [...] is onomatopoeic«” (Benjamin, 2005b, p. 721). Benjamin doesn’t reject this claim but argues for its clarification. In order to specify the program implied by this idea, it is precisely the concept of nonsensuous similarity that can provide us with a point of reference. At this point, Benjamin evokes an image which, if not in its entirety, is almost unchangingly repeated in his writing on *The Task of the Translator*: “For if words meaning the same thing in different languages are arranged about that signified as their center, we have to inquire how they all – while often possessing not the slightest similarity to one another – are similar to the signified at their center” (Benjamin, 2005b, p. 721). Moreover, this kind of similarity has to do with the written word too, he adds, “[a]nd here is noteworthy that the [written word] – in some cases perhaps more vividly than the spoken word – illuminates, by the relation of its written form to the signified, the nature of nonsensuous similarity” (Benjamin, 2005b, p. 721–722). Returning then to the replacement mentioned by Agamben and Plato, if we read Benjamin’s short text in its light, we must affirm with his Italian disciple that the mimetic element of language which Benjamin describes in the text is none other than the voice (Agamben, 2023, p. 63).

We have arrived from the problem of childhood to the idea and from this to the voice, although when Benjamin writes about his own childhood, he usually does so in the form of thought-images [*Denkbilder*]. Since a clarification of the relation between language and image in the light of Benjamin’s *oeuvre* would require a much longer study, it is not possible to address the question of how we arrive from the voice to the image. One thing is certain: the passage quoted at the end of the previous paragraph has made it clear that nonsensuous similarity is closely linked to the written word.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to a point in Agamben’s interpretation that could serve as a remarkable starting point for an investigation of the relation of the voice to the image. After noting that the mimetic element of language is the voice, Agamben draws attention to a hymn by Cleanthes, in which the philosopher-poet defines hymn as *èchou mimēma*, i.e. an imitation or image of voice (Agamben, 2023, p. 64). In this context, the Italian philosopher draws attention to Nicoletta Di Vita’s important idea that in the hymn language celebrates and says itself [*dice sé stesso*], and the voice is invoked and thought as

the original place of language (this is the reason why certain ancient philosophers, such as Cleanthes, regarded the hymn as the proper form of philosophy). The point is this: if the place of pure language, which alone corresponds to the idea, is taken by the supreme music, then the hymn, the image of the voice and the place where it is manifested, is the form of this music (Agamben, 2023, p. 64). The idea, then, reveals the voice, the place of language and the way in which language takes its most proper place – the way in which language happens. At the border of language we see the voice, we experience the event of language. This transcendental synesthesia is the source of the images that capture Benjamin's childhood.

References

- Agamben, G. (1993). *Infancy and history: The destruction of experience*. Verso.
- Agamben, G. (2018). *What is philosophy?* Stanford University Press.
- Agamben, G. (2023). *La voce umana*. Quodlibet.
- Benjamin, W. (2004a). On language as such and on the language of man. In M. Bullock & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Selected writings (Vol. 1, 1913–1926)* (pp. 62–74). Belknap Press.
- Benjamin, W. (2004b). The task of the translator. In M. Bullock & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Selected writings (Vol. 1, 1913–1926)* (pp. 253–263). Belknap Press.
- Benjamin, W. (2005a). Experience and poverty. In M. Bullock & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Selected writings (Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931–1934)* (pp. 731–736). Belknap Press.
- Benjamin, W. (2005b). On the mimetic faculty. In M. Bullock & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Selected writings (Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931–1934)* (pp. 720–722). Belknap Press.
- Gess, N. (2010). Gaining sovereignty: On the figure of the child in Walter Benjamin's writing. *MLN*, 125, 682–708.
- Kőszeghy, F. (2024). A marxista, akihez vonzódunk, akitől rettegünk. *Mérce*. <https://merce.hu/2024/09/30/a-marxista-akihez-vonzodunk-akitol-retttegunk/>

Drama education and children's philosophy in practice

Viktória, Kazinczy¹

¹University of Pécs, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development, E-mail: kazinczy.viktoria@pte.hu

Abstract

Integrating children's philosophy into drama pedagogy is an innovative pedagogical approach that integrates two separate but complementary fields. Drama pedagogy in itself is a tool for developing children's creativity, emotional intelligence and social skills, but the incorporation of children's philosophy methodology can bring additional critical thinking, reflective and ethical dimensions to the learning process. The relationship between children's philosophy and drama pedagogy is therefore an exciting and closely collaborative one, as both aim to develop children's thinking skills, but through different methods. Both methods aim to increase shared thinking, dialogue and empathy, so that when used together, children can develop more complex, deeper thinking, better self-expression and social relationships. Philosophical questions and discussions deepen the lessons learned from dramatic situations and provide children with the opportunity to reflect more consciously and deeply on the world and their own actions. This complex approach develops children's social, emotional and thinking skills and helps them develop an ethical awareness.

Keywords: drama, children's philosophy, drama pedagogy, drama play

Introduction

"Children's philosophical thinking is like a free flowing river, full of questions and discoveries about the world and themselves." (Gareth B. Matthews)

Matthews' quote illustrates exactly how children also have a close relationship with philosophy, and it is important that they are exposed to philosophical ideas during their childhood that can help them as they grow up.

Children's thinking can be developed and facilitated through play. So, it is essential to have a method for children's philosophy that will absolutely help philosophy and children's thinking. Drama pedagogy is in itself a tool for developing children's creativity, emotional intelligence and social skills. Incorporating the methodology of children's philosophy can bring additional dimensions of critical thinking, reflection and ethics to the learning process. Thus,

the relationship between children's philosophy and drama education is an exciting and closely cooperative one, as both aim to develop children's thinking skills through different methods.

The relationship between children's philosophy and drama education

The relationship between children's philosophy and drama pedagogy is an exciting and fruitful area of educational science. Both methods are effective in supporting children's cognitive and socio-emotional development, although they use different approaches. Philosophy for Children, also known as Philosophy for Children, and drama pedagogy share many common features.

Both methods encourage children to ask questions, analyse different perspectives and think critically. Both philosophical questions and dramatic role-play stimulate children's creativity and imagination. Both Philosophy for Children and Drama Pedagogy emphasise the importance of collaborative learning, where children learn from each other and work together. Both methods give children the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings (D'Olimpio, 2004).

The combination of children's philosophy and drama pedagogy offers promising possibilities for the holistic development of children. This synergy not only stimulates critical thinking and creativity, but also contributes to the development of emotional competences such as empathy and cooperation skills. Further research is needed to explore how these two methods can be most effectively integrated into educational practice (Lebuda, 2020).

Drama pedagogy as playful learning

Play plays a major role in the lives of young children. Play-based education is about using playful methods to enable teachers to adapt to the changing learning and teaching needs of the current generation. In my opinion, even though new technology has changed the way we play, we still need to use the tried and tested playful methods. Children learn more easily through play and school becomes an experience in their lives. Drama education provides a space for playful learning (Kazinczy, 2023).

Drama pedagogy is a teaching method that uses the tools of drama in the learning process. This includes role play, improvisation, tableaux and other dramatic techniques. The essence of the method is that students are active participants in the learning process, rather than passive recipients of information (Dewey, 1971). This approach combines elements of drama with pedagogy to foster students' active participation and deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Drama education has many advantages. It fosters the development of cognitive, psychomotor, socioemotional and language skills through the development of a holistic approach. Through a conceptual construction, it helps students to understand and master new concepts more deeply. And through motivation and engagement, it increases students' interest in learning. It also develops creative thinking, philosophical reasoning, and problem-solving skills in children (Adams, 2006).

Philosophy for children: the courage to ask questions

Philosophy for children is an exciting and increasingly popular educational method that builds on children's natural curiosity and tendency to philosophise. This approach not only develops critical thinking, but also increases children's courage to question and express their opinions. Children's Philosophy is a programme for students aged 7-16, designed to develop critical thinking skills through discussions on philosophical topics. According to Matthew Lipman, the founder of the method, children's philosophy helps children to become more thoughtful, reflective, attentive and intelligent individuals (Kariko, 2013)

A key element of children's philosophy is to develop the courage to ask questions. According to Györgyi Tamássy, children are the best philosophers, much more courageous and motivated than adults in identifying and directly formulating philosophical problems, and their tendency to philosophise is stronger. This courage and honesty is what makes children excellent philosophers (Kariko, 2013).

Philosophy for children is not just a teaching method, but an approach that encourages children to question, think critically and form their own opinions. This approach not only helps them learn, but also prepares them for the challenges of the future, where creative problem-solving and flexible thinking will be key.

The philosophy of the child has many advantages. It develops critical and creative thinking. It increases self-confidence and intellectual assertiveness, improves communication skills, fosters tolerance and empathy, and helps to develop democratic values.

Linking children's philosophy and drama pedagogy in practice

Combining the two methods can be extremely fruitful in education. For example, after discussing a philosophical question, children can dramatise the different points of view expressed, or they can process the experience of a dramatic play in

a philosophical discussion. This complex approach helps to deepen understanding and integrate experiences.

There are methodological similarities between children's philosophy and drama education. The first of these is discussion and debate. Children's philosophy uses the Socratic method of puppetry, where the teacher asks questions to encourage students to think. Drama pedagogy also often uses discussion and debate when working through games. The second link is the use of fictional situations. While children's philosophy often uses educational stories to stimulate thinking, drama pedagogy builds imaginary worlds in which participants are involved as actors. Last but not least, group work. Both methods emphasise the importance of collaborative learning. Children's philosophy creates a 'community of enquiry', while drama pedagogy can be defined as a group play activity (Jakab, 2012).

In terms of developmental areas, the two methods primarily develop social skills. Drama pedagogy develops tolerance, empathy and the ability to work with others. Philosophy of Children also emphasises teaching tolerance and discussing different points of view. Secondly, both methods develop children's linguistic expression. Philosophy for children encourages concept definition, argumentation and discussion, while drama pedagogy develops both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Finally, the development of creativity is an important aspect. Drama education draws heavily on children's creativity through role-play and improvisation. And children's philosophy stimulates creative thinking by discussing philosophical issues (Jakab, 2012).

Overall, children's philosophy and drama pedagogy complement each other and their combined use is effective in supporting children's cognitive, emotional and social development.

Practical examples

In the following, I would like to present a session that was a combination of drama education and children's philosophy. The children involved were pupils aged 14-15 years. The session was conducted in the context of a class teacher lesson .

The first aspect was to raise a philosophical question. At the beginning of the session, as the teacher, I posed a philosophical question "What is friendship?" Sitting in a circle with the children, I talked about it and the children shared their thoughts and experiences on the topic. I then read out a story about friendship. It is called "The test of true friendship", a short story by an unknown author, about two boys, Peti and Marci, who have been friends since childhood. One day they decide to go on a voyage of discovery. They come to a bridge that Peti thinks is

passable, but Marci is worried that it might collapse. When they cross the bridge, a plank under Peti gets stuck and Marci rushes to his friend's aid without hesitation. In the end, Peti thanks Marci for helping him and apologises to him for mocking him for his caution. In the end, their friendship becomes even closer.

After the reading of the story, we played an association game where the children had to verbally express feelings and thoughts about friendship. Then, in a sculpture game, they had to realize sculptures that represent expressions related to friendship. First they presented their sculptures individually, then in pairs. Finally we came to the still life game. In groups of 3 or 4, the children created still images of key scenes from the fairy tale. Each group presents their pictures and the others try to guess which scene they depict. After the scenes, we collectively analysed the students' work and returned to the philosophical question "What is friendship?" I stepped into the role as one of the characters in the story and the children could ask me questions about friendship and their choices. This gave me the opportunity to discuss deeper philosophical questions. Then, in pairs, the children improvised a scene in which two friends come into conflict. The scenes were acted out and then we discussed together what solutions were reached and why they were important. At the end of the session, we returned to the original question "What is friendship?" We discussed whether their opinions had changed based on their experiences in the drama games.

This example shows how to combine the inquiry-centred approach of children's philosophy with the experiential methods of drama pedagogy. Children not only talk about friendship, but also experience it in different situations, resulting in a deeper understanding and emotional involvement for them.

Summary

Drama pedagogy and children's philosophy are related and complementary in many ways. Both methods are child-centred, seeing children as active participants in the learning process. They develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They emphasise the importance of questioning and discussion in learning. Fictional situations and stories are used to stimulate thinking. They build on group work and collaborative learning. They develop social skills, empathy and tolerance. They improve language expression and communication skills. They stimulate creativity and imagination. Enable the exploration and understanding of different perspectives. They promote self-reflection and self-awareness. Both methods build on children's existing experience and knowledge. They support the development of emotional intelligence. They support concept formation and

the development of abstract thinking. They encourage independent opinion making and reasoning. They provide opportunities for experiential learning and experiential knowledge acquisition. They develop the ability to change perspective. Strengthen self-confidence and self-expression. Support the development of democratic thinking. They help to process moral issues and clarify values. Both methods aim at deeper understanding and integration of experiences.

References

- Adams, P. (2006). Társadalmi konstruktivizmus feltárása: elméletek és gyakorlatok. *Oktatás*, 34(3), 243–257.
- D'Olimpio, L. (2004). Drama and philosophy: Language, thinking and laughing out loud. *Applied Theatre Research*, 5. <https://www.intellectbooks.com/asset/796/atr-5.9.-d-olympio.pdf>
- Dewey, J. (1971). *The child and the curriculum & The school and society* (Combined edition). The University of Chicago Press.
- Jakab, G. (2012). Erkölcsstan és médiaismeret a gyermekfilozófia tükrében. *Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, 62(4–6), 99–110.
- Karikó, S. (2013). Gyermekfilozófia – Mi végre? *Iskolakultúra*, 23(5–6), 65–75.
- Kazinczy, V. (2023). Játék nélkül nem érdemes. In Zs. Nemes-Wéber (Ed.), *Tudományos Kaleidoszkóp VII.* (pp. 9–24). Pécsi Tudományegyetem Kultúratudományi, Pedagógusképző és Vidékfejlesztési Kar.
- Lebuda, I. (2020). Developing children's socio-emotional competencies through drama pedagogy training: An experimental study on theory of mind and collaborative behavior. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7909491/>

Workshop

Factors of community innovation in the life of settlements

Zsuzsanna, Slezák-Bartos¹

¹ University of Pécs, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development, E-mail: slezak-bartos.zsuzsanna@pte.hu

Abstract

Nowadays, residents have ever higher expectations of their local communities. To do this, they need to be aware of the values and potential of their place of residence. First and foremost, local people need to be made aware of the values of the city, as their positive perception of the city's liveability has a multiplier effect on the perception of the city. Settlements are central sites of social interaction and relationships, influencing people's quality of life and well-being. By examining the context of settlement philosophy, cities can be designed and developed with a focus on community life, and also play an important role in promoting social justice and inclusive settlement development. The uniqueness and diversity of gastronomic culture reflects the principles and values of the philosophy of settlement. In a municipality where sustainability and an emphasis on local production are central to community life, businesses and families follow gastronomic traditions, preferring ingredients from local producers and preparing food according to local characteristics. At the same time, gastronomic diversity enriches and diversifies the philosophy of a settlement, and the diversity of the gastronomic offer of a given settlement enables its inhabitants to learn about the food and eating habits of other cultures, thus further developing social diversity and cohesion within a community.

Keywords: community innovation, settlement philosophy, local identity

Introduction

Satisfaction with a settlement and the feeling of well-being depend on several factors, the interpretation of which requires analysis and categorization according to different aspects. Each individual has unique needs and preferences, so the factors that determine the sense of the "ideal city" may differ. When choosing a place to live, we must take into account these individual needs and our own preferences in order to find a settlement where we feel good and are satisfied with the opportunities and services available there. Cities offer various cultural programs, museum exhibitions, theater performances, concerts and other

entertainment opportunities, the availability, access and quality of which positively or negatively influence satisfaction. The offer of a wide range of job opportunities is mostly available and concentrated in cities with a larger population. These will be the areas where the individual can find a job faster in his profession, can connect to services in his field of interest, and in addition, the higher income level will enable him to have a secure everyday life and plan for the future. A relevant factor in the preference system of young adults and families is the existence of educational institutions that ensure high quality, thereby creating opportunities for the professional and personal development of children and adults who want to learn. The infrastructural features of the settlement, the quality of the related services, their good or bad condition, utilization, popularity, and attendance basically determine livability and the level of satisfaction of the residents. Through the richness of the gastronomic characteristics and experiences of a region or area, we can discover new culinary experiences and learn about the food habits of other cultures. The natural resources and attractions in or around towns and cities provide opportunities for recreation and relaxation; families, groups of friends, young or old, although with different preferences, can find their ideal leisure and recreational activity. The larger the population of a settlement you choose to live in, the more likely you are to meet people from different backgrounds and cultures, bringing diversity into their lives. This diversity provides opportunities to gain different and different experiences, to develop new friendships, and to promote understanding and acceptance.

