



ФИЛОСОФИЯ И МЕТОДОЛОГИЯ НА ПЕДАГОГИКАТА

PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY OF PEDAGOGY

HAPPINESS AS GOODNESS.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** *It is evident that the separate examination of the concepts of happiness and goodness offers various approaches. Thus, scrutinizing them together would further widen the range of possibilities. The phrase “happiness as goodness” means that we can at least examine happiness as the manifestation of goodness. Goodness is a pedagogical category which, above all, expresses a superior virtue. The problem here is that pedagogy as a social science has remained fully indifferent to the theoretical examination of goodness. This particular study states that goodness is the primary motivating force of education and the other way around, as well as the innermost world of education and maybe the deepest and most wonderful content of it. The virtue of goodness presupposes the eminence of the heart and soul.*

**Keywords:** *happiness; welfare; goodness; education; virtue.*

Motto: *“Where are you, beautiful fairy of our life, happiness?”*

*Mihály Tompa*

(19<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian poet)

INTRODUCTION

“Where is happiness,” many people ask. Let me go beyond it: “Where is goodness?” We search for it feverishly and almost convulsively, but most of the time we do not find it or rarely find it in small fragments. In reality we see many unsatisfied and unhappy people around us, and these people are missing decency (Hódi 2010: 115, 224). Or as the famous contemporary French-Belgian writer Houellebecq claims, “Nowadays, we are vegetating in a world without goodness” (Houellebecq 2019). If we ever meet happy people, we envy them and consider them to be in fortune’s favour (Hódi 2010: 232).

We are facing a phony contradiction: despite the existence of the Happy School, the Institute of Happiness, the Happy Child pedagogical programme, The World is Better with You Foundation, the *Happiness* magazine, the prestigious international *Journal of Happiness Studies* and so forth, we do not know much about the concept of happiness, not to mention goodness. It is unfortunate and unacceptable for me that the two most related disciplines, namely psychology and pedagogy, can only show very mi-

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nor results with regard to the two phenomena. Furthermore, one can experience a serious lack of interest in them. Psychology has not dealt with the problem of happiness directly until the emergence of positive psychology in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. As for the science of pedagogy, the situation is even worse: it remains silent in terms of the question of happiness. The well-known anthologies of studies on education theory, chrestomathies and pedagogy conferences do not even mention this virtue. However, they intensively scrutinize, for example, honesty, veracity, loyalty, love and other important virtues. They remain uninterested only in relation to goodness. Concerning the related philosophical and ethical research, we can easily conclude that, despite a few endeavours, systematic analyses are in short supply.

Thus, we cannot be surprised by the fact that we have rather limited knowledge on the meaning and characteristics of both goodness and happiness. The knowledge we have rests on insecure foundations. What is more, in most cases we evaluate the concept under investigation incorrectly. It is not rare either that our choice of words reflects prejudices. Plenty of questions are not reassuringly clarified. For instance, how is welfare related to happiness? Who and how many people can have this feeling? Can we experience happiness only for a short time or can we enjoy it over a longer period of time? What is the essence of good and goodness? What is the difference between welfare and goodness? Why is it important to examine happiness, unhappiness, goodness and evilness at the same time? Last but not least, what is the underlying correlation between happiness and goodness?

Further questions could also be posed, but the above-mentioned ones might be able to demonstrate that the problematics and dilemmas of happiness and goodness set an enormous challenge to pedagogy and psychology. I reckon that we are far from being able to give well-structured and properly differentiated answers. We desperately need to conduct a lot of research and to elaborate on such inquiries which at least attempt to provide us with a common framework for the relevant psychological, pedagogical and philosophic results we have. Numerous and various researchers (mostly the representatives of psychology and pedagogy) could deal with the questions of happiness and goodness. Nevertheless, everybody who is not indifferent to the evolution of the concepts of happiness and goodness, especially their educational aspect within this framework, should be interested in the topic to a certain extent. I elaborate only on one single but unavoidable question and attempt to answer it: Is it desirable to include the standpoint of pedagogy in our interpretation of happiness? This would concretely mean: Is there in fact a correlation between happiness and goodness? As a result of such an inquiry, we can draw an educational philosophical conclusion which can be useful to anyone who is receptive to the realization of happiness and goodness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Welfare and Being Good*

Positive psychology has several approaches to the definition of the concept of happiness. The majority of researchers accept the interpretation that it is nothing else but subjective welfare, the feeling of subjective welfare. Before discussing this concept in detail, I would like to justify why I have given this particular title to my study. *Goodness* – in my opinion – *is the manifestation of happiness* and vice versa: *happiness is the consequence of goodness*. Therefore, I argue that a happy person is in the possession of the virtue of goodness, and goodness triggers the feeling of happiness in the individual. Nevertheless, linking the two concepts in such a manner might not seem convincing to everybody. Let me articulate my point of view in a broader sense: in that manner happiness can be regarded as an aspect of goodness. It is not a bold thought to raise the correlation between happiness and goodness. Relating the two concepts can be lucrative. In this respect, I would like to highlight three standpoints: a viewpoint in public awareness, an assertive scientific (psychological) statement, and finally a classic philosophical proposition. The first one is something we all know: the banal catchphrase present in advertising: “It is good to be happy!” For the scientific example, let us turn to Attila Oláh, the most famous representative of contemporary Hungarian positive psychology. In many of his works, he claims that the function of happiness is to help the individual determine what is right and what is wrong (Oláh 2010: ed.). Lastly, it is also worth considering the famous statement of Aristotle that happiness is the ultimate good (Peters

1893: 16). According to the philosopher, the ultimate goal of all deeds is happiness that keeps humans in motion. It would be worth dedicating a separate study to the ultimate good. In the following sections, I shall briefly touch upon the topic.

I would like to add to the above-mentioned three examples that even if we cannot identify happiness and goodness, it is still obvious that there are underlying similarities between them, even though they remain hidden in most cases.

When we are doing research on the connection between happiness and goodness, we should first and foremost clarify the meaning of the two concepts. Unfortunately, problems start with that. There is a shockingly small number of analyses of the concept of happiness and we do not have a unified and unambiguous definition of it. There are a few promising attempts to describe it, but they do not really bother with coming up with a definition. They simply acknowledge the fact that such a concept can be interpreted in several ways due to its complexity (mysteriousness).

There are several stereotypes, well-intentioned but superficial conceptions about the phenomenon of happiness. It is a common perception that happiness is nothing else but a mental state in which one does not have any problems or troubles, i.e. a perfect world. Furthermore, many people profess that happiness equals wealth, the secure and continuous financial growth which brings along the feeling of welfare. Others claim it is a rare gift of God, the manifestation of fortune. A further question is whether happiness is a short moment or it can persist for a long time. What is the matter with health? Can a person suffering from an illness be happy? There are many people who think that the root of happiness is love: without it one cannot be happy. If it was true, then why has the following saying emerged in the public consciousness: "If I do not feel happy, does it mean that you do not love me anymore?" The statement that there are as many types of happiness as the number of people in the world may sound desirable. This kind of happiness cannot be modelled at all. It has neither general characteristics nor an intrinsic and common content.

I think that we can avoid such an unimaginative explanation, or, to put it mildly, an inadequately established point of view or misconception, if we find the lowest possible denominator among the various articulations of happiness to which we should consistently stick. To find this denominator, let us turn to some classical philosophical conclusions. Aristotle pointed out the following:

Thus, it seems that happiness is something final and self-sufficing, and is the end of all that man does. [...] Happiness [...] is strictly final which is always chosen as an end in itself and never as a means. [...] But nevertheless, true worth shines out even here, in the calm endurance of many great misfortunes, not through insensibility, but through nobility and greatness of soul. [...] [A] happy man is one who exercises his faculties in accordance with perfect excellence, being duly furnished with external goods (Peters 1893: 15–16, 25–26).