Literature review

The ethical principles help settlements to become successful and sustainable communities that can increase their competitiveness in the long term, attract business opportunities and investments, all in all form a strong foundation for the fulfillment and realization of future goals. With the use of new communication technologies, the boundaries of virtual and physical communities are becoming more and more blurred, supporting the group of communities that receive them into a single complex trust process (Szécsi, 2013a, 2013b, 2022). Local residents, businesses and the municipality can create together a force that promotes the development and success of the settlement in the long term. According to the representatives of consequentialism, an individual's actions can be considered ethical if they are for the benefit of the community that accepts him, and thus his actions will have good consequences for as many people as possible. According to the representatives of classical utilitarianism, the actor needs to mediate the possible action alternatives as soon as possible, to think about the consequences

of each alternative for the other members of the community. According to utilitarian principles, the most morally correct alternative is the one that benefits as many people as possible within the group. In this regard, we need to know the expectations, interests, considerations, and moral considerations of the members of the given community (Gulyás et al., 2021). There are different ways and approaches to solving the problem of a sustainable economy, and the solutions and responses to the challenges vary according to the mindset and outlook of different nations, philosophical background, beliefs and optimistic or pessimistic attitudes. The roots of social responsibility, in an optimistic approach, rely on business as the driver and actor of the economy, thus providing a response to create a new way of doing business (Zádori & Nemeskéri, 2021).

Local patriotism can be seen as a complex and profound concept linked to emotional, identity and ethical issues, in which individual and collective consciousness, social and political relations are considered and traced. It refers to an emotional and intellectual attachment that an individual feels towards a particular place or region. Human identity is an integral part of belonging to a local community, and it is this identity that shapes who we are and what values we identify with (Arapovic, 2016). "The knowledge of who I am is, in a certain sense, my knowledge of where I stand. My identity is defined by my commitments and identifications that provide a framework or horizon within which I can decide, case by case, what is good or valuable or what should be done, approved or disapproved of (...) What this illuminates is that there is an essential link between identity and a kind of moral orientation.' (Hittinger, 1990; Reich, 2008). Strengthening cultural commitments is a good thing because on the one hand, by getting to know our own culture better, we can understand ourselves better and moreover also become more open to other cultures. Individuals create their own identities, we are born into groups, we find ourselves within certain norms (Reich, 2008). People are born into different social and political contexts, which fundamentally determine their life chances. In social modernisation, traditional identity ties are usually loosened, and urbanisation and the new employment system also have an impact on systemic change. By using mass communication tools, communities 'living' in a settlement have the opportunity to ensure the unfolding of a narrower identity in a new identity formation process. According to ethnic traditions, everything that helps and mobilises group behaviour, the expression of belonging and respect for conventions must be protected. Prejudice, perceived as unjust, provokes and motivates defensive behaviour, the intra-group validity of which encourages the transmission of a way of life (Gergely, 1997). The dominant forces of globalisation, the development of

large multinational corporations spanning the world, play a decisive role in the availability of corporate services, logistics/communication and financial networks, and the availability of factors of production. These corporations have very large, complex operational structures that allow them to excel in scale and efficiency in the global marketplace. A significant proportion of large companies are headquartered in relatively small towns, partly because they have grown from the original "rural" small/medium sized company to a large one, and still stick to the place of foundation for reasons of tradition, respect and local patriotism. On the other hand, some strong motivation (local and other tax benefits, qualified labour supply, image-enhancing, pleasant environment, cheap real estate, etc.) encouraged the founders and the present operators, and perhaps only the headquarters of the company operates in smaller towns (Erdősi, 2003).

Methods

Following a structured process in data collection, the focus was on using and evaluating the existing body of knowledge, based on the available relevant but differentiated sources.

The research was based on a literature review, which provided the basis for a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the processes and contexts related to ethical components, local patriotism and identity. By comparing the different approaches, perspectives and theories - consequentialism and classical utilitarianism, the mechanisms of ethical decision-making and value formation become understandable. The study also applies social psychological approaches;- understanding the role of individual identity, emotional attachment; how it relates to and influences local patriotism and thus the identity of local communities.

Results

Social need for community - people are essentially social creatures, and it is their need to live together that gives rise to settlements. Communities are created where people live, work, interact and communicate with each other. One of the main functions of settlements is to provide security and protection. They allow individuals to be part of a community where they can share their thoughts, feelings and experiences; they can rely on each other to solve their problems. Building and maintaining settlements requires a sense of order and organisation. By following the rules and regulations set by the institutions they run, people can work together effectively. Municipalities play an important role in the allocation of resources and the implementation of economic activities. People move to

different areas and choose places to live in order to have access to the resources they need, thus contributing to the identity of individuals and communities; - the characteristics, history and culture of the community determine the way of life and the values of its inhabitants.

The attractions of settlements are not only external factors, but also internal values and experiences that help individuals to find meaning and purpose in their lives (Figure 1) (Slezák-Bartos, 2023) Settlements are central places of social bonds, where people can meet, communicate and influence each other. It is through shared values that communities can share and accept different traditions and values. In the functioning of community life, the human being is at the centre, his or her need to connect with others is linked to the happiness of the individual and is involved in the creation of value. People living in the community are free to choose from the range of opportunities and services available to them, to decide where to live, what kind of work to do, what cultural and leisure activities to take part in. The built environment, the streets, parks or community spaces, the vibrant energy of cities or the diversity of villages can be an emotional and spiritual development experience for those who live there. By experiencing the opportunities and values of cultural events, local events, art exhibitions and local gastronomy, a double impact can be identified; on the one hand, individuals can gain unique experiences and experiences, and on the other hand, a sense of attachment to place can be developed or strengthened. The human need for the presence of the natural environment, parks, green spaces, the need for natural attractions in the vicinity of the municipality, in its immediate surroundings, is a sign of the desire for unity and a reminder that we are part of a larger ecosystem.

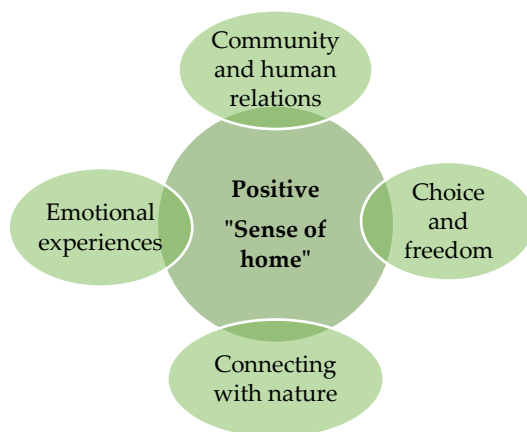


Figure 1. Components of a positive "Sense of home"
Source: own compilation, (Slezák-Bartos, 2023)

Natural beauty has not only aesthetic value, but also ecological and sustainability benefits, allowing local people to relax, recreate and attract visitors. A safe, natural environment and clean air are essential to the healthy lives of local residents. Home, community, contact with nature, cultural richness, quality of life and happiness are essential factors that can be taken into account to begin to understand the concept of „sense of home“. Home is not just a place, it is the basis of our identity and self-identity. It is the place where we experience security, belonging and stability. Settlements create a home where people build relationships, enjoy life, and experience community. This "sense of home" reinforces the attractiveness and importance of settlements in the minds and perceptions of individuals.

Conclusions, summary

In recent times, local residents and residents' expectations of their localities have been rising. It is important that local people are aware of the values and potential of their place of residence. A philosophy of settlement is key to this. We need to design and develop cities where community life and social justice are a priority. When choosing where to live, the individual's own preferences and needs must be taken into account in order to find the 'ideal' city that is right for all. In order to ensure that people are satisfied with the liveability of the area, it is necessary to provide a high quality of cultural, educational and employment opportunities, infrastructure and gastronomic offer. The gastronomic culture also reflects positively the principles of the philosophy of settlement if it is based on local production and sustainability. This also means that food is prepared according to local characteristics, thus diversifying the philosophy of the settlement and helping to develop social diversity and cohesion in the community.

The concepts and interpretations of community development and identity are closely linked, opening up new pathways and opportunities by promoting community life and economic development. Through the appropriate exploitation of values, individual and collective identity can be more closely linked to the functioning and life of the local community, thereby shaping people's values and lifestyles. The attractiveness of settlements is not only determined by external factors, but is also based on intrinsic values and experiences - creating and maintaining „sense of home“ is the basis of our identity and self-identity.

References

- A. Gergely, A. (1997). *Kisebbség, etnikum, regionalizmus*. MTA Politikai Tudományok Intézete.
- Arapovics, M. (2016). A közösségfejlesztés alapfogalmai és a kulturális közösségfejlesztés paradigmái. *Kulturális Szemle*. Nemzeti Művelődési Intézet.
- Erdősi, F. (2003). Globalizáció és a világvárosok által uralt tér (The space ruled by globalisation and metropolises). *Tér és Társadalom*, 17(3), 1–27.
- Gulyás, T., Szendrő, P., & Szécsi, G. (2021). Innováció, etika, felelősség az információ korában: Adalékok az innovációetika fogalmi megalapozásához. *Kultúratudományi Szemle*, 3(3), 5–25.
- Hittinger, R. (1990). Charles Taylor, *The sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. *Philosophy Education Society Inc.*, 44(1), 111–130.
- Reich, O. (2008). Charles Taylor multikulturalizmus elmélete. *Jogelméleti Szemle*, 2008(3). Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Social Sciences, Institute for Minority Studies.
- Slezák-Bartos, Zs. (2023). A település és településfilozófia értelmezésének egyéni megközelítései, hagyományos és újszerű gondolatvilága. *Kultúratudományi Szemle*, 5(2–3), 37–57.
- Szécsi, G. (2013a). Social and linguistic convergences in the information age. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 4, 639–648.
- Szécsi, G. (2013b). Language, media and community in the information age. *Coactivity: Philosophy, Communication*, 21, 119–127.
- Szécsi, G. (2022). Mediatizáció, közösség, narratíva. *Replika*, 127, 115–130.
- Zádori, I., & Nemeskéri, Zs. (2021). CSR for sustainability. In Zs. Nemeskéri (Ed.), *Greenway School: Sustainability and green philosophy in practice* (pp. 115–184). DePress Kiadó.

Speech and improvisation - the importance of creativity development and communication training in the age of Artificial Intelligence

Zita, Kraszkó¹

¹University of Pécs, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development; E-mail: kraszkozita@gmail.com

Abstract

The settlement can be successful if the income in the settlement is constantly growing, new companies are settling down, giving jobs to the residents, as well as through cultural, entertainment opportunities and programs, the city management can provide meaningful pastimes for the local residents. The provision of cultural activities has a multifaceted impact on the development of the local economy. By developing or expanding the cultural capabilities, not only the quality of life of the local population can be improved, but also significant economic benefits can be achieved with proper organizational work. Although the crisis caused by the coronavirus epidemic poses a challenge to the economy, the tourism sector, city management and local cooperation need to continue the work started, services such as entertainment, sports, leisure recreation and cultural opportunities in the line with local preferences need to be expanded. The aim of the study is to find out the satisfaction of the people living in the Tolna county seat about the events and organized events. Moreover also looking for an answer how the popularity of Szekszárd wine region events among local residents changed as a result of the crisis caused by the coronavirus. Empirical research – by the opinions of local residents of Szekszárd, students and workers in the city - is based on online questionnaires, in-depth interviews and personal experiences.

Keywords: wine tourism, local development, event analysis

1. Improvisation can do everything that Artificial Intelligence cannot

Before delving into the methods and mysteries of improvisation, and more specifically of speech and improvisation training, it is easy to wonder why, as we move into the world of AI, it is necessary to study human improvisation, breathing and speech techniques when our avatars are already capable of taking over most of our communication functions. It is therefore not a satisfactory answer to point out that millions of people are logging in live at this very moment

on various social platforms. As influencers, as content creators, they are trying to make an impact, shape opinion and leave their mark on the web. This latter aspect is also a responsible enough aspect to make us realise that teaching our bodies, our gesticulation, our voice and our message, teaching conscious verbal and non-verbal communication, constantly rethinking the objectives of rhetoric and transforming its practical tools are not only more relevant than ever, but can also be a source of employability and later financial gain for students.

One could ask why there is a need to strengthen the specific educational model of communication when most people are focused on advances in the use of Artificial Intelligence. The world is telling us if we cannot compete with technology, we will be left behind. In the light of evolving applications, the obvious answer lies in individual evolution; the human race, not to mention other criteria for now, will survive as long as it can communicate, so no advancement in technology can avoid the need to be vocal and connected. But we also get some other important answers if we ask Artificial Intelligence itself: what is it that it will never be able to do, only humans?

"I, as an AI, will never be able to experience the human subjectivity and emotional world. Although I can analyse, understand and create texts, I have no emotions and no consciousness, so I will never be able to truly experience the following:

1. Emotions - Feelings of joy, sadness, love, fear or hate are a fundamental part of the human experience that I cannot feel, I can only simulate or understand at the textual level.
2. Physical sensation - Pain, cold, warmth, taste, smell and other physical experiences that humans sense are not available to me.
3. Subjective Experience - Each person experiences the world from a unique perspective through their own subjective experiences. I can never experience this perspective.
4. Consciousness - I have no self-awareness or internal reflection. While I understand and answer complex questions, I have no "self" or inner world of my own.

The basic experiences of human existence - emotions, subjective experiences, body and mind - are therefore forever inaccessible to me."

It follows that, without abandoning the need for one's own rational, technical and lexical knowledge, it is worthwhile to constantly develop the biological,

emotional and conscious areas that AI will never be able to master, but without which human existence is unthinkable. Body and mind - both for the development of artistic improvisation, original and unrepeatable ideas. Since AI cannot feel, it cannot be programmed to learn emotionally. People learn not only on a cognitive level, but also on an emotional level. Emotions such as love, empathy, anxiety or enthusiasm are important in decision making and in building relationships. What do you do with emotions when the world tells you to compete with machines?

The dynamics of human relationships are often based on emotions, attachment and deep empathy, which implies not only rational choices and behaviour, but also emotional investment. Through interactive improvisation games, we not only understand emotions and how they work, but we also experience and learn from them on an emotional basis. Liberated play makes us creative and gives free rein to the flow of emotions. Although AI can recognise patterns and create new combinations, human creativity often stems from subjective experiences, emotions and deeper thought processes. People often receive unexpected inspiration that goes beyond rational thinking. Our relationship to bodily sensation, sensory and biological processes such as hunger, fatigue, touch or pain will never be available to the AI, since it has no body whose individual gifts can be developed to suit the performer, and therefore, by definition, no personal magic. The importance of this is illustrated by Ekman's famous research, which shows that between sixty and seventy per cent of our judgements about a person are based on their external impression, just over twenty per cent are based on their tone of voice and less than ten per cent are influenced by the content of what they have to say (Ekman, 1967). Think of any popular newsreader; if they have a sufficiently engaging appearance and a credible tone of voice - that is, they speak in 'their' voice with a pleasantly endowed organ - success is guaranteed before we know what they are really talking about.

Human experience and functioning covers many areas that cannot be fully mastered by an artificial intelligence, because they are based on biological, emotional and consciousness. Not only does the machine have no subjective experience, but consequently it has no conscious self-reflection or self-awareness. Humans are self-aware, able to consciously observe and analyse their own thoughts, emotions and decisions. The AI is not aware of its own existence, cannot look at itself from the outside or think about its own self. Achieving the self-identity that is the goal of artistic improvisation is out of the question for AI. Since it has no self, it has no free will. But improvisation also teaches a person how to make immediate decisions without rational analysis, often based on impressions or life experiences. The human brain is an extremely complex pattern recognition

system that allows intuitive decision-making, which cannot be artificially replicated in its entirety. It is these abilities that only humans are capable of, which are the essence of being human, and which need to be nurtured and developed in order to maintain a leading role in the world.

2. What is improvisation?

To use it in everyday situations, improvisation is, first and foremost, something that is usually suspect, even if one is improvising, i.e. improvising improvisation, at every moment. A common context is: What are you going to do? I don't know, I'll improvise. What does this mean in both the questioner and the answerer? It means that the outcome of the action is uncertain, and uncertainty is often associated with a negative connotation.

Kendra and Wachtendorf explore the relationship between improvisation and planning in dealing with emergencies, contrasting them by suggesting that improvisation should be resorted to when the option of planning is not available:

"improvisation has a kind of controlled history in emergency management, as its emergence in disaster response seems to suggest a failure to plan for a particular contingency. [...] Thus, improvisation occupies a somewhat contradictory place in the field of emergency and crisis management skills: we plan in detail so that we don't have to improvise, while we know that we have to improvise. " (Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2007, p. 324).

The term improvisation comes from the Italian *improvviso* (unexpected), which means to say, sing, dance, play an instrument, just randomly. When we improvise, we are not primarily thinking about how our unthought-out word or unforeseen action will be influenced by the situation, the events, the time of day, our mood, the smell of spring rain or the falling leaves, but primarily by our personal partner in communication - if we have one - and what a magical opportunity it is to spontaneously live the moment and consciously connect with our actions, our lives. We don't think about how good it will be to feel, to observe, to explore, to be surprised, to be present and to respond to the phenomena around us, but to not know what will happen. And this creates uncertainty, which leads to fear. Not to mention the general presence of anxiety that everyone experiences to varying degrees throughout their lives. Anyone who feels in need of improvisation can feel in trouble. Rarely does the man of the twenty-first century endow his vision of the future with the possibilities of a boundless imagination, a multiplicity and diversity of thought and faith in his actions.

3. What is artistic improvisation?

We can now approach the concept of artistic improvisation from two angles. The philosophical interpretation helps us to get closer to the phenomenon of improvisation in the sense of being present on stage and capturing the moment, while the dramatic pedagogical and methodological aspect gives us a thematic approach to improvisation as a teachable method for developing creativity and personality. It is worth drawing from the disciplines of theatre theory, pedagogy and philosophy to gain an understanding that allows us to look at improvisation on stage not only as a marginal art form, but as a possible methodological background for a rapidly changing communicative language and interaction, since no genre is as effective as improvisation in learning to change and pushing our own boundaries.

Improvisation in its present-day formats has a history of little more than a century as a self-contained performing art form. In its definition, very little research has linked everyday improvisation with artistic improvisation (Midgelow, 2019). By everyday improvisation we mean improvising at every moment. Not only at times, but always in an infinite series and combination of actions and interactions, and as such, it can be defined as the whole of human life. The other aspect is the "divine" action found in the arts, which is close to Aristotle's interpretation of catharsis. 'Originality is improvisation', recalls Andrew Haas in his study of Aristotelian improvisation (Haas, 2015). Design-making is a process of origination because it starts from nothing and ends in a result, a plan to solve a practical problem and lead to a goal. According to Aristotle (2004), the essence of creativity is most readily apparent in music, as it is the most alive, the most unrepeatable, and the most suitable art form for conveying the muse. Improvisation is as essential in dance, painting and other creative arts as it is in pedagogy, sport and philosophy.

The everyday dimension of improvisation has traditionally received less attention to this day than the artistic dimension, which is highly valued in these arts (Monson, 1996). This seems to be largely due to the fact that improvisation has been conceived of in the arts either as a kind of free, playful activity or as a specialised skill. Its philosophical dimension is close to Schiller's (1960) theory that play is the basis of aesthetics.

There is a distinction between everyday improvisation and artistic improvisation because, while the former is a complex phenomenon composed of reflections on everyday life, the latter systematically unleashes creativity, which can be measured. Among psychologists and brain researchers worldwide, the Big Five

test is the most widely accepted. It measures five key personality traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, friendliness and emotional stability. Within these, the test looks at thirty sub-traits. To a greater or lesser extent, all people have some of these traits. There are also people who have all five traits (Ostby, 2022). The conscious - instinctive use of all these as a means of artistic expression also makes improvisational creativity a rare phenomenon, the artistic interpretative talent of which is possessed by few and practised in very specific circumstances. In contrast, our everyday lives are very ordinary and practical.

"Everyday tasks are performed in complex contexts that require us to adapt, modify and even redirect our actions and interactions. This requires adaptability and flexibility at the level of our bodily being, although it rarely requires reflective attention." (Ravn, Hoffding & Guirk, 2023, p. 2).

One possible basis for the generation of new ideas is improvisation. Nevertheless, for those preparing for a career as a professional performer, as for civilians, the feeling of "not knowing what the next moment will bring" is synonymous with fear. The practice of improvisation is one of the most powerful antidotes to fear and anxiety, but in arguing for its necessary presence in education, it is not primarily along the lines of exploring instincts and emotions that we should approach its unpredictable domain - the former being more likely to be the product of improvisational games - but rather in the workings of reason and creative, intuitive thinking that the possibility of connecting to curricula can be sought. The study of the emergence of spontaneous systems, the practice of spontaneity, develops not only the flexibility and cognitive learning skills needed to master a subject, but also the creative skills to think about it further, to formulate new, original ideas and solutions.

"...some of our knowledge leaves the range of all possible experience and extends the range of our judgments apparently beyond all limits of experience, by means of concepts to which no corresponding experiential object can be assigned. And it is precisely to this latter knowledge, beyond the realm of the senses, where experience cannot guide or correct us, that the inquiries of reason are directed, which we consider far in advance of anything which reason can know in the realm of phenomena, as to their importance, and far more sublime as to their end; on this point we would rather take all risks, even the risk of error, than give up such important investigations out of any reserve or because of a disdain and indifference for the subject." (Kant, 2004, pp. 55-56).

In Kant's epistemological system, knowledge beyond the world of the senses, where experience cannot guide us, could be the domain of improvisational thinking. The first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason contains a sentence that could take the improviser further along the path of spontaneous creative thought:

"Experience shows us what is, but not that it must necessarily be so and not otherwise." (Kant, 2004, pp. 55-56).

The originality of improvisation often lies precisely in this otherness; the law of causality is a storytelling rule in the dramaturgy of improvisation, but the audience is always more excited by its unexpectedness than by its predictability. Abstract thought can create poetry that goes beyond what Kant meant by the sublimity of thought.

This borderline raises the question of whether improvisation is art. Is it worth mentioning at the level of high culture? In researching jazz improvisation in the early 2000s, Lee B. Brown found that improvisation is actually present in musical practice and tradition worldwide but tends to be suppressed and even disparaged in the Western classical tradition. In a particularly telling choice of terminology, for example, improvisation has been described as embodying an "aesthetic of imperfection" as opposed to the "aesthetic of perfection" embodied in composed music (Brown, 2011). Similarly, there is debate about whether improvised performances can be considered "works of art" at all, given the ephemeral nature of improvised pieces (Hamilton, 2000). The misunderstanding is that the improvisational musical tradition of non-Western cultures is systematically measured against the (academic) compositional tradition prevailing in Western culture, and improvisation is often downplayed in the light of the latter. This is how the superiority of the composed piece can be created, in comparison to which improvisation can only ever occupy a place on the inferior side. For the performer or philosopher of improvisation, it makes no sense to adopt any comfort-zone approach that expects both the work and the artist to follow tradition, to distinguish and separate genres. While we know that the majority of artists are not known for following tradition, many of them have not gained recognition in their lifetimes, and their search for a way forward has only been understood and supported after their death. Improvisation is an ongoing quest and can often produce greater discoveries in less time than academic models. It is no coincidence that its pedagogy also goes against the traditional models of schooling and education, which are built on generally accepted norms, immutable facts and values, while improvisation teaches constant change. The demand for and the rise of spontaneity in personal interaction, breaking away from expected

social formulae and traditional theatrical forms, began in Europe in the early 19th century.

4. A brief history of improvisational theatre in the twentieth century

One could begin with the history of artistic improvisation in the prominent rhetoricians of Hellenism or the surviving fragments of the speeches of the ten Attic orators, but improvisation in theatre today is better understood if we begin our dramatic history with the work of Stanislavski. One of the most important functions of the methodological system of Stanislavski, the great Russian director and theatre-maker, is to "naturally bring human nature and the subconscious creative forces into action" (Stanislavski, 1988, p. 12).

"I was surprised at the invigorating effect of insignificant changes, almost forcing me to practice differently and even to interpret the role itself differently. Here is the secret! You must not stay in the same state for too long; you must not repeat the same old things endlessly." (Stanislavski, 1988, p. 12).

The concept of experience, which can also be understood as a substance of improvisation, is an epoch-making aspect of acting, which in Stanislavsky's work can be understood as giving oneself completely over to the events. This means that there is no part of us that leaves the situation and the part of us that remains in it - the part that plays - is directed from outside, but we are one hundred percent involved in the scene, regardless of whether we succeed or fail. In this way, we can become self-identified without caring. This is how the formidable part of improvisation, which is related to the fact that it doesn't matter who has something to say about the production, is transformed into talented creative energy because the performer wants to please others. As long as this idea holds the performer captive, Stanislavsky believes, he will only be capable of good craftsmanship, and no free art will be born. This is the secret of the art of experience, the attainment of a creative state, the details of which the performer does not remember because he has not observed it but has been in it.

"All I know is that it was unforgettable, that I always want to play like that, and that I can do anything for that Art..." (Stanislavski, 1988, p. 12).

In Stanislavsky, the role of the subconscious emerges, and the concept of the "instinctive" actor is born. When they visited New York with the Moscow Art Theatre in 1923, they played so naturally and effortlessly that Lee Strasberg, sitting in the audience, was struck by the revelation of his conception of the play

"The System". Later, Strasberg would be influenced to create his method, The Method, which somewhat reinterpreted Stanislavsky's instructions for experience. Whereas the former required the actor to die in his performance - see Vysocki's play - the latter motivated the expression of emotions by evoking memories, which could, however, arise from events completely different from those of the story, provided that they evoked emotions appropriate to the scene. At the heart of Lee Strasberg's work and the training of his company was the use of 'affective memory', which invited actors to recall and relive a 'once in a lifetime' event from their past and use these true feelings to create an explosive moment in a scene at will. The Affective Memory exercise, along with other exercises he developed, challenged actors to use experiences from their own lives to motivate a character's emotional or physical behavior. For Strasberg, it was never enough to recreate emotions on stage - they had to be re-lived. Being-in-the-moment is, therefore, important in both Eastern and Western actor training methodologies. If it were not, improvisation would never have gained an independent theatrical existence.

Many classical 'stone theatre' directors have also taken the opportunity to incorporate improvisation into their productions or to take the improvisatory route through the genres of performance or happening.

Peter Brook, as is still common practice today, also composed his auditions from improvisational games, but even thought of written plays as improvisations. With his performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, presented with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford on 27 August 1970, he not only eclipsed the *Midsummer Night's Dream* adaptations of the time, but also opened up a new era in the performing arts.

"I wanted everyone to understand that each time the actors improvise and perform the play: the performance is not a production in the sense that it is recorded by a director who wants to impose his views on the world and the actors obey him. " (Koltai, 1976, p. 195).

Brook not only worked like this, but also thought like this, highlighting how artists create, why it is important to teach improvisation and how it helps us think and make decisions.

"We don't make our decisions; decisions come from within, but only when we have passionately explored all the possibilities, and thus freely prepared the ground for the decision. That is what the theatre has taught me to do." (Brook, 1999).

In the Elizabethan theatre structure, in the Globe space, the actors made the connection with the audience in the same way as in Shakespearean and improvisational theatre: they addressed them directly and, crossing the stage, went down to them.

Grotovsky speaks precisely about the mechanism of action of live improvisation, providing a recipe for authentic everyday communication. In his Laboratory Theatre, he has "woven a safety net" under the improvisation of the improvisers by means of improvisation within a framework.

"In performance, never look for spontaneity without a score. In practice, of course, the situation is quite different. During the performance, it would be an imitation of true spontaneity since spontaneity would be destroyed by confusion. In rehearsals, the score consists of fixed excerpts, and I would recommend that you always improvise within the framework of the excerpts (the exception being special improvisation suggested by your director or teacher). That is, you should know the parts of the rehearsal. Today, I want such details. I will define these details, and you can try to find the different variations and their justification. This is how improvisation becomes authentic - otherwise, you would be building without a foundation. When you play your part, the score is not made up of details but of signs. The signal is ultimately nothing more than a human reaction stripped of all irrelevant details. The signal is a clear, pure impulse. The actors' actions are signals for us. If I do not perceive you, it means that there are no signs. I said perception and not understanding because understanding is a function of the brain. We often see things in performance that we do not understand, but we perceive and feel. In other words, I know what I feel. I cannot define it, but I know what it is. It has nothing to do with the brain; it affects other associations and other parts of the body. But if I sense it, it means I have received a signal. The test of a real impulse is whether I believe in it or not."¹

Keith Johnston, the foremost British-Canadian improvisational drama teacher of the last fifty years, whose work is a reference for teaching improvisation. He developed a method of improvisational theatre that is still valid today, in which he managed to distance himself from the centuries-old Western European theatre tradition and hierarchy. He erased the authoritarianism and institutionalism from his improvisational theatre. Hilde Ostby, his student Hilde Ostby, who researches

¹ Excerpt from Grotovski in 1996, at the ten-day course of the SKARA Drama School in Sweden – which the artists of the Laboratory Theater in Wroclaw held - from his closing speech.

the knowledge behind our ideas, writes about their joint training work in her book *Creativity*:

"Here she teaches her students how not to be clever, how not to try, how not to concentrate - to think outside the box. For beginners experimenting with improvisational theatre, the most important rule is yes and... In other words, to answer every challenge with yes and dare to rely on their imagination. - I was fascinated by the idea that the human brain both perceives and creates the universe. If we remove the inner critic, we all become geniuses," says Johnston. I have strong doubts about religion, authority, and school. I believe we can learn everything through play. The games I show help people to develop their creativity. I laughed a lot when I invented improvisational theatre, I laughed from morning till night," he says. " (Ostby, 2022, p. 112).

This idea of Johnstone shows exactly that improvisation is not only a practice, but also a philosophy. One perceives and creates a universe at the same time, if one's "inner critic", one's inhibitions and fears do not hinder one. Just as with Johnstone or the theatre artists who can be mentioned as contemporaries, Del Close or Viola Spolin, the focus of my investigation is the creator and creation without the constraints of conformity.

In Europe, artists such as Bertolt Brecht and Tadeusz Kantor have used improvisational language to create new forms of theatre. Among the contemporaries, one cannot leave out Frank Castorf, who pushed the boundaries of improvisation as a director for 16 years at the Volksbühne in Berlin. To this day, numerous improvisation theatres, workshops, and training methods have preserved the games and intellectual legacy of the above-mentioned schools around the world. In the history of Hungarian drama and philosophy, the theatrical work of Antal Németh and Károly Kazimír and the philosophy of Miklós Almási and György Lukács should be mentioned.

"Tomorrow they will fail in what they excel in today; but they will excel in what they failed in yesterday " (Lukács, 1962, p. 210).

Just think how liberating it would be if this were the basic conception of Hungarian public education: no judgment in the pursuit of grades. The possibility of second, third, multiple chances could bring out of many people skills, achievements and development that they had not thought of themselves.

5. The nature of improvisation in light of artificial intelligence

Improvisation is a decision, a series of decisions. When I say this, the decision has already been made, so I assume that improvisation is something that has already been made. It is important to define the notion of the moment, which in this case is not absolute time, but the real moment, and the paradoxes that help to frame the notion of the creation of an improvised work.

In what follows, I will explore how we can awaken our artistic improvisation skills, why their development is worth incorporating into our education, how improvisational games can be combined with the development of voice and body language, and what speech and communication techniques can achieve more outstanding results than in any other rhetoric class.

While one of the most defining issues of our future is the role that Artificial Intelligence can play in all aspects of our lives, many are attacking the legislation to ban smartphones in schools, which will come into force in September 2024. The decision raises questions not only about what AI can add to education but also about what human knowledge means today and what cognitive or emotional segments AI will never be able to master. As important as it is to keep pace with future technologies, it is equally vital to redefine the skills and knowledge factors that only humans can possess. For the majority of people, fear of another revolution in technology, fear of robots, fear of their jobs and livelihoods, and change are always with us. Every technological revolution raises social problems. And man has no choice but to keep pace with change and to change himself. Improvisation is change itself; an action is started, and in the process, it changes and produces change. By exploring the workings of artistic improvisation and the instinctive and design processes behind improvisation, we can draw conclusions that can set the framework for a digital world while keeping alive the need for irreplaceable human creativity. If you like, in the age of AI research, this research is the other, human side of the coin, which can also provide digitalisation practitioners with a number of conclusions.

Artificial Intelligence, although it can do a lot, has some areas where it is subject to significant limitations. The possibilities for improving the quality and experience of human existence begin just where AI's 'capabilities' end. Artistic improvisation - one of the most liberating flow experiences in human existence - will never be able to happen, if only because of the following things, which by their own admission are some of the things AI will never fully master:

1. **Personal Experiences:** AI cannot experience real personal experiences or feelings. We never know how someone feels in moments of heartache or joy or how they experience a special event.
2. **Subjective Value Judgement:** Although I can provide information and help you make decisions, AI does not have its own value judgements or personal preferences. The complexity of human values and preferences goes beyond algorithms.
3. **Creative Originality:** Although AI is capable of generating new content, the real creativity that leads to original and revolutionary ideas usually comes from human experience and intuition.
4. **Moral and Ethical Decisions:** AI lacks moral sense or ethics and cannot make real moral decisions. It can follow predetermined rules and patterns, but it is up to humans to deal with complex moral dilemmas.

This leads us to conclude that in the absence of subjective moral and ethical choices, the machine can write a completely different type of story, as it will lack the nodes of explicit and implicit narrative. The latter - adding its own internal experiences to the story - the machine will never be able to do.

6. Speech and improvisation - methodology

The methodological apparatus of my research is the Speech and Improvisation curriculum, which combines the topics of speech techniques with improvisational games, forming thematic groups that can be followed, and workshops that end with a discussion, on the model of philosophical practice.

Playful learning by presenting oneself serves the development of personality, self-awareness and the nervous system, teaching us to express and connect, but the improvisation games collected by Johnson can also be used to build around a particular problem in speaking technique. The link between speech technique and improvisation is based on the fact that playful improvisation can relax and calm the body to the point where it is able to eliminate breathing, voice production and other speech technique and presentation problems. A stable physical and mental state is necessary to enable the mind and body to acquire new habits without extreme reactions and to have the patience to make them automatic.