Based on the quote above, it is obvious that both happiness and goodness are virtues or maybe the ultimate virtues which we practice for their own sake, not in relation to something else. Happiness and goodness are activities in accordance with virtues. Later, Seneca summarized that happiness is a very serious thing: "Happy men are the men of virtue" (Seneca 1975: 116). Kant elaborated on this thought in the Late Modern Period. He primarily discussed the concept of good. However, his witty remarks are very useful to research on happiness. He defined two forms of the manifestation of good: corporeal (physical) and moral good. He put welfare and all the pleasures derived from it into the former category. The latter will be the virtuous deed. The two forms are in an eternal battle with each other, but it is obvious that good in a moral sense is the superior and exemplary one. Kant wittily elaborated on the opposite of both forms at the same time. Thus, he compared welfare to disease (unease) and good to the manifestation of bad moral. He stated that *welfare* or *disease* refer to one's pleasant or unpleasant physical state: pleasure and pain. Nevertheless, good or bad relates to the *will*, whether the law of pure reason orders something to become its object. Good and bad are related to actions and not to one's feelings (Kant 1991: pp. 173, 509–510).

What conclusions can be drawn on the basis of this philosophical discussion? It is clear to me that the feeling of subjective welfare can trigger pleasant and joyful feelings. Nevertheless, if we want to grasp the true nature of happiness, we must enter into a deeper layer of human existence: the inner world

of the personality. We must reach the superior sphere of coexistence and cooperation, the functioning of the virtue which controls the will and actions as a fine and stable mechanism. We must not forget that József Halasy-Nagy, a Hungarian philosopher who lived and philosophized during the interwar period, claimed that naturalistic ethics names the desirable existential state as happiness. Every theory looking for good in the exterior material reality can only reach a dead end because good and bad are absolute values of the individual. Pleasure and welfare are undoubtedly values but they are not the Absolute, not everything (Halasy-Nagy 2002: 177–178). The Absolute is not the good in a moral sense. Consequently, one can state that subjective welfare is a desirable and pleasant feeling for the individual. However, it brings along only the pretence of happiness. In one of his works, Halasy-Nagy argues that the decisive factor of happiness is an action in accordance with virtue which (the action) does not originate from the outside world but from the depth of our soul (Halasy-Nagy 1991: 166). Thus, we can find happiness in our inner world, i.e. inward, moral character, not in the exterior world. I shall quote another Hungarian philosopher, Tamás Nyíri (also theologian), who summarized it in the following way: Moral good is happiness (Nyíri 1991: 97).

The philosophical historical research can be continued. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned discussion has already revealed to me that it would be desirable and reasonable to draw certain conclusions in a more defined manner than we have been doing, or one should rather rethink our general conceptions of happiness. I am primarily thinking of breaking with the popular view which associates happiness with the possession of goods: economy, pleasures (e.g. culinary, sexual pleasures, drug consumption, sweet laziness). I should highlight that, according to Aristotle, intellectual, spiritual pleasure exists as well. What is more, we can control and enjoy it with our healthy body. We can summarize it in the word *welfare*. However, it is not fortunate to define happiness by welfare, simply because welfare does not cover the essence of happiness. As we have already seen and will see later on, human beings can be linked to their inner world, moral value and the sheer existence of virtue. The adjective *subjective*, which is frequently utilized, does not question the above-mentioned criterion from a critical perspective. I claim that identifying happiness with subjective welfare is not acceptable at all since it does not take the intrinsic aspects into consideration or at least does not interpret them to a satisfying extent. Subjective welfare marginalizes the innermost parts of the individual: spiritual manifestations and moral virtues.

This does not mean that we are not interested in our own financial, social, sexual state and medical condition; these are important elements of normal everyday life. They convey real values and needs. Nevertheless, we know and experience that not all of us become happy. Even if not everybody knows, more components are needed for the manifestation of happiness. Superior content and a noble moral deed can bring us happiness. If we stuck to the standpoint that happiness equals welfare, we would not be able to explain certain things. For example, what should say about the members of the Maasai tribe who live in deep poverty in two-metre high mud huts without windows and are in a constant struggle for food and water on a daily basis, but who are satisfied with and feel happy about their situation? A person with disabilities can also be happy while someone who has won the lottery can become unhappy. A popular singer or celebrated film star can be upset or sad below the surface. One should also pose the following rhetorical question: Can we love our child, parents, domestic partner or spouse despite being unhappy? Consequently, happiness should not be determined by love as many would think.