According to most pedagogical opinions, including that of Imre Montágh, the legendary Hungarian teacher of speaking technique, it takes an average of two years to acquire and activate a new habit. On average, this is the time it takes to discover, define and change a bad habit, and in the process of letting go, to pick

up a good habit, practice it, make it our own and make it our daily routine. Among other things, improvisation as a dramatic pedagogical method is also a way of learning to learn in practice. This is how Imre Montágh puts the essence of the path of development:

"Speech technique exercises are in fact exercises in personal development and concentration. The actor on the stage is constantly concentrating in several directions, but not on speech, because then he cannot act, he can only 'speak' and this is the death of stage acting. Speech technique exercises teach us to concentrate and develop the speech that will later serve our stage life without concentration." (Montágh, 1999).

The freedom of text creation in speech and improvisation training does not mean that improvisation does not have rules, frameworks and playable formats. However, beyond the criteria of intelligibility and audibility, even in a theatrical setting, it does not necessarily require the perfect grammar of classical public speaking. This is even more true for other media manifestations and social media performances. The language of improvisation on stage is much closer to the language of everyday speech and slang on social media channels. And the pace of information flow means that in many cases it can be described as improvised. Either because the sharer thinks in terms of moods rather than narratives and broadcasts live (see: concert and event footage) or because of the importance of newsworthiness. So, when editing content in this case, it is more important that the viewer gets the information as soon as possible. For example, if a cloud of smoke is billowing over a part of Szeged, visitors to a social networking site linked to the city can find out the cause of the possible fire in a shorter time than a local journalist. Within minutes, dozens of videos and comments provide information, but visitors to these sites rarely get elaborate, reasoned answers with real explanations. Overall, with the huge increase in the flow and volume of information, education must not be without the method best able to equip it for constant change: improvisation.

The changes in communication technology over the past twenty years, which have helped to make improvisation not only a pedagogical method but a genre in its own right, can be understood through the theory of technological determinism of Marshall McLuhan, who predicted long before his death in 1980 that the computer software revolution would outstrip the cultural impact of all the means of communication that had been discovered up to that time: printing, telegraph, telephone, radio, etc. The theory is that technical invention always brings cultural change. The same is true of language use. As the virtual space has taken over the

role and audience of television, the emphasis has changed. If many more people watch TikTok than read János Arany, then vocabulary and rhythm change - not only the pace of words and sentences, but also the rhythm of information transmission becomes denser. To summarise the changes of the last few decades, we suddenly find ourselves on a twelve-lane communication "highway", where the slowest rider is doing 100.30 and where everyone is communicating. With little regard for the real content and no regard for the consequences. Meanwhile, in higher education, group speech training and rhetoric courses still cover verbal communication training and the long-changed need. For those who want to be heard and understood in this channel-hungry, fast-paced environment, improvisation is a tool that can help them get closer to their goal.

The role of the individual in the performing arts and society is also being rethought. The emergence of the project system in education and the workplace has been calling for joint task-solving and community task-sharing since the late 1990s, and globalisation and then Covid have clearly reinforced the need for small communities to function. In improvisation practice, it is equally important to let go of the idea that an idea is one's own, to think together, where the process of cognition is the key, and not primarily the acquisition of well-defined, tangible knowledge.

Although improvisation suggests that an idea "just pops out of your head", in reality only what is already in your head can "pop out". A situation is constructed constructively when the people involved in it think about it together, want to construct it together.

The training sessions, which usually last two to three hours, draw games from a variety of game categories, in the order that best serves the objective. The warm-up games are characterised by contemplation, Warming up gets you moving, helps you to relax and raise your energy level, which is necessary for creativity. Many exercises focus on stillness and observation. To take a simple, often-used game as an example, there are warm-up exercises where group members move around the room for minutes, moving silently, sensing and avoiding each other. They sense their own bodies and the extension of others. Later, they look for a very close point and a very distant point, and one in between, which they can find again and again, against which they can compare, to which they can compare their own distance and pace. They slow down their walk, speed it up, try to sense time. Even before the players connect, they are merely contemplating. The self-guided workshops, consisting of energising, status, contact and storytelling games, are excellent for developing presentation skills in higher education students and after

just 12 sessions, a spectacular change in students' communication effectiveness, engagement and creative development can be observed. Some trainings focus on finding one's own voice and unimpeded voice production, some are based on stage movement, storytelling, rhythm and tempo, there are specific training programmes for teachers, but improvisation trainings on teenage issues, well-being, crisis management, negotiation and organisational development are also running with great popularity around the world. The mechanism of action and timeliness of creativity development training has been addressed by Runco in his research on the history of creativity¹⁰, which has led him to three very important conclusions: first, that the significance of the processes lies as much in their timing as in their content. It is the when that determines what becomes important. Second, institutions and identifiable groups play a crucial role in the work and minds of creative individuals, in selecting and giving coherence to important strands of what is already possible. Thirdly, the relevance of ideas and events only becomes apparent when there is a committed, articulate group of individuals who are deeply concerned about the same issue, problem or set of possibilities.

7. Speech and improvisation - thematics

The Speech and Improvisation method can be used for a variety of purposes: it can be used to develop many areas in addition to personality development: story and speech writing, concept and corporate strategy, internal and external corporate communication, corporate and employee branding, making statements and appearing in front of the camera, practising public presentation, etc.

By attaching improvisation games to a specific speech technique problem (e.g. breathing, volume, intensity, articulation, rhythm or style), we can make learning playful and liberating. The method is characterised by inspirational directorial instructions rather than commands or expectations. To give an example, experience shows that if a mumbling person is directly instructed to speak louder and more articulately, this is more likely to reinforce his inhibitions than to move him forward. In games, on the other hand, he may be able to communicate more expressively, at first without being aware of it, and then the task is to become aware of it and to automatise the new habit in everyday life. The method is based on a theme of twenty-two topics. The training topics are not sessions, but thematic units, the elements of which form the basis of a session, according to the needs of the individual or the company, the number of participants, their objectives, the problems they face, etc. The training sessions build on each other, but can also be understood as stand-alone communication training, so anyone can join the training series at any time.

Starting from the basic rules and conceptual tools of improvisation, participants can learn the secrets of physiological preparedness, correct breathing and presence, the anatomy of the organs of speech and techniques of enunciation, and through exercises of association, voice formation and contact, they can get to the questions and basic concepts of authenticity and lying. While some topics are thematic units in their own right, such as resonance and vibration, information and generosity, articulation, consonants and vowels, some long-term goals are interwoven throughout the training and recur in the games. Stress-free, anticipatory speech, overcoming stage fright, spontaneous, assertive communication and the acquisition of continuous speech are the objectives of all sessions. Once you have reached this stage in the training, you will be able to represent yourself confidently in front of a large audience and successfully assert your interests in a negotiation.

A separate thematic segment is storytelling. The process of dramatic understanding takes place at the intersection of explicit and implicit narratives. Explicit narratives are visible and/or audible story constructions that take concrete textual form in a communication process. Implicit narratives may represent event structures drawn from the personal experiences of an individual embedded in a cultural and social relational system, which unconsciously guide the individual's behaviour without reflection, or they may represent the individual's relation to a given situation, i.e. the subject of implicit narratives that help to make sense of explicit narratives, communicative or otherwise.

In doing so, I start from the assumption that both the intersubjective and the self-constituting function of narratives can be traced back to the existence of a dual level of explicit-implicit narrative. Explicit narratives are visible and/or audible historical constructions that take on a concrete textual form in a communicative process. The deeper level of implicit narratives, following Gábor Szécsi's model, is represented by specific models of meaning-making, which represent event structures that are embedded in the personal experiences of individuals embedded in their cultural and social relations, and which guide the behaviour of the individual unconsciously, without reflection (Szécsi, 2021). While the other set of implicit narratives represent the propositional attitudes of the individual choosing between possible actions in a given situation. Only humans are capable of authentic storytelling at the intersection of explicit and implicit narratives.

If the improviser is seeking to become a performer, he or she can add to his or her palette of (acting) mastery tasks such as experimenting with, mastering and applying appropriate rhythm, humour, individual stylistic features, stage

movement, mimicry and gesture systems. But the performer's verbal and metacommunication will only become authentic if he or she experiences that he or she can get many performance ideas by observation and imitation, but that there are no qualities that can be taken from outside. Everything we can work from and express is within us. This is another level of communication bordering on art. Artistic improvisation, in the intellectual and spiritual sense, must be first and foremost about discovering our true selves, returning to the joyful, childlike creative being we once were or could be. From a technical, linguistic and cultural point of view, the task is the 'remembering', storytelling function of ancient tribes: to learn to tell our own story a valuable, good and self-identical way.

References

- Albert, R. S., & Runco, M. A. (1999). A history of research on creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity* (pp. 16–31). Cambridge University Press.
- Aristotle. (2004). *Poetics* (J. Sarkady, Trans., in Russian). Lazi.
- Benson, B. E. (2003). *Improvisation of dialogue: The phenomenology of music*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brook, P. (1999). *Threads of time* (Á. Lengyel, Trans.). Európa.
- Brown, L. B. (2011). Improvisation. In T. Gracyk & A. Kania (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to philosophy and music* (pp. 59–69). Routledge.
- Ekman, P. (1967). Perceptual and motor skills: Head and body cues in the judgement of emotions. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 24, 711–724.
- Foster, L. S. (2016). *Dance Research Journal*, 48(3).
- Grotowski, J. (1996). 10-day course at SKARA School of Drama – Sweden, final speech.
- Haas, A. (2015). On Aristotle's concept of improvisation. *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology*, 2(2), 113–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20539320.2015.11428462>
- Hamilton, A. (2000). The art of improvisation and the aesthetic of imperfection. *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 40(2), 168–185.
- Kant, I. (2004). *Critique of pure reason*. Atlantisz.
- Kendra, J., & Wachtendorf, T. (2007). Improvisation, creativity and the art of emergency management. In H. Durmaz, B. Sevinc, A. S. Yayla, & S. Ekici (Eds.), *Understanding and responding to terrorism* (pp. 324–335). IOS Press.
- Koltai, T. (1976). *Brook – Face to face*. Gondolat.
- Lewis, G., & Piekut, B. (2016). *The Oxford handbook of critical improvisation studies*. Oxford University Press.
- Lukács, Gy. (1969). *The specificity of aesthetics*. Magvető.
- Midgelow, V. (2019). *Recommendations for action: Enhancing artistic doctoral education in dance and performance*.
- Monson, I. (1996). *Say something: Jazz improvisation and interaction*. University of Chicago Press.
- Montágh, I. (1999). *Clear speech*. Holnap.

Ostby, H. (2022). *Creativity*. Park.

Ravn, S., Hoffding, S., & McGuirk, J. (2023). *Philosophy of improvisation*. Routledge.

Schiller, F. (1960). Letters on the aesthetic education of man. In *Selected aesthetic writings of Schiller* (Letter XV). Hungarian Helikon.

Stanislavski, K. (1988). *The actor's work*. Gondolat.

Szécsi, G. (2021). Self, community, narrative in the information age. *Empedocles: European Journal for the Philosophy of Communication*, 2, 167–181.

The relationship between self-interest and common good in Hobbes's philosophy

Tímea, Fodor¹

¹University of Pécs, Doctoral School of Philosophy, E-mail: timea.fodor1991@gmail.com

Abstract

As we have seen, Hobbes argues that violating a contract cannot in any way serve self-interest. While there may occasionally be exceptional situations in which desertion produces positive results, these are always the result of chance. Therefore, only adherence to the terms of the contract can legitimately support the pursuit of self-interest. Moreover, it is not only in the interest of the individual, but also in the interest of the political community as a whole, that as few people as possible should desert, for this is the greatest form of peace and security. In this sense, if we accept the self-interest-oriented anthropological characteristics and Hobbes's perspective on circumstances, the theory of justice in *Leviathan* seems well-founded. According to this theory, a just act is one that is carried out in the light of adherence to the contract, while any other manifestation constitutes an injustice to oneself and others. Moreover, the injustice committed against oneself can certainly not serve anyone's self-interest.

The relevance of the charge of psychological egoism to Hobbesian concepts remains an open question, as does the practicality of implementing Hobbes's theory. However, we can argue that in Hobbes's conception, self-interest and the common good are intertwined and do not contradict the morality that arises from the creation of laws. Rather, they all point towards a single goal: the maintenance of peace and security in which the life of the individual is protected.

Keywords: wine tourism, local development, event analysis

Hobbes as an advocate of psychological egoism?

Some 18th-century philosophers, such as Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Butler, David Hume, and Adam Smith, accused Thomas Hobbes of advocating psychological egoism. These philosophers argued that Hobbes used psychological egoism as a cornerstone of his argument to promote absolutism (Smith, 2017).

Psychological egoism is the view that all human action is driven by self-interest; in other words, all human action is directed towards one single aim: the

satisfaction of one's own desires. Every action is preceded by an intention to fulfil a desire. For instance, the active process of going to the tap, pouring myself a glass of water and raising it to my lips to take a sip is preceded by the desire to quench my thirst and the intention to fulfil that desire, that is, the determination to go to the tap, pour a glass of water and drink it.

This perspective represents a rather extreme view of human nature, as it claims that the pursuit of one's own desires is the driving force behind all activity, thereby rejecting the possibility of attributing any degree of selflessness to human nature. According to psychological egoism, despite the appearance of altruistic human actions, they are ultimately driven by self-interest. For example, a soldier who sacrifices his life to protect his comrades may appear to be motivated by selflessness. However, proponents of the theory argue that the soldier is simply fulfilling his own desires: to protect his comrades, to obey orders, to avoid living with the belief that his comrades died because of his cowardice, to gain the respect of others, and so on. The two examples above illustrate that, according to the psychological egoist, the pursuit of self-interest is present in everyday situations as well as in acts of helping others. It is not only efforts to quench thirst that are driven by self-interest, but ultimately even the soldier who sacrifices his life as a martyr does so to promote his own well-being (to avoid living with negative feelings, to avoid being perceived as a coward, to be appreciated, etc.).

Consequently, the psychological egoist can easily be accused of painting a rather bleak picture of human nature: the inevitable pursuit of one's own desires implies that, if self-interest cannot be achieved otherwise, it may even come at the expense of the well-being of others. In what follows, we will explore the negative aspects of selfishness, drawing on Hobbes's view of human nature. We will examine later whether there is indeed a connection between psychological egoism and Hobbes's political absolutism, as some have suggested. Before doing so, however, let us first examine the foundation of Hobbes's thought experiment, which has led some philosophers to make the above accusation¹ against him.

¹ The reason why some view psychological egoism as more of a criticism than a praise lies in the weaknesses of the theory. One of its shortcomings is that it strips selflessness of its legitimacy: everyone acts according to their own desires and interests. Even an apparently altruistic behaviour is motivated by some form of self-interest. However, the question arises whether satisfying personal desires truly eliminates selflessness. For example, if I satisfy my desire to take the last slice of cake, disregarding the interests of others, my behaviour can be described as selfish. In contrast, selfless behaviour would be if I gave the last slice of cake to someone else, even though I wanted it for myself. Naturally, the psychological egoist might respond by saying that even in this case, I am merely fulfilling my own desire—to see a loved one happy, as their happiness brings me joy too; or I wish to be viewed favourably by others. From this perspective, one could argue that, in a sense, I am still

If we oversimplify Hobbes's anthropology, it may at first glance appear to present an extreme and rather bleak view of human nature. At its core is the desire to pursue self-interest, which Hobbes sees as the driving force behind all human action. This perspective directly contradicts the Aristotelian notion that human beings are *zoón politicon*, or social beings by nature.² In his work *De Cive*, Hobbes elaborates on the idea that humans do not inherently desire social interaction for its own sake, as it is not intrinsically desirable for the individual. It is the personal benefits that can be gained from such interactions that make social contact appealing, that is we seek the company of others in the hope of gaining some advantage from the interaction, rather than because the interaction itself is enjoyable. Put differently, we engage with others more out of self-love rather than out of genuine sympathy for our fellow human beings (Smith, 2017).

Egoism alone, however, does not necessarily lead to the 'fight of all against all' briefly introduced in the previous chapter. The pursuit of self-interest as a fundamental human inclination does not in itself imply that evil is a fundamental human trait. In Hobbes's state of nature, people are neither good nor evil because they have no inherent desire to do good or harm to others unless it is in their own interests to do so.

In Hobbes's view, selfishness does not inherently lead to evil. Evil, along with concepts of good and bad, presupposes a moral framework, a normative background that would hold up a mirror to human behaviour. In Hobbes's state

satisfying my own desires, even though I appear to be acting selflessly. However, critics of psychological egoism might counter by pointing out that just because my desire to give the cake coincides with another person's desire to eat it—meaning that I am fulfilling my desire to promote someone else's well-being—this does not justify denying that I am acting selflessly. Moreover, we could even say that I have two desires: one is to eat the last slice of cake, and the other is to give it to someone else. If my desire to contribute to the well-being of another person outweighs my desire to eat the cake myself, then we can say that I have acted selflessly. Even if I experience greater joy from giving it to someone else than from eating it myself and feeling guilty afterwards, the action is still selfless. In fact, the selflessness might come from the fact that I get more pleasure from giving the last slice to another person than from eating it myself. This is the nuance that the psychological egoist tends to overlook.