Such examples can convince us that we need to further elaborate on our interpretation of happiness. Based on the above-mentioned philosophical conclusions, we can come up with and utilize definitions at a deeper level. Goods, pleasures, health, success and love are our everyday companions that follow us until the end of our life. However, I should again emphasize that not all of us become happy people. If we want to define the scrutinized concept in a general and short way, we can say that *happiness is a special sensation which expresses the totality of human existence; a force which penetrates and radiates from the inner parts of the self; a superior virtue that moves and elevates every aspect of life*. It is an ecstatic experience that can strike individuals in a second but can build their personality as a guiding principle, even if it is not conscious during their entire life or they become aware of it at the end of their life (namely that they have lived a happy life).

As we might know, the devil is in the details, so coming up with general definitions of happiness is not sufficient. We must elaborate on the details. If we want to specify the seemingly mysterious patterns

of happiness, three “prosaic” criteria should be established. Here are the three “pillars” of happiness: a) it is necessary to set real goals and have a firm motivating force that keeps the person in motion; b) it is inevitable to have a concrete commitment to somebody or something that gives your life a purpose, a meaning and a magical aura; c) it should leave an exact, unique and meaningful trace in the way of thinking, deeds and behaviour of the person (which is uniquely in his/her possession).

It is obvious that those who consider themselves happy live their happiness differently. The form is diverse. However, the following three elements are always present independently from the particular situation, circumstances, historical period and social characteristics:

a) One can live one’s life in an ad hoc and instinctive way depending on the mischievous games of fate, but it is not really worth doing so. One needs to set some kind of concrete goals, since consciousness, the conscious way of living, is an important characteristic feature of human beings. Nevertheless, setting a goal will only become the tool of happiness if one does not simply establish it but can internalize and profess it wholeheartedly. The goal should also be realistic. This realistic (meaning achievable but at the same time posing a big challenge) goal is important to ceaselessly motivate people to take steps in order to be active participants in the formation of their destiny. An aimless life does not lead anywhere. It is also boring and pathetic in many cases. The biggest challenge of pedagogy and education policy is undeniably whether they can engage children or youngsters (or anybody else who we want to motivate to develop) in setting an objective which they can internalize and which helps them become active participants in the process. Or is it enough to subjugate them to an objective that is uninteresting and even alien to them (based on rigorous paternal authority, rigid educational mechanisms, hasty and aggressive political decisions, etc.)? In the former scenario, one can rely on the participants’ independent thinking, creativity and, to a certain extent, their autonomy. In the latter, one can make them accept the servile obedience and the routine-like reflexes of conformity.

Proper motivation is as important as setting and interpreting the aims well. Here we can face the problem of education which is frequently neglected and considered marginal, namely establishing and maintaining a natural interest in and concentration on the things to be learnt (e.g. the education material to be learnt, the work to be done and the establishment of cooperation). It is especially important to mobilize the power of will, as in many cases it can help us overcome the difficulties. An everlasting truth: a weak-willed person can hardly become happy, whereas with strong willpower we can do miracles even if we are not at the top of our abilities. Experience shows that effective motivation and indispensable willpower can be achieved through concentration, fantasy and huge efforts. This task cannot be replaced, and we must find its real role and significance.

b) Happy people can proudly claim that personal and firm commitment, faith and conviction are present in their life. Happiness can be a solemn idea, a noble cause or devotion to a person who can be dead or alive. It is a deep bonding with somebody or something which accompanies these people during their entire life, giving them moral firmness and a feeling of safety. To such people, life is not a struggle. They do not suffer from it but take charge of it. Furthermore, in a symbolic and literal sense, they can sacrifice all their time, energy and freedom in order to achieve this goal as it means the ultimate meaning of life to them.

Let me mention some everyday examples in order to shed light on this correlation. Fortunately, there are some married couples or couples living together among us who believe in love and stand up for each other, no matter what happens. They believe in each other with unshakable trust, which makes their coexistence easier and their relationship happier. Nevertheless, we also know at least one single mother who perseveringly and hopefully raises and caters for her child with disabilities. She sacrifices everything for him/her because she firmly believes that her commitment can bring full recovery to him/her, and this commitment triggers happiness in her. Sometimes we can meet pedagogues as well who are guided by the belief that their educational work is indeed meaningful, although they will not receive any direct and convincing proof of it. The real, “zealous” pedagogues have faith in themselves and their work, and perceive their tasks as a holy mission.

Such example can convince the reader that happiness should not really be linked to some moments, but it can come into being by a lucky constellation. Happiness can largely determine a person

and become a constant personality trait which overarches all ages. A child, a youngster, an adult and an elderly person can all be happy. Happiness is a state of existence that is independent of age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, profession, religion, language, possessions and education, since it stems from the inner world, the intellectual richness of human beings.

c) The heritage that a person can leave behind can be the most important element of happiness. Every day people doubtlessly live in accordance with rules, regulations, laws and customs. In other words, they do what everybody else does: study, prepare for adulthood, make their house a home, get married, have children and then raise their offspring. They do it all as a duty with dignity. However, there is a creative performance, an exemplary moral behaviour that triggers the fascination of others through generations, and becomes part of the memory of humankind. It leaves a trace behind that reflects the spirituality, fantasy, creative work and moral greatness that will be preserved and appreciated by others. A given circle of our fellow humans invent something that has not existed before, then create it as a new and original product, a work of art, a form of coexistence, a solemn, moral manifestation of value, a radical change in how we live. *Whoever possesses such skills and competences will become a happy person.* The work of their life and mastery will be the biggest proof that *the sheer welfare can be transformed into an existence of superior and noble value* (in other words, goodness). I mention some concrete examples in the following sections:

Happy is someone who designs a unique and original “music palace” which triggers the fascination of the world. Happy is someone who establishes an internationally known dance group, theatre or fine arts school, or who creates a literary work of art from scratch. Happy is the carpenter, metalworker, mason or interior designer who makes his/her employer (and him-/herself) infinitely happy with his/her exotic ideas and unique perception. Happy is the mountain climber who conquers Mount Everest. Happy are the professional athletes who bring glory to their homeland by pushing themselves and their teammates to the limit to win the world championship. Happy is the farmer who turns a prairie into a rich land with his/her perseverance and brave experiments. Happy is the doctor who heals a patient with a new treatment. Happy is the pioneer research engineer who develops a product, service or communication system, and then makes it easier, faster and more functional. Happy is the mother who makes an honest adult with good manners out of a rather bad child causing much trouble. Last but not least, happy is the pedagogue whose thoughts, worldview and values can be seen in the work and humane attitude of his/her students. In relation to the latter, the contemporary Hungarian author Krisztián Grecsó writes that the true pedagogue has a living oeuvre (Grecsó 2008: 136). It is not true that the pedagogue who can educate with such a positive effect does not feel happy. Such feedback compensates for everything and makes him/her forget all the insults, humiliation and injustices that he had to tolerate.

One could provide further examples from all domains of life in an endless variety. What is common in all of them are the well-articulated objective, strong willpower, firm commitment and conviction, everlasting creation and noble moral example which go beyond themselves, leaving a trace in the memory of generations.

### ***Goodness, the Heavenly Obsession***

In the preceding section, the concepts of good and goodness have occurred several times, but I shall discuss them separately. Good (being good) is also a popular concept like happiness, but it is slightly different because clarifying it seems to be an even more complicated task. It is nearly impossible to define it. It can be seen that many researchers try to refer to it, although they do not define it. In many cases, they do not even bother with trying to do so (at least in terms of defining happiness, one can see a few attempts). Unfortunately, one can claim that pedagogy research has been neglecting the systematic in-depth analysis of goodness, regardless of the fact that this social science is most competent in the matter of personality development. First, one should ask literature for help: as the artist can – at least – portray goodness in a sensual manner.