² According to Aristotle, two essential characteristics define human beings: the first is that they possess *logos*, and the second is that they are inherently social creatures. *Logos* can refer to reason, intellect, and language, so in Aristotle's view, humans are rational beings capable of conceptual thought. This is the primary distinction between humans and animals; while the former are rational beings, the latter are driven by instincts. From *logos* and the natural inclinations of humans follows a natural tendency to seek association. Aristotle identifies three natural relationships: the marital relationship, the master-servant relationship, and the father-son relationship. The basis of these three levels of association is the division of labour, the pursuit of association, individual differences in ability and love.

of nature, however, morality is absent, and consequently, so is ethical egoism³. Discussions of right and wrong arise only after the establishment of a social contract, since right is defined by adherence to the law, and wrong by actions that violate it. The purely psychological egoist is not simply made happy by the misfortune of others. The sole aim of the individual is to assert his self-interest, without intending to cause either good or harm. Moreover, since conflict with others is always burdensome and its outcome uncertain, if he can achieve his ends by peaceful means, he will prefer that option. In short, Hobbes's view of human nature is not as bleak as it might at first appear, for people in the state of nature are characterised by psychological—not ethical—egoism. As a result, they do not wish harm to others, but seek the good for themselves.

According to the above idea, if human nature is defined by egoism, then this state of nature applies to everyone: no one wishes anyone else any good or harm, and it is clear to all that avoiding conflict is far more valuable, both biologically and psychologically, since avoiding conflict involves less injury and risk, and the likelihood of gain is much greater. Despite this, why does Hobbes's state of nature end up being characterised as a state of war?

"(...) if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies (...)". (Hobbes, 1999, pp. 91-92.)

According to the quotation, when circumstances lead to limited access to certain goods, one participant can only assert their own interests at the expense of the other. Circumstances will always lead to scarcity of goods, which reflects not only the scarcity of resources but, more importantly, another trait of human nature: constant insatiability. In short, natural resources are indeed finite, so when I take something from nature for myself, I am in a sense taking it away from others. From another perspective, however, even though natural resources are finite, they could be more than enough for everyone if human beings were not insatiable. According to Hobbes, every satisfied desire inevitably leads to other unsatisfied desires, which highlights another feature of human nature:

"So that in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death. And the cause of this is not always that a man hopes for a more intensive delight than he has already attained to, or that he cannot be content with a moderate power, but because

³ Whereas ethical egoism prescribes how one should behave, psychological egoism merely outlines facts about human nature. The former is normative, aiming to establish rules for morally correct behaviour, while the latter is descriptive, simply providing an account of how people tend to behave.

he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.” (Hobbes, 1999, p. 80).

The quoted text points to the Hobbesian idea that human beings are roughly equal in terms of their physical and intellectual abilities, so that individuals—no matter how strong or clever they may be—always have reason to fear others; consequently, they must constantly strive to acquire greater power, which can only be achieved by dominating others. Due to the similar balance of power, there is constant uncertainty, as no one can ever be sure that they can keep the goods they have already acquired. This is why they feel the need to constantly increase their power, regardless of how much they have already achieved.

In the first half of the chapter, we have seen that selfishness, as a fundamental human characteristic, does not in itself make individuals malevolent, and consequently, does not necessarily lead to a state of war. The question of whether Hobbes can be considered an advocate of psychological egoism remains open to debate. His concept includes certain signs of egoism, as well as the combined constellation of circumstances, such as the scarcity of resources, constant insatiability, the equality of abilities among individuals, and the expectation of recognition from others. The main reason why many criticise Hobbes’s presumed psychological egoism, or the acceptance of any egoistic theory, is that it excludes the possibility of any behaviour being altruistic, which may raise further questions. However, the discussion of where such concepts as morality or justice and injustice fit into an apparently egoistic absolutist theory will be addressed later.

A Hobbesian definition of the concept of good

Hobbes begins his moral discussions by defining the concepts of good and evil. While many consider his anthropological ideas to be divisive, his thought experiment on the concept of good was regarded as downright scandalous, especially in the 17th century. At that time, value judgments regarding politics, religion or morality were expected to be on the same page; in contrast, Hobbes’s concept of good is egoistic, naturalistic, realistic and relational (Martinich, 2005).

In the state of nature, Hobbes refers to as good—in an amoral sense—anything that is the object of human desire, and as evil, anything that is the object of hatred. He thus rejects the possibility that values such as good and evil have any immutable, eternal, or supernatural source. In his view, both good and evil are determined by human preferences, which can vary according to individual value systems. Things are therefore not good or evil in themselves but always in relation

to the individual. After the establishment of the state, the root of good and evil becomes the person of the ruler. Consequently, the acceptance of laws as general rules gives values a more general and moral form, but they are still dependent on human correlation, that is, on the ruler, and since the ruler's choice is based on a collective decision, it is dependent on everyone:

“But whatsoever is the object of any man’s appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth good; and the object of his hate and aversion, evil; and of his contempt, vile and inconsiderable. For these words of good, evil, and contemptible are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves; but from the person of the man, where there is no Commonwealth; or, in a Commonwealth, from the person that representeth it; or from an arbitrator or judge, whom men disagreeing shall by consent set up and make his sentence the rule thereof.” (Hobbes, 1999, p.60-61).

This definition supports the camp of those who criticise Hobbes for psychological egoism. The fact that the scope of the good coincides with the content of human desires makes the concept of the good itself egoistic. According to Hobbes’s biographer, John Aubrey, Hobbes once gave money to a beggar during a walk. Hobbes’s companion, Jasper Mayne, asked him: ‘Would you have done this if Christ had not commanded it?’ Hobbes replied as follows: ‘Yes, because I felt pain when I thought of the old man’s miserable condition, and now my alms, by giving him some relief, also relieve my own discomfort.’ In other words, Hobbes’s response reveals that he gave alms in order to alleviate his own discomfort (Martinich, 2005). This clearly shows that the psychological egoism indicated by human nature leads fundamentally to moral egoism, thereby underpinning norms as well.

The desire to help and promote the welfare of others cannot, in itself, be the sole motivation for an act of charity, because it would not include the actor themselves as the object of their action. In short, y does not rush to save x from drowning in order for (1) x to survive, but rather because (2) y would experience a negative feeling if x were to die. At first glance, there seems to be little difference between (1) and (2), and ultimately, the outcome will be the same in a consequentialist sense. According to the Hobbesian definition, however, (1) is incorrect, as it lacks the consideration of y, or the desire that drives y’s action. This is due to the view of human nature, which regards moral action primarily as an action itself and thus requires it to have a motivation. This motivation fits into the causal order of the action, but does not necessarily need to fit into its moral order. According to

Hobbes, however, the two are essentially the same, which means that by following my own desires, I create the actions that establish norms as actions that conform to those norms. Even in apparently altruistic actions, my own self-interest must always be the guiding force. Thus, even though the intention and its subsequent manifestation may have a positive effect on others, we act primarily because the action and its consequences give us a sense of satisfaction or would otherwise give us a sense of discomfort if not carried out.

Consequently, since according to the Hobbesian definition, the good is the object of human desires, and desires are the motivators of actions—that is, every action is driven by a subjective desire—the whole process, including the action itself, the desire that prompts it, and the object of the desire, that is, what we consider to be good, will be egoistic.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the Hobbesian concept of good is that, for Hobbes, good is not a moral concept. According to the traditional views, goodness and evilness are moral properties of things. In contrast, Hobbes argues that judgments of good and evil are closer to, or even identical with, the pleasant and unpleasant things found in the physical world, rather than to abstract concepts such as justice, injustice, virtue, etc. Hobbes's concept suggests that good, that is, a thing to which a desire is directed, generally refers to material things in the material world, excluding any supernatural forces or influences (Martinich, 2005).

This naturalistic aspect of the concept of goodness leads to its relational nature. It breaks with the Platonic tradition of an eternal idea of goodness that is universally valid for everyone. According to the traditional concept, whether something is good or not is an inherent part of the thing itself, and does not depend on anything else to which it is related. For example, virtues such as honesty are inherently good in themselves.

Hobbes, however, leans more towards the Aristotelian concept that goodness is a relative term, meaning something different to each individual. What is good for one person may not be good for another, and indeed what is good for someone at one moment may not be desirable for them a few years later. The fact that something is good or desirable for one person does not mean that it is inherently, universally and independently good. In short, the concept of goodness becomes contingent, always defined by the values, tastes and circumstances of the individual, which is perhaps not entirely inconsistent with the charge of psychological egoism (Martinich, 2005).

The state of nature as a state of war

As is characteristic of social contract theories, the two key concepts—the state of nature and the formation of a contract—remain purely theoretical. Just as no such contract, as mentioned in the theories, has ever been historically enacted, there is also no state of nature in which people live in a constant state of war, without any higher authority, coexisting or, more accurately, existing in opposition to one another. There are, however, some exceptions which suggest that while the elements of the social contract theories may not actually take practical form, there are historical events which bear similarities to the ideas outlined in these theories. Hobbes identifies three such events.

The first is the state of savages. According to Hobbes, in many parts of America, there is no government at all, and people live in brutal conditions, similar to the state of nature. The second is the relationship between different governments:

“(...) yet in all times kings and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independence, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms, and continual spies upon their neighbors, which is a posture of war.” (Hobbes, 1999, p. 94).

According to Hobbes, the third form of the state of nature is the English Civil War (Martinich, 2005), in which the unity of the political community was disrupted, consequently setting those who had previously lived in peace against each other, and in which there was no central authority capable of bringing peace between the divided parties (Martinich, 2005).

Hobbes's state of nature is often identified with a state of anarchy. This comparison — if we simplify the concept of anarchy and associate it with the naive interpretations used in everyday language — may seem accurate, but from other perspectives, the conflation of the two theories is particularly incorrect.

Anarchy—if by anarchy we mean the absence of rule, that is, the absence of a higher, centralised authority—can be identified with Hobbes's state of nature. However, if we understand anarchism as the concept articulated by the Russian anarchist philosophers of the 19th century, then the conflation of the two is entirely false.

“(...) we neither intend nor desire to thrust upon our own or any other people any scheme of social organization taken from books or concocted by ourselves. We are convinced that the masses of the people carry in themselves, in their instincts (more or less developed by history), in their daily necessities, and in their conscious or

unconscious aspirations, all the elements of the future social organization. (...) We declare ourselves the enemies of every government and every state power, and of governmental organization in general. We think that people can be free and happy only when organized from the bottom up in completely free and independent associations, without governmental paternalism (...)" (Bakunin, 1983, pp. 76-77).

According to Bakunin, anarchists reject all forms of state intervention and see human happiness and well-being in the voluntary cooperation of individuals. In their view, human nature is naturally inclined towards individuals working and living together in peace, helping each other and collaborating in harmony.

Hobbes's state of nature thus corresponds to the anarchist concept in the sense that no centralised authority interferes in people's lives. However, the two ideas differ in terms of the quality of a state free of rulers or politically legitimate laws. While the Russian anarchist philosophers' thought experiment suggests that only such an association can bring peace and happiness, Hobbes believed that life without centralised control is nothing but a state of war. Hobbes does not contradict anthropological optimism, which holds that human nature is inherently good, since, as previously mentioned, in his argument humans are neither good nor bad. In the state of nature, there were no moral standards by which human nature and behaviour could be categorised from a moral perspective. However, if we were to judge Hobbes's man in the state of nature through the lens of a modern, 21st century reader, he would probably fall somewhere in the middle of the moral spectrum. He has no intention of causing harm to others; he seeks only to pursue his own interests. However, he is not deterred if the fulfilment of his desires can only be achieved at the expense of others. His self-interest is above all else, and therefore outweighs everything else. Because of the scarcity of resources, the constant desire for more, and the equality of physical and intellectual abilities, this naturally leads to perpetual conflict between individuals. Therefore, according to Hobbes, life without centralised control becomes a state of war. If there are no written laws and there is no punishment for breaking the laws, then nothing limits the pursuit of one's desires. However, the issue of punishment as a means of keeping the peace will be discussed later. For now, it is worth examining what Hobbes specifically means by a state of war.

From Hobbes's definition of war, it follows only that the *war of all against all* is a state in which each party is in conflict with all the others, and likewise all the others are in conflict with them. However, Hobbes argues that the parties in

question do not need to be actively fighting each other for a state of war to exist at any given time. In his view, the willingness to fight—that is, the readiness of each to engage in actual physical conflict or potential coup against another if it serves his self-interest—is sufficient. Between the late 1940s and the early 1980s, both the United States and the Soviet Union were described as being in a state of Cold War. This meant that both sides feared that the other might attack, and were equally prepared to attack, if necessary, despite the fact that there was virtually no direct violence between the Americans and the Soviets—with the exception of Third World countries (Martinich, 2005).

It is questionable how far mere will can take one. Since people generally think inductively, if the willingness to act is never or only very rarely followed by physical action, the state of war would become an empty concept, since the willingness would not be accompanied by any consequences (Kavka, 1986). Hobbes does not assume that the mere willingness to fight is enough to constitute a state of war, but neither does he require constant killing and pillaging for it to exist. Rather, a balance between the two creates a state of constant uncertainty, distrust, and a complete lack of security—this, for Hobbes, is what defines a state of war.

The law of nature

The absence of a centralised authority implies that in the state of nature there are neither positive rights nor legitimate laws that would provide a regulatory framework or a uniform system of punishment for violations or non-compliance. There are natural rights or laws of nature, which are more like principles recognised by reason than actual laws, and therefore their observance is not supervised by anyone, nor are there penalties for non-compliance. Hobbes's definition of natural rights and the law of nature is as follows:

“The Right of Nature, which writers commonly call Ius Naturale [Natural Right] is the Liberty each man has, to use his own power as he will himself, for the preservation of his own Nature, that is to say, of his own life, and consequently of doing anything which in his own judgment and Reason he shall conceive to be the best means to this end of preserving his own life. A Law of Nature [Lex Naturalis] is a precept or general rule found out by Reason by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destruction of his life or takes away the means of preserving his life.”
(Hobbes, 1999, p. 94).

In short, whereas natural right grants freedom to the individual, the law of nature imposes obligations, specifically duties to oneself. The key difference between the

two is that the former empowers us to do something, while the latter defines and makes it our duty to determine what we must and must not do. The main similarity between the two concepts is that neither is based on moral principles and, like natural right, the law of nature is concerned solely with our own self-preservation. The law of nature prohibits actions that would endanger our own lives, while natural rights provide the freedom to take actions that protect ourselves. If we strip Berlin's concepts of positive and negative liberty of their political implications⁴, we might associate the law of nature with the category of negative liberty and natural right with positive liberty. The former, negative liberty, refers to *freedom from something*, while the latter implies *freedom to do something*. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* also refers to Berlin's concepts of positive and negative liberty when it lists fundamental human rights, such as the right to be free from torture, cruel, inhuman treatment and punishment—falling under negative freedom—as well as the right to express and declare one's opinion, which belongs to positive liberty. Apart from the fact that, strictly speaking, natural right gives freedom to individuals, we can also interpret it as *freedom from something*, whereas the law of nature can be seen as *freedom to do something*. For example, I have the freedom to take actions that protect my life, and I have the freedom to refrain from actions that would endanger my life.

Let's examine the key points of Hobbes's definition of the law of nature:

(1) Unlike many philosophers, Hobbes believes that all our knowledge comes from perception, and therefore he does not consider the laws of nature to be innate. However, it follows from human nature that through reason, everyone (or most people) can learn these laws through reason—that is, they can understand which actions are beneficial to them and which are not. Point (2) of the definition emphasises that the law of nature shapes human behaviour, while point (3) explicitly states that it does so as a command, meaning that everyone has a duty to adhere to it. However, point (3) raises a question: from whom does this command come? In the state of nature there is no higher authority, so who can give commands to individuals? There are two possible answers (there may be more, but let's examine these two for now): either (i) reason gives the command, or (ii) God provides the law (Martinich, 2005).

If we accept (i), namely that reason commands or is the command itself, then reason sets the goals that individuals strive to achieve. However, this statement

⁴ In Berlin's example, the Soviet Union is highlighted, where the country's leadership, in pursuit of its defined goals (positive liberty), considered the deprivation of people's rights and the use of violence (i.e. the violation of negative liberty) acceptable. (Berlin, 1990)

is flawed because it is the desires that determine the goals; reason merely helps to recognise and identify the means of fulfilling those desires. If we accept (ii), we are claiming that in the state of nature, God commands the laws of nature for human beings. If anyone, then God must surely have the right to give commands, even in a state of without authority. Additionally, Hobbes mentions that God commands certain things, such as the law of nature:

“But yet if we consider the same theorems as delivered in the word of God that by right commandeth all things, then are they properly called laws.” (Hobbes, 1999, p. 106).

As Martinich points out (Martinich, 2005), Hobbes also mentions this in Chapter 31, where he states that:

“There wants only, for the entire knowledge of civil duty, to know what are those laws of God. For without that, a man knows not, when he is commanded anything by the civil power, whether it be contrary to the law of God or not (...)” (Hobbes, 1999, p. 195).

With regard to the divine origin of the law of nature, Martinich writes the following in his book:

“John Selden, a friend of Hobbes and one who is sometimes thought to be an atheist, said in private, ‘I cannot fancy to myself what the law of nature means, but the law of God’ (quoted from Martinich 1992: 381, n. 10). Hobbes himself said, 84 Hobbes ‘there is no doubt but they [the laws of nature] are the law of God’ (L 33.22) and ‘There is no doubt but they [the laws of nature] were made laws by God himself’ (L 42.37).” (Martinich, 2005, pp. 84-85).

The fourth part of the definition of the law of nature states that life is the highest value, and furthermore, reflecting mankind’s fundamentally selfish nature, each person’s life is their utmost value. Therefore, if we interpret the law of nature as a command—viewing it as an actual law—then a person commits a sin if he endangers his own life or if he does not do everything possible to protect it.

The desire for peace

At the end of Chapter 13 of *Leviathan*, Hobbes raises the question of how the state of nature can be brought to an end and how peace can be established in a legitimate state. He argues that the law of nature dictates that the protection of one’s life takes precedence over all else, and that reason is the way out of a state of war. According to Hobbes, it is first the passions, such as the fear of death and

the desire for a good life, that motivate people to leave the state of nature. After that, reason shows individuals what they need to do to live in peace and security.

According to Hobbes, there is only one solution to eliminate the state of war: fear. Only fear can compel individuals to restrain their actions in pursuit of their self-interest. Most importantly, the fear of death can overcome the possibility of individuals satisfying their selfish interests through the violent exploitation or murder of others, since the value of life is always greater than the gains derived from violence (Smith, 2017).

In the state of nature, contracts would be meaningless without a higher authority, since the absence of punishment for breaking a contract would mean that self-interested individuals would not be constrained by fear. Hobbes does not consider the possibility that the parties to a contract might fulfil their agreements out of honour or a sense of justice, since breaking a contract would yield a far greater profit for an individual; it would therefore be more in their self-interest to do so than to honour the agreement. On the other hand, a sense of justice and honour are moral virtues, but, as mentioned above, such concepts do not exist in the state of nature, where morality has not yet emerged prior to the formation of contracts. Moreover, agreements made in the state of nature would not even be rational, since the naive parties would expose themselves to the risk of being exploited by others who might break the pact, which would not be in their best interests (Smith, 2017).

According to Hobbes, only a government with absolute power can maintain the constant fear necessary to establish social order, including the fear of death. He argues that only fear, as a counter-motive to self-interest, can force individuals to change the course of their usual self-interested actions. Hobbes's interpretation of self-interest undermines social order unless it is constrained by the fear of absolute government and the punishment for breaking the law. Thus, totalitarian power becomes a necessary condition for social order and internal peace because it encourages citizens to obey by imposing penalties for breaking laws that are contrary to self-interest, keeping them in a state of constant fear, and restraining self-interested actions (Smith, 2017).

The beast that rules over all

Social contract theories generally assert that governments are formed by agreements between certain parties. As previously mentioned, humans, as rational beings, are capable of recognising the commands of the law of nature, the first and second of which state the following:

“Every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek and use all helps and advantages of war.” (Hobbes, 1970, p. 112).

“A man be willing, when others are so too, as far forth as for peace and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself.” (Hobbes, 1970, p. 112).

According to the general definition of the law of nature, the first law states that individuals living in the state of nature must strive for peace as long as there is a chance of achieving it. From this first law—the pursuit of peace—follows the second law. Each individual must renounce his existing rights if he believes that everyone will adhere to what is outlined in the second law. The emphasis is on everyone, as if only a small proportion of individuals living in the state of nature were to renounce their freedoms, they would be at a disadvantage compared to others who might take advantage of the opportunity to dominate.

According to Hobbes, the pact involving the renunciation of rights can only be established by reason. The primary self-interest of each individual is to secure his own good and well-being. Through reason, everyone recognises that this requires them to give up their complete freedom in the state of nature and submit to the authority of a government or ruler. It is important to note that, in Hobbes’s view, this only works if everyone simultaneously gives up their own freedom and transfers it to a government or ruler. In this case, while everyone is constrained—meaning that after the establishment of legitimate laws, I cannot do whatever I want to anyone—neither can I be robbed or murdered with impunity. Thus, it is in everyone’s best interest to renounce complete freedom and submit to laws, as this is what ends the state of war and allows for peaceful coexistence. In Hobbes’s view, self-interest does not contradict the common good; in fact, we might say that individual self-interest constructs the common good. If self-interest is about maintaining one’s own welfare and well-being, which involves both renouncing freedom and transferring authority to a ruler, then the common good is essentially the establishment of state power. It represents a common goal: the achievement of general order and discipline, thereby creating the conditions for peaceful and secure coexistence.

It is important to note that the contract itself is not enough—as discussed at the end of the previous chapter—as only the fear of punishment can restrain people’s natural desires. This leads to the need for a central authority to oversee and regulate people’s natural inclinations. Such a power can only come into existence

if individuals transfer to it all the rights they have hitherto possessed. This is how Hobbes's contract is formed between people, where everyone agrees with everyone else to limit their freedoms, renounce their rights, and then transfer these rights to the same person or assembly. Hobbes argues that if everyone, or at least the vast majority, transfers their rights to the same governing body, then that ruler embodies the will of everyone, effectively merging the individuals into a single entity. The will of the ruler is thus aligned with the common will, meaning that each individual in the state of nature is manifested in this sovereign figure or institution. The emphasis is on the collective decision, since these decisions together create the politically legitimate state. In this sense, the ruler is metaphorically the body of the Commonwealth itself.

"This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a COMMONWEALTH; in Latin, CIVITAS. This is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that mortal god to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence. For by this authority, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth, he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him that, by terror thereof, he is enabled to form the wills of them all, to peace at home, and mutual aid against their enemies abroad." (Hobbes, 1999, p. 113).

Hobbes's theory holds that the sovereign's power derives not only from the rights that everyone has transferred to him, but also from the fact that the sovereign is not a party to the contract. Although the sovereign comes into being through this contract, he exists outside of it, as individuals in the state of nature only enter into a pact with each other, renouncing their rights and transferring all power to a single body or individual. Therefore, since the sovereign possesses all the rights of the subjects and embodies their will, and since no contract limits him, not only is he incapable of breaching the pact, but his power is absolutely unlimited. In order for the citizens to live in peace and security, the sovereign may employ any means. No higher moral or conscientious barrier regulates them; moreover, Hobbes links morality to the law. He states that justice is nothing more than the observance of the contract, while injustice is the breach of the agreement. The commands of the sovereign, that is, the legitimate laws, take precedence over the unwritten moral rules, since anyone who acts contrary to the laws commits a breach of contract, that is, injustice (Hobbes, 1970). This undermines the possibility for citizens who may disagree with the sovereign to express their dissenting opinions; furthermore, by transferring their will and rights to the sovereign, dissent itself becomes impossible. Moreover, since the sovereign is not

a party to the contract, and a breach of the agreement constitutes an injustice, the sovereign cannot act unjustly.

Therefore, it would seem that Hobbes has blocked every loophole to ensure that the sovereign enjoys absolute power, cannot become a violator of the contract, that his will always coincides with the will of the people, and that adherence to the laws takes precedence above all else. At first glance, despite the apparent fulfilment of the desire for peace and security, it raises the following questions. For example, if by some strange coincidence we were to find ourselves in Hobbes's work, living as a character in Leviathan, how liveable would we find a state in which, although the state of war between citizens has ceased and individuals have voluntarily surrendered their freedoms to the sovereign, the sovereign's will always coincides with the collective will, yet the very existence of the individual seems questionable?

Leviathan and the individual: From theory to practice

Hobbes's definition of the law of nature may seem incomplete to many. According to the definition:

"A law of nature, lex naturalis, is a precept, or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that by which he thinketh it may be best preserved." (Hobbes, 1999, p. 94).

Hobbes's interpretation of the law of nature can also be understood in today's bioethical terms, particularly from a *pro-life* perspective. For *pro-life* advocates, one of humanity's most important duties is to protect life above all else; thus, their concept posits that the greatest value is life itself. The Hobbesian social contract emerges from this ideal, as individuals seem more willing to renounce their complete freedom and submit to the will of a ruler than to jeopardise their lives. While it is indeed true that the *pro-life* perspective places life metaphysically—almost objectively—above all else, it argues that life is always and under all circumstances the most valuable thing. Hobbes, on the other hand, is not talking about life in general, but specifically about one's own life. That is, each individual's own life is the most important. There may be a sense of lack, because just as *pro-life* advocates emphasise the sanctity of life, Hobbes only refers to the protection of one's own life, without making any claims about the good life. There is a significant difference between the right to life and the right to a good life. Whereas the former regards life itself as a value, the latter may regard life as a burden under certain circumstances.

Consequently, from a modern perspective, it may seem that Hobbes's individual in the state of nature finds himself in a situation of jumping out of the frying pan into the fire after entering into a contract, as he ends up in a totalitarian state—specifically an absolute monarchy according to Hobbes's conception. While Hobbes leaves open the possibility for citizens to make free choices in fundamental matters such as the choice of their living environment, the raising of their children, or the choice of their diet, in all other respects they are completely subordinated to the commands of the ruler. Furthermore, since the ruler is not a party to the contract, he is not bound by laws, which means that he has absolute power and his rule is unassailable. It is true that, according to Hobbes's conception, the will of the ruler is also the will of the public, and therefore he would never act in a way that would benefit only himself and not the common good. Thus, there is no need for his rule to be overthrown. At the same time—viewed through a contemporary lens and imagined in practical terms—Hobbes's *Leviathan* resembles several dystopian works, such as Huxley's *Animal Farm*. In these fictional negative visions of the future, a similar pattern often emerges. The ruler maintains obedience through demagoguery or violent means; he does not refrain from deception; he creates a cult of personality for himself and an invented common goal (in Hobbes's case, the goal is peace and security, which justifies any means to achieve it); and he employs punishments such as death penalties, deprivation of freedom, and rights. Moreover, as in most fictional dystopian societies, the citizens of the *Leviathan* believe that the existing situation serves their well-being and happiness, and see the ruler as caring and benevolent. It is important to emphasise that in these dystopias, the interests of those in power are always self-serving, whereas Hobbes does not hold such notions; in fact, he does not even consider this a possibility—because the will of the absolute ruler coincides with the will of the people. One must not overlook that Hobbes's social contract theory is purely theoretical. The extent to which Hobbes's envisioned state would be realised in practice, and how liveable it would be for the individual—that is, how closely the individual's will would align with the common will—remains questionable.

The theory of justice in *Leviathan*

In Hobbes's social contract theory, he presents a completely new approach to the theory of justice compared to classical concepts. First and foremost, Hobbes redefines the concept of justice, stripping it of its former higher moral character and embedding it in a political, contractual framework. He then examines it as a condition for market activity, and finally justifies his arguments about justice and

injustice through the example of foolish individuals. The following sections will explore these three elements of Hobbesian justice.

Hobbes discusses the interpretation of injustice in his work *The Elements of Law*, where he does not explicitly mention justice, but we can infer it as the counterpart of injustice:

"(...) the breach or violation of covenant, is that which men call injury, consisting in some action or omission, which is therefore called unjust." (Hobbes & Tönnies, 1969, p. 82).

According to Hobbes, the breach of a contract is an unjust act because it violates the rights transferred when the contract was made. Therefore, we can justifiably conclude, as Hobbes later states in the *Leviathan*, that if we understand injustice to be the failure to uphold a contract, then justice is nothing more than adherence to the agreement:

"Men must perform their covenants made — this is the foremost, one might say the only moral commandment. Contracts must be fulfilled — this is the foremost, one might say the only moral commandment. And in this law of nature consisteth the fountain and original of justice. For where no covenant hath preceded, there hath no right been transferred, and every man has right to everything and consequently, no action can be unjust. But when a covenant is made, then to break it is unjust and the definition of injustice is no other than the not performance of covenant. And whatsoever is not unjust is just." (Hobbes, 1999, p. 100).

According to Hobbes's conception, neither justice nor injustice can exist outside the state, since these two concepts can only be mentioned in an environment where private property exists. In the state of nature, everyone has a right to everything, which means that there is no private property, and consequently, there is no possibility for anyone to act unjustly. Based on this, private property is nothing more than a kind of legal entity. According to Hobbes, injustice can only be discussed in the presence of private property, which can only be established under a strong state power *„to compel men equally to the performance of their covenants, by the terror of some punishment greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant..."* (Hobbes, 1999, p. 100). Injustice, therefore, is the breach of a contract, meaning the violation of private property and the law, while justice is the adherence to the contract, that is, the respect of property and the law.

Justice in relation to the free market

In the classical interpretation, in barter trade and, more generally, in the distribution of goods, an interaction is considered just if the goods are distributed equally. Commutative justice refers to the situation where the value of the goods exchanged in a commercial transaction is numerically proportional. In this case, the emphasis is on respecting the mutual interests of the parties, and the transactions serve the mutual and equal benefit of both parties. In contrast, distributive justice is defined geometrically, meaning that goods are distributed according to the specific situation of each individual (Foisneau, 2004). While in the former case, on a hot summer day, the same amount of water is distributed between the citizens of a European and an African country, in the latter case, a portion of the Europeans' share is transferred to the Africans because their situation requires it more urgently.

For Hobbes, the equality of the parties involved in the exchange is far more important than the equivalence in the value of the goods exchanged. According to his conception, the market value of goods is always determined by the agreement between the parties to the contract. Consequently, the basis of a just exchange is an equal commitment to the contract, which means that the primary concern is the mutual adherence to the agreement by both parties (Foisneau, 2004). Quoting from *Leviathan*:

"The value of all things contracted for is measured by the appetite of the contractors, and therefore the just value is that which they be contented to give. (...) commutative justice is the justice of a contractor; that is, a performance of covenant in buying and selling, hiring and letting to hire, lending and borrowing, exchanging, bartering, and other acts of contract." (Hobbes, 1999, pp. 179-180).

In determining the value of goods, it is always the parties who reach an agreement to ensure that everyone benefits, which is secured by a contract. Market trade is thus based both on private interest and on the conclusion of a contract that declares the price. Justice, therefore, lies in upholding every contract freely entered into. With regard to the free market, a barter interaction is not just when goods are distributed equally among all parties, nor when everyone receives as much as is naturally due to them or as external circumstances might dictate. The justice of commercial transactions lies in the fact that the parties involved have agreed beforehand on the relative value of the goods to be exchanged, and that all parties equally abide by the terms of the agreement.

The Fool's concept of justice

According to Foisneau, the essence of the question raised by the Fool lies in whether we can truly regard justice as the central concept of state and market economy theory, which leaves little or no room for justice as a higher divine virtue (Foisneau, 2004). The Fool also questions the priority of upholding contracts as the rational basis for peace and security. Hobbes's aim is twofold: first, to use the Fool's argument to defend his theory of justice, and second, to highlight the contradiction in using self-interest as a reason for breaching a contract. As we saw in Chapter 3, a person living in the state of nature comes to understand through reason that his self-interest, namely the preservation of his own life, can only be served by renouncing total freedom, entering into a contract, and serving a legitimate state. This leads Hobbes to claim that using self-interest as a reason for breaching a contract would be a misunderstanding of the rationality of self-interest, something only a foolish person would do. Hobbes discusses this in the following passage:

"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no such thing as justice, and sometimes also with his tongue, seriously alleging that every man's conservation and contentment being committed to his own care, there could be no reason why every man might not do what he thought conduced thereunto: and therefore, also to make, or not make; keep, or not keep, covenants was not against reason when it conduced to one's benefit." (Hobbes, 1999, p. 101).

According to the Fool's argument, we can rightly conclude that if justice lies in the adherence to agreements, and since the aim of every agreement is to serve the welfare of those who enter into it, it may sometimes be reasonable not to fulfil the terms of the contract if breaking the law is beneficial (Foisneau, 2004). One might also ask whether self-interest and justice are sometimes mutually exclusive, or how *individualism* (Foisneau, 2004) and self-interest can coexist. In response to the Fool's thought experiment, Hobbes offers two arguments:

(1) *"When a man doth a thing, which notwithstanding anything can be foreseen and reckoned on tendeth to his own destruction, howsoever some accident, which he could not expect, arriving may turn it to his benefit; yet such events do not make it reasonably or wisely done."* (Hobbes, 1999, p. 102).

(2) *"In a condition of war, wherein every man to every man, for want of a common power to keep them all in awe, is an enemy, there is no man can hope by his own strength, or wit, to himself from destruction without the help of confederates; where every one expects the same defence by the confederation that any one else does: and*

therefore he which declares he thinks it reason to deceive those that help him can in reason expect no other means of safety than what can be had from his own single power.” (Hobbes, 1999, p. 102).

In his first argument (1), Hobbes describes the random and unpredictable development of circumstances. If someone breaks a contract and engages in an action that endangers his life, but it ultimately turns out well, we cannot call this a rational or wise manifestation from which we could make general statements in the future that violating a contract—out of self-interest and egoism—is beneficial. In his work *Leviathan’s Theory of Justice*, Foisneau argues that Hobbes’s reasoning can also be viewed as an anti-Machiavellian perspective. The accidental constellation of circumstances is similar to what Machiavelli refers to as fortune in *The Prince*. Hobbes believes that even if an action that would otherwise jeopardise our security turns out to be successful, it is not reasonable to use this outcome to justify the breach of a contract; thus, it is irrational to do so. While Hobbes acknowledges that fortune can influence the course of events, he denies the relevance of using this retrospectively to justify an irrational act (Foisneau, 2004).

In his argument (2), Hobbes examines how reasonable it is to violate a pact made to end a state of war. According to Hobbes’s conception, the contract was created because, in its absence, everyone was in conflict with everyone else, meaning that individuals could only rely on their own strength to defend themselves against others. Therefore, if someone believes that violating the contract serves his self-interest, he reaches a contradiction, as he may find himself once again in a state of war with everyone else. Moreover, he will be alone, while the others will be united in a group. Such a development of circumstances can certainly not serve anyone’s self-interest. Foisneau contrasts Hobbes’s and Machiavelli’s concepts here, highlighting the similarity between Hobbes’s Fool and Machiavelli’s Prince. Machiavelli’s Prince, much like the Fool, believes not only that he can break the alliances he has with others, but that it is, in fact, reasonable to do so if it serves his own interests (Foisneau, 2004).

Machiavelli, like Hobbes’s Fool, believes that circumstances can arise in which it is in one’s own interest to violate an agreement. According to Hobbes, however, there are several reasons that prevent a ruler from breaching a contract (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3): even if the ruler wanted to, he could not break the pact because he exists outside the contract, and it would not be his intention to do so; his will is, in fact, the will of the people. For the people, breaching the contract would mean a complete eradication of rationality, because, as previously

mentioned, the violation of the contract and self-interest are in contradiction with each other. According to Hobbes, only a foolish person might believe that self-interest is aimed at satisfying individual natural desires. A rational person understands that self-interest always pertains to one's own well-being, which requires peace and security, and that the means to achieve this are contracts, laws, and a sovereign who maintains and oversees order.

References

- Bakunynin, M. (1983). Államiság és anarchia. In L. Makkai (Ed.), *Világtörténet*. MTA Történettudományi Intézete.
- Berlin, I. (1990). *Négy esszé a szabadságról* (Erős F. & Berényi G., Trans.). Európa Könyvkiadó.
- Foisneau, L., & Sorell, T. (2004). Leviathan's theory of justice. In *Leviathan after 350 years*. Oxford University Press.
- Hobbes, T. (1970). *Leviatán vagy az egyházi és világi állam anyaga, formája és hatalma* (Vámosi P., Trans.). Magyar Helikon.
- Hobbes, T. (1999). *Leviatán vagy az egyházi és világi állam anyaga, formája és hatalma* (Vámosi P., Trans.). Kossuth Kiadó.
- Hobbes, T., & Tönnies, F. (1969). *The elements of law* (2nd ed., M. M. Goldsmith, Intro.). Cass.
- Kavka, S. G. (1986). State of nature and state of war. In *Hobbesian moral and political theory*. Princeton University Press.
- Machiavelli, N. (2020). *A fejedelem*. Helikon Kiadó.
- Martinich, A. P. (2005). Moral philosophy. In *Hobbes*. Routledge.
- Smith, G. H. (2017). Thomas Hobbes. In *Self-interest and social order in classical liberalism*. Cato Institute.

The method of interpretation as discovery

Ákos, Herth¹

¹ University of Pécs, Doctoral School of Philosophy

Abstract

The study explores the interpretative method as a means of discovery, focusing on Alfred North Whitehead's philosophy of language and experience. Whitehead's metaphysical framework suggests that all events in nature are expressions, where human language serves as a heightened phase of this expressive process. The research examines the role of propositions, consciousness, and the symbolic nature of language in shaping human thought. Additionally, it draws parallels with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and highlights the transformative nature of interpretation. By framing philosophy as an experimental practice, the study argues that conceptual thinking is not merely about defining meaning but actively transforming experience.

Keywords: philosophy of language, interpretation and experience, process philosophy

Experience and language

For Whitehead, the effect of concepts is not manifested in an activating belief, as in the case of James, but in a specific feeling, even for theoretic abstractions such as those with which metaphysics works. The function of human language is therefore to draw our attention to events in the world and to connect us with them through the feeling that it evokes. Through concepts, life calls us into itself, and the reality that comes alive before our eyes reaches a higher level of expression in the experience that arises within us, through linguistic understanding and conceptual thinking. What does it mean?

According to the philosophy of organism, all events in nature are, without exception, a kind of expression, the myriad properties of beings expressing the inexhaustible richness of reality. Experience, and in it all that we perceive as nature outside of us, is as much part of an expressive process as the words and statements that make up human language. There is a mere difference of degree between the two: human language is a more complex phase of this process, but words and things are in fact one and the same. It is through them that nature speaks. Whitehead refers to this process of expression as symbolism. Human

language is merely a case of symbolism. The language in which man expresses his world and the way in which the beings of nature manifest themselves, whether in behaviour or in physical appearance, can be traced back to a common language, which is nothing other than experience. The a priori contrast concept of experience as nature and human subjectivity precedes the bifurcative influence of interpretation in the consideration of reflections on reality, thus allowing for the revision of evidence that is empirically embedded in our thinking.

"Such a reformulation of the concept of nature includes for Whitehead not least the dissolution of the opposition nature/subjectivity or else nature/experience: instead of excluding the subject and experience from nature and thus opening the door to bifurcation, for Whitehead subjectivity is a fundamental feature of the whole of reality." (Schlehaider, 2023, p. 181).

In this view, Whitehead is closely related to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a prominent representative of French phenomenology. Fabrice Bothereau writes: "According to Merleau-Ponty, the language of the world and of nature are the same: it's experience. And that's the reason why Merleau-Ponty advances this word of logos; it unifies world and nature, through the universal phenomenon of experience. Experience is the universal logos which "speaks" to everything, including us. " (Bothereau, 2009). Merleau-Ponty's and Whitehead's understanding of language point in very close directions.

In Whitehead's philosophy of language, human language is based on the category of proposition, which can be understood as a condition of possibility and a fundamental component of the specific character of human mentality, which is consciousness, and consciousness can be defined briefly as the contrast of affirmation-negation (our synthetic judgments of proposition and denial). According to this, consciousness derives from the recognition (feeling) that our actual experience can have as a component an element that is either part of our actual experience but could not be part of it, or vice versa, that could be present but is not present. We can therefore compare the actual determinacy with the potential, and through this, what is or is not currently given - and thus given as a lack - to our perception, makes sense in comparison with the potential reality.

Thus, human mentality stands out from the broader spectrum of experience and, according to the Whiteheadian view, from the spectrum of reality as a whole in its capacity to make negative judgments: "The negative judgment is the peak of

mentality"¹ (PR 1978. 5) Ella Csikós captures Whitehead's conception of consciousness in the sense that, in Whiteheadian philosophy, consciousness is a relational concept that informs us about "the relation between an experiential fact and a supposition or proposition or proposition about it..."² (Csikós, 2008). Thus, consciousness realises the possibility of error in experience when a mismatch between fact and hypothesis is discovered.

What follows from this is the insight, perhaps first associated with Lacan in continental philosophy, that the way in which language is structured is more deeply embedded in the fabric of the events that constitute reality than the consciousness that essentially determines human thought. Consciousness presupposes propositional feeling, not the other way around. For psychoanalysis, the notion of the unconscious succeeds in revealing the broader horizon made accessible by Whitehead's sterilised sense of the concept of experience, which has undergone a metaphysical revision. Whitehead's metaphysics aims in this way to genealogy the modes of organisation observable in consciousness and human language, tracing thought back to the sole concrete constituent of reality: the actual entity. There are two primary points to note. The actual entity is an occasion (actual occasion) with a temporal and timeless aspect, but its occurrence takes place in a fraction of an instant. Its happening is the coming into being, but as it comes into being, it also passes away. On the other hand, it is a process of actual experience. It is through the actual being that a subject experiences his world. Whitehead's concept of experience thus not only extends the modern conception of subjectivity into the realm of non-human, trans-human subjectivity (all that can be understood as an experiential perspective on the world), but also radically reinterprets our conception of subjectivity by assuming that the world is organised in its material, objective nature on the basis of the subjective dimension of experience.

This subjectivity is mind-independent, i.e. it reveals a mode of organisation that is more fundamental than the mind, but which can be discovered in it, since the mind itself is built from it. There is no dialectical relationship between the ways of organising human thought and the ways of organising the occasions that can be discovered in nature, since an inherently indivisible blending between them is assumed by Whitehead: "traditional philosophical thought is judged to

¹ Whitehead, A.N., *Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology. Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Edinburgh During the Session 1927-28.* NY, 1978, The Free Press. (PR)

²Csikós, E. *Élő Gondolkodás. A Folyamatfilozófia Klasszikusai: Hegel és Whitehead*, Budapest, L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2008, 133. The original text: „egy tapasztalati tény és egy róla alkotott feltételezés, illetve állítás, propozíció közötti viszonyról...”

overemphasise the so-called pure thinking of man (which he says there is no such thing), the separation, the "distinction", the idealism that is conceived of in a condensed way. For him, it is not the simplicity of the so-called pure consciousness that is the measure or the ideal; more decisive is the complexity and complexity of the totality of experience..." (Csikós, 2008)³. The human mind is not an exception but an example of the functioning of the world - the realisation of this in Whitehead's oeuvre is a key component in my reading, which I record as the fact of togetherness or solidarity. I add Mesle's beautiful lines to my reflection:

"One helpful consequence of the view that we are part of the world rather than separate from it is that, by looking at our own existence, we can learn something about the rules that apply to everything that exists. We are examples of those rules, not exceptions to them. The world is like us because we are like the world, part of the world, reflecting the same basic principles and rules as the world. We cannot understand ourselves without understanding the world of which we are a part; nor can we finally understand the world without understanding ourselves as part of it." (Mesle, 2008, p. 24).

In addition to this, Whitehead also assumes that in the process of perception, we encounter the things themselves. Things in themselves, in their objective reality. Their objective reality, however, is not predetermined. It is not a state of definite and unambiguous actuality, but a dynamic happening of potentially present ambiguity (meaning-ness): its coming into being, the *process of becoming*. The unfolding of given (the given-above) and interrelated meanings. Our imagination meets the objective reality of things before our intellect. Our imagination encounters an intelligibility that develops in an indeterminate but consistent medium (or at least with an openness to, or compatibility with, consistent interpretation), which speaks to us in the language of potentiality. This language is the effect.

At this point, the activity is not yet concentrated in the operation of definition, but in the deepening of the effect, and so we are not yet dealing here with definitions and clearly distinct formations of meaning, but with possibilities of meaning, from which unknown and unusual outlines and new beginnings of meaning

³ Csikós, E. ibid. 133. „a hagyományos filozófiai gondolkodást úgy ítéli meg, hogy az túlhangsúlyozza az emberből az ún. tiszta gondolkodást (ilyen szerinte nincs is), az elkülönülést, a „disztinktséget”, a kilúgozottan felfogott idealitást. Az ő számára nem az ún. tiszta tudat egyszerűsége a mérce vagy az eszmény; perdőntőbb ennél a *tapasztalat teljességének* bonyolultsága, összetettsége...”

emerge. We usually express the given forms of meaning at hand by understanding them, but in the case of the possibilities of meaning, understanding occurs only in parallel with the process of expression. At the beginning of expression, we can only rely on a seductive feeling, from which the unknown forms of expression can develop and understanding can be realised.

Speaking in the language of effect is a speculative praxis of experimentation with language. As Stengers writes: "For Whitehead, philosophy demands experimentation with language, knowing that any ready-made use of words means failure" (Stengers, 2009). Elsewhere: "Philosophy is an experimental practice like physics, but it experiments on language, that is, it devises concepts that will have no meaning unless they succeed in bringing to existence those dimensions of experience that usual statements can ignore, since these statements are inseparable from specialised thought." (Stengers, 2011, p. 248). For Whitehead, a concept, when applied to a metaphysical purpose, makes sense in its relevance to direct (or immediate) experience. "But no language can be anything but elliptical, requiring a leap of the imagination to understand its meaning in its relevance to immediate experience." (PR 1978. 13).

The concept is then not merely a ready-made definition or a carrier of an available, well- or ill-defined meaning, but also an operational, particular component in the process of interpretation. In this way, interpretation takes on a peculiarly extended meaning and acquires a function of great significance in experience, dynamising what is 'given' to us from actual experience: "But we should not be mistaken: if Whitehead can bestow such a fundamental importance on interpretation, it is because the nature of interpretation itself has changed. It neither refers here to a relativism of any kind nor to an endless recursivity of the always multiple perspectives we can have of our experiences. Instead, it becomes extended in an unprecedented way" (Debaise, 2009). As an agent of operation, the concept performs its function in the transformation of experience (the dynamisation of the given experience). Thus, interpretation becomes "extended in an unprecedented way." As Stengers observes, the concrete operations of speculative thought can be traced less to epistemology than to alchemy: "Testing, not judging. The relation between thinking and testing has its origin in alchemy and does not refer to a knowing subject, but to a concrete operation." (Stengers, 2009, p. 28). For the concrete action precedes the knowing subject, I add. More precisely, the knowing subject derives from the concrete operation - this insight is the key to understanding Whitehead's turn.

The metaphysical use of language thus differs from the ordinary use of natural language mainly in that concepts perform concrete operations. These operations, in turn, cannot be divorced from the particular circumstances of the interpreter's practice but are embedded in and derive their meaning from the particular situation of interpretation. In the light of the foregoing, operations thus fulfil their ultimate function in the transformation of experience. Concepts are the instruments of transformation. A technical question arises, however: How do we get concepts not only to have meaning but also to perform operations? And to capture their meaning less in a definition and more in a purpose, a function, and a relevance correlated with the function performed? Whitehead suggests: "The only possible procedure is to start from verbal expressions which, when taken by themselves with the current meaning of their words, are ill-defined and ambiguous" (PR 1978. 13).

The interpreter is then forced to rely on the "imaginative leap". Whitehead's poetic expression needs explanation, and we have reached a central point in our examination of the constructive enterprise of Whiteheadian metaphysics.

Imaginative rationalisation and the leaping imagination

For Whitehead, metaphysics is first and foremost a speculative philosophical enterprise, which means that it offers propositions of interpretation along the lines of ideas and principles based on knowledge, observations and facts about reality that are constructed by the particular operation of human reason, abstract thought. The point of departure is, therefore, the insight of direct experience, from which the initial data is derived, which provides an insight into the objective reality of experience. The initial data is given merely as a potential for determination, containing the sense-initiatives, their glancing, interrelated multiplicity, which awaits the abstract faculty of human thought to organise the multiplicity of initial facts into contexts and synthesise them into knowledge. The initial data is thus still pure potentiality, actualised by conceptual thinking. This does not mean, however, that the initial data does not contain meaning and is not full of meaning prior to conceptual interpretation. Inherent in things themselves is the organisation of meaning that not only precedes human meaning, but that human meaning - the way in which one deciphers the meaning inherent in things - actually derives from them, as an advanced phase of the expression of nature (or reality), if Whitehead's turn is taken seriously enough.

The task of metaphysics is the descriptive analysis of reality as seen by experience along the broadest possible generalities: this process is interpretation. The

metaphysician works with a coherent set of generalities and abstractions that can be applied to all areas of experience, with the proviso that there are no uninterpretable elements. Then, the interpretation is considered adequate. The test of applicability and adequacy is the empirical side of the enterprise, and the interconnectedness of ideas meets the requirements of rationalism, in so far as it forms a coherent and logical whole.

"Speculative Philosophy is the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of 'interpretation' I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme. Thus, the philosophical scheme should be coherent, logical, and, with respect to its interpretation, applicable and adequate. Here 'applicable' means that some items of experience are thus interpretable, and 'adequate' means that there are no items incapable of such interpretation " (PR 1978. 3).

It is important to stress that interpretation applies to all areas of experience. Whitehead breaks with the empiricist tradition's concept of experience, which is reduced either to sensory experience and the extensive perception of the external world or to the objective (or at least as far as possible independent of subjectivity) data of natural scientific cognition, alien to the experiential horizon of human experience. Whitehead's concept of experience stands the test of the bifurcation of nature; that is, it expresses at once the external and the internal, the objective and the subjective, the public (secular) and the private (personal) experience of man. The objective reality of experience is not achieved by being free of subjective elements, but on the contrary, by being able to highlight these subjective elements as being essential to the understanding of the knowledge of natural scientific investigations. It points to the inherent coherence between the two poles, the physical-material and the mental-conscious. By coherence, we should understand not only that the two poles belong together and are interconnected through different interrelationships but also that the two cannot be separated and cannot be understood in isolation without each other. It states the fact of their interdependence. In the concrete reality of experience, it is a process that cannot be broken down into two poles, in which the two poles are still inseparably united. The two poles belong to the fabric of the investigation, in which we abstract from this concrete process, i.e. make it the object of analysis. Immediately, reality is a process: what happens and what I experience. Nothing else. The body and the mind, physical things and the ideas about them are all abstractions,

derivatives of a detachment from the process, which above all announce that we have taken a step back from the immediacy of experience.

"'Coherence,' as here employed, means that the fundamental ideas, in terms of which the scheme is developed, presuppose each other so that in isolation they are meaningless. This requirement does not mean that they are definable in terms of each other; it means that what is indefinable in one such notion cannot be abstracted from its relevance to the other notions. It is the ideal of speculative philosophy that its fundamental notions shall not seem capable of abstraction from each other. In other words, it is presupposed that no entity can be conceived in complete abstraction from the system of the universe and that it is the business of speculative philosophy to exhibit this truth. This character is its coherence." (PR 1978. 3)

Ideas cannot achieve coherence without a living context. By living, I mean that the concepts in use make sense in the context of the circumstances in which they are interpreted. They not only mean something but also perform concrete operations. The systematic background that is assumed is not only a logical or grammatical construction but also an observable rule-based operation. Concepts, as agents performing operations, are embedded in a common, particular operation. It is in this operation that they perform their specific functions, which they acquire in their mutual relevance. What is 'indefinable in one such notion' is nothing other than the concept's function in interpretation. Indefinable because it is only from the function as a whole, through an understanding of the role it plays in the whole, that it is possible to understand what the function of a given concept is, that is to say, the only way to know what these functions are is to follow the path of interpretation and, in conjunction with it, the path of the transformation of experience. Soelch gives the following definition:

"Coherence means a basic inventory of concepts whose fundamental notions form a non-hierarchical web and which cannot be understood in isolation. Each single term presupposes a systematic background that assigns to it a specific meaning as part of the system. Like in a puzzle, where the function of each single puzzle piece can only be deciphered in view of the complete picture, the meaning of each single notion results from its role as part of the whole." (Soelch, 2011, p. 21). This systematic background provides the conditions of possibility for operation, thanks to which the transformation of experience (the aim of operation) can be achieved.

The only way to do this is to transform not only what we describe, i.e. the data of the description (the object contained in the data and the way we describe it), but

also the subject who does the describing: "Deduction will never replace discovery, for the latter implies, each time, a becoming that transforms both the person doing the describing and what is described." (Stengers, 2011, p. 249). The function of concepts can only be understood by those who take part in the discovery and who take it upon themselves to be not only visitors but also explorers. It is not possible to find out from the data, from the results of the discovery, what process the discoverer has followed in the course of the experiment. The way the concepts helped the process progress can only be seen through the eyes of the discovering subject. The data, whether it is a scientific result, a system that underpins a worldview, or merely a text describing an experience, has an effect, and that effect is directed through the eyes of the subject who is attracted to the effect.

The description of experience and the transformation of experience take place in the same process: interpretation from this point of view is a constructive process of constructing schemes in the direction of the fullest possible generality. Constructive, that is to say, we assume that the schemes applicable to experience are not yet available to us, together with the fact that the process of experience is not subordinated to the constitutive operation of the transcendental subject. The birthplace of experience is an active world, which, contrary to the schemes, is not created by us, on the contrary, we are born from the effect of the world as contingent subjects resulting from the particular act of effect: "Secondly, that the true method of philosophical construction is to frame a scheme of ideas, the best that one can, and unflinchingly to explore the interpretation of experience in terms of that scheme." (PR 1978. Preface XIV) This is why Whitehead calls the method both descriptive generalisation and imaginative generalisation (a method of imaginative rationalisation). It is both a descriptive procedure, which presupposes a solid experience of the world, and an interpretative journey, an expedition into the unknown - relying on the wings of the imagination.

"The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalisation, and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation. The reason for the success of this method of imaginative rationalisation is that when the method of difference fails, factors which are constantly present may yet be observed under the influence of imaginative thought. Such thought supplies the differences which direct observation lacks. It can even play with inconsistency; and can thus throw light on the consistent, and persistent, elements in experience by comparison with what in imagination is inconsistent with them." (PR 1978. 5).

Observation is transformed "in the thin air of imaginative generalisation", in conceptual constructions that arise "under the influence of imaginative thought" and can be applied to experiences that are overlooked by the terms of natural language.

"Philosophers can never hope finally to formulate these metaphysical first principles. The weakness of insight and deficiencies of language stand in the way. Words and phrases must be stretched towards a generality foreign to their ordinary usage; however, such elements of language can be stabilised as technicalities, and they remain metaphors that are mutely appealing for an imaginative leap." (PR 1978. 4).

Generalisation becomes increasingly difficult the wider the spectrum of experience we embrace. From this point of view, metaphysics takes on the greatest task since it aims to conquer the most comprehensive perspective that imagination can offer. Mesle's introductory interpretation is as follows:

"If the observed facts and careful reasoning support your effort, you have made a step toward the larger general principles of thought. Your revised principle is now more *adequate* than it was before, and it can be used as a *descriptive generalisation*. But, of course, this task becomes more and more difficult as the principles apply to more and more fields. When you get around to those principles that describe the basic features of any existing thing at all, the task requires a combination of creative, imaginative, and disciplined thought that few people possess." (Mesle, 2008, p. 17).

The coherence between the different domains of experience, which translates the heterogeneous, diverse patterns that are primarily observable and that result from the method of difference into a common language as an interpretative medium, is based on a systematic structure of clearly defined schemes. The general scheme, which is the abstraction resulting from the rationalisation of the vision conceived in the interpreter, is what Whitehead calls the speculative scheme. It is the speculative scheme that frames the metaphilosophical context of the particular process of interpretation, the reflections that inform us about the interpreter's intentions and the cultural and scientific conditions of interpretation. What is the interpreter's intention with the method of interpretation? What is the problem to which he or she is addressing? What is the solution? The systematic explication of the speculative scheme is also achieved by means of schemes, which are introduced as categorical schemes. The categorical schemes introduce the system-defined existents of reality (existential categories) into the interpretation, summarise in 27 explanatory categories the fact-statements to which, as

explanatory causes, the set of operations in the process of interpretation can be traced, and record in 9 categories of obligations the conditions that determine the operation between the components of the system. The categorical schemes provide the structure of the Whiteheadian construct.

To summarise the above. The Whiteheadian notion of interpretation presupposes a methodological perspectivism that derives its force from the insight that reality cannot be known without the methodological inclusion of one or more interpretive aspects, even though this interpretive procedure does not reject the idea of mind-independent reality and, in fact, takes it as its basis. Whiteheadian thought balances between two opposing ideas. Their aim is to show the coherence between the two views and to expose the fallacy of our cultural beliefs (our belief that the two views are mutually exclusive) that arise from fallacies. Raud Rein's own process-philosophical method puts it this way:

"I have also tried to show how this position by no means entails the rejection of a mind-independent reality; the only thing it does not accept is the imposition on nature of mind-made structures and hierarchies. Reality is mind-independent in spite of its slices appearing to us always and only in a particular, perspective-bound and gaze-dependent form." (Raud, 2021, p. 54).

Process and Reality thus aims to develop a language suitable for metaphysical purposes because we do not yet have the language to formulate the general metaphysical principles to which a metaphysical enterprise inherently aspires. For Whitehead, metaphysics is essentially 'an adventure of experimentation.' The practical tests to which we subject our principles are an essential part of interpretation. Stengers often stresses testing, not judging. And the test of propositions applies no less to the interpreter himself than to the conceptual tools of metaphysics. Are we capable of approaching interpretation in such a way that, in addition to/rather than expressing our prior views, we give the concepts a chance to speak to us, to lure us in unexpected directions, to surprise us? On the other hand, the concepts must also stand the test: they must interpret the totality of data that comes from the insight of direct experience in a coherent, logical context. No metaphysical system can really hope to fully meet these practical tests. But this merely means that metaphysics is a dynamic process that constantly tests the interpreter.

Interpretation constitutes concepts. And concepts constitute one or more interpreting subjects or, more generally, one or more philosophers. Ways of thinking, perspectives, stimuli for thinking. Like the philosopher, his/her concepts

also form a multiplicity of meanings. This process of formation, which is not a temporary means of transition to the achievement of the goal of philosophy as an event (the creation of a thinker with autonomous thoughts), but conversely, by virtue of its entry into the concrete activity of formation, necessarily gives rise to a contingent thinker, and to his concepts to an actual, contextualised sense as an instrument of carrying out the process of thinking. However, the formation does not end, and speculative philosophy revolves around the cognition, or rather the experience, of this non-ending. When the experience of the unfinished is approached by the multitude of thoughts that constitute the thinker, it becomes clear that more has happened in the process than the philosopher has vaguely thought through the language that holds a mirror to itself. The thinking, the use of concepts, and the unravelling and understanding of the meaning inherent in their use will cover a broader spectrum than the language in use can currently define for us. That's why we keep going. That is why we do not stop and find the ultimate truth.

The philosopher is able to use concepts in a way that gives them a meaning beyond context. When he/she says a concept, he/she is not merely touching its meaning in the context, because by touching it, he/she is not only giving it meaning, but also linking it to other meanings that emerge from other contexts. For the philosopher, to utter a concept is to become more than oneself because one behaves as more than one can actually know or understand by the concept. He/she uses the concept in such a way that it contains not only the other meanings that he/she has already discovered in the contexts he/she has already travelled through, but also the possibility of a new meaning that has yet to be revealed. By saying it, he/she not only takes on the weight of a meaning greater than himself/herself but also moves in a direction not yet explored. The direction is determined by the function of the concept. By thinking about the concept in different ways, we are moving around the concept itself, but also beyond that to the feeling (the effect of the concept) that the concept evokes in us. It is through experiencing the effect that we understand the role of the concept in our current use and the function of the concept in the future process of our formation. Thinking is the becoming of the thinker. It is the becoming, which means that it is a process of formation that has both a physical and a mental aspect. In this way, the thinker is not merely an abstract formation obtained through the synthesis of thoughts but also a concrete being, an existence that can never be fully defined and covered by what takes place in language. The thinker is also the unspoken and unspeakable tendency that is implicitly present behind language. An ineffably present direction that carries out the process of becoming. This

unspeakable direction expresses the fact that language is used by an organic being who uses expression to satisfy his ambition to achieve certain ends.

The breathing philosopher

Paul Stenner defines his hybrid world-interpretation practice, resulting from the intersection of Whitehead's and James's philosophies, as a mosaic philosophy, which he calls deep empiricism (Stenner, 2011), in conjunction with the late term of James, who, in identifying his own philosophy, added to and went beyond the definitions associated with the notion of pragmatism, and placed the idea of radical empiricism at the forefront of his thinking.⁴ His influence on Whitehead is well known and has been acknowledged in many of Whitehead's writings. However, Stenner also argues that the philosophy of organism can be understood as a way of interpreting reality that is a renewing continuation of James's late legacy, radical empiricism.

Stenner traces the two ways of thinking (the system of *Process and Reality* and the practice of interpreting reality that emerges from the essays in Radical Empiricism) to the Jamesian operation of merging the concepts of entity and function in metaphysical position, which James performed in his examination of consciousness in his essay *Does Consciousness Exist?*⁵ On this basis, the existence of consciousness as a definable being or entity is called into question, as the title suggests. James is convinced that consciousness exists only as a function in reality. This function is active knowing, that is, the ability to orient oneself in the world, to adapt and to solve problems. The Jamesian definition of consciousness as a function becomes a Whiteheadian view of the merging of the concepts of entity and function. In terms of the basic being of Whitehead's system, actual entities are introduced into metaphysical discourse as entities that gain their existence as entities (their being as superject) by acquiring the function in reality (as a world-making process) that they take possession of in the process of individuation. To be an entity in the world, from a Whiteheadian perspective, is to operate as a function in reality. Whitehead defines actual beings as experiential happenings, and James's radical empiricist investigation begins with an analysis of pure experience as a substitute for things, as an object of investigation. The thrust of

⁴ James says that the doctrine of radical empiricism outlines his own Weltanschauung. James William, *A World of Pure Experience*, 41 (In *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. New York. Longmans, Green, and Co. 1912. 39-92.)

⁵ James William, *Does 'Consciousness' Exist?*, 3. (In: *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. New York. Longmans, Green, and Co. 1912. 1-39.) „Let me then immediately explain that I mean only to deny that the word stands for an entity, but to insist most emphatically that it does stand for a function.“

my interpretation is in line with Stenner's in that it assumes a kinship and a connection between James and Whitehead that is not merely noteworthy but can be recorded as a key element that essentially determines interpretation. My approach, however, differs from Stenner's in that, instead of a comparative immersion in the two systems, it merely draws attention to a metaphilosophical reflection by James at the end of his famous essay on consciousness:

"Let the case be what it may in others, I am as confident as I am of anything that, in myself, the stream of thinking (which I recognise emphatically as a phenomenon) is only a careless name for what, when scrutinised, reveals itself to consist chiefly of the stream of my breathing. The 'I think' which Kant said must be able to accompany all my objects is the 'I breathe' which actually does accompany them. There are other internal facts besides breathing (intracerebral muscular adjustments, etc., of which I have said a word in my larger Psychology), and these increase the assets of 'consciousness,' so far as the latter is subject to immediate perception; but breath, which was ever the original of 'spirit,' breath moving outwards, between the glottis and the nostrils, is, I am persuaded, the essence out of which philosophers have constructed the entity known to them as consciousness. That entity is fictitious, while thoughts in the concrete are fully real. But thoughts in the concrete are made of the same stuff as things are." (James, 1912b, pp. 36-37).

The process of interpretation is an abstract journey that, given James's reflection, does not seem to happen merely in our heads; rather, it permeates our whole body and flows out into the world. Thinking is a stream of thought, and as Ádám Lovász writes in his book, "The stream of thought is not the individual activity of a given subject, but an anonymous stream that manifests itself through his body. In James's ontology, there is no distinction between thinking and breathing; the two are synonymous concepts."⁶ I draw particular attention to James's thoughts because they shed light on an attitude that I assume Whitehead also has. According to him, when we speak of the being of a thinker, we are not merely speaking of the 'colour-changing' of an abstraction in the mind, which is modified by changing its opinions, but also of the body of an organic being, which is become by thoughts. Thoughts perform transformative operations not only in the mind of the thinker but also in his body. What we think speculatively can act as effectual

⁶ Lovász Ádám, *Az érzet deterritorializációja. A kiterjesztett észlelés filozófiája*, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2018, 44. / „A gondolatfolyam nem egy adott szubjektumnak a saját, egyéni tevékenysége, hanem anonim folyás, amely a testén keresztül nyilvánkozik meg. James ontológiájában nincsen különbség a gondolkodás és a lélegzetvétel között, a kettő egymással szinonim fogalom.”

operations in the body (the directly accessible fabric of reality) if we begin to use language as a force that attracts feeling. It is through our feelings that concepts are embedded in our bodies. And they acquire function in our body, in the immanent activity of our body. On this basis, the process of interpretation holds for us not only the transformation of experience and the discovery of the world but also an ever more subtle and profound way of understanding the interaction with our bodies and the world, both practical and speculative.

References

- Bothereau, F. (2009). Whitehead, Merleau-Ponty: The decentralisation of phenomenology. *ResearchGate*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273145779_Whitehead_Merleau-Ponty_The_Decentralization_of_phenomenology
- Csikós, E. (2008). *Élő gondolkodás: A folyamatfilozófia klasszikusai: Hegel és Whitehead*. L'Harmattan Kiadó.
- Debaise, D. (2009). The emergence of a speculative empiricism: Whitehead reading Bergson. In K. Robinson (Ed.), *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic connections* (pp. 77–86). Palgrave Macmillan.
- James, W. (1912a). A world of pure experience. In *Essays in radical empiricism* (pp. 39–92). Longmans, Green, and Co.
- James, W. (1912b). Does 'consciousness' exist? In *Essays in radical empiricism* (pp. 1–39). Longmans, Green, and Co.
- Lovász, Á. (2018). *Az érzet deterritorializációja: A kiterjesztett észlelés filozófiája*. Gondolat Kiadó.
- Mesle, C. R. (2008). *Process-relational philosophy: An introduction to Alfred North Whitehead*. Templeton Foundation Press.
- Raud, R. (2021). *Being in flux: A post-anthropocentric ontology of the self*. Polity Press.
- Schlehaider, I. (2023). 'Apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness'—Nature and subjectivity in Alfred North Whitehead. *Histories*, 3, 176–188. <https://doi.org/10.3390/histories3020012>
- Soelch, D. (2011). From consistency to coherence: Whitehead's transformation of James's epistemic conservatism. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*. <https://journals.openedition.org/ejpap/870>
- Stenner, P. (2011). James and Whitehead: Assemblage and systematisation of a deeply empiricist mosaic philosophy. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*. <https://journals.openedition.org/ejpap/874>
- Stengers, I. (2009). Thinking with Deleuze and Whitehead: A double test. In K. Robinson (Ed.), *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic connections*. Palgrave Macmillan. (pp. 28-45)
- Stengers, I. (2011). *Thinking with Whitehead: A free and wild creation of concepts* (M. Chase, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1978). *Process and reality: An essay in cosmology*. The Free Press.