One can experience and know that every person is capable of living according to the virtue of goodness. Even Dante mentioned while scrutinising the depths of hell that a particular politician de-

serves the harsh criticism he receives (Dante, no date: 34). “That was an arrogant person in the world. Goodness is none that decks his memory.” Of course, the lack of goodness is not observed only in the sphere of politics. It can manifest itself in other domains of life as well. Fortunately, good also manifests itself, and we should not be surprised by that since good in itself is fascinating (all of us can agree with that), and its positive effect is endless. In order to demonstrate its wonderful power precisely, I would like to mention three arbitrarily chosen literary works of art: Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita*, and an excellent essay of the Hungarian poet Milán Füst which can be considered the *ars poetica* of pedagogy.

It is superfluous to discuss Victor Hugo’s romantic novel in detail as all of us know it. One can follow the story of the protagonists Jean Valjean (fleeing prisoner) and Javert (detective inspector). As a result of the unpredictable fortune, Jean Valjean, who remains an honest man despite all that happens, can decide Javert’s fate and chooses to show mercy to his eternal enemy. Here comes the gist of it: the detective inspector is fascinated by Jean Valjean showing him mercy, which forces him to admit to himself that this miserable man is actually a good person who pays with forgiveness for evilness, and that *human goodness does exist* (Hugo 1966: 137–138, 141). In romantic stories and tales, goodness always wins. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that one can see such manifestations in real life, even if they do not occur frequently. However, I can surely claim that it does have such a magic effect and power in reality as it has in tales.

Bulgakov unearths another correlation: bad hides along with good. Furthermore, one can understand the meaning of good only if it is compared to its opposite: bad. Therefore, good and bad come together and are in relation to each other. Let us turn to the philosophical argument of Woland and Levi Matvei in the novel:

Kindly consider the question: what would your good do if evil did not exist, and what would the earth look like if shadows disappeared from it? Shadows are cast by objects and people. Here is the shadow of my sword. Trees and living beings also have shadows. Do you want to skin the whole earth, tearing all the trees and living things off of it, because of your fantasy of enjoying bare light? (Bulgakov 1997: 368).

I would add to the realization of Woland that happiness appears along with sadness just as good exists along with bad. Therefore, when we discuss good and happiness, we should also mention bad and unhappiness (we should elaborate on the question of unhappiness to the same extent as we examine goodness).

Last but not least, we can also discover an “intellectual treasure” in the diary of Milán Füst which has long been disregarded by philosophers, literary historians and pedagogy researchers – to me it is really incomprehensible why. The writer articulates his thoughts in such a sensual and precise way that I would recommend it as a guiding principle to anyone who is interested in education (parents, practising pedagogues and researchers). Let me quote the relevant part in more detail as I have already quoted in my other study (*Pedagogical Almanac*, 1/2020, 21):

They preach in school with no effect, there is none either when the priest, your mother or father tells you to be good, [...] you decide in your childhood you will be good, clean and unselfish for nothing ... Life comes – and you have forgotten now, – you cheat, steal, live for pleasures. [...] You are tricky, pusillanimous. [...] But the education that I have got from my mother, the idealism ignorant of life that I received while being breastfed ... But life is – unfortunately – not like this. [...] And do you believe your mother did not know life? She knew, – but still [...] she wanted to share the better of herself [...], faith risen up in her because her child can be – must be free and clean. [...] And when you have a child: – you [...] will be careful [...] to reveal the horrible, ... and you will point at life the way just like Moses did with the promised land to the hopeful (Füst 1976: pp. 178–179).

The above-mentioned lines speak for themselves. However, I consider it important to highlight the following educational conclusion: Education (and the pedagogical work) towards goodness can be insulted, criticized, accused of naivety and silenced. Nevertheless, we cannot remove it from history. As long as the mother (or anybody else who educates) exists, our thirst for goodness will persist forever.

The previously mentioned literary examples constitute a new category in connection with goodness, namely the concept of *education*. We can easily assume that goodness naturally correlates to educa-

tion. If we elaborate on it, we can rightfully claim that education – as for its deepest content – is nothing else but the motivation for good. It is not a coincidence that the philosopher and philosopher of education attempt to come up with such definitions. Without being involved in the analysis of long philosophical texts, let us have a look at some typical attempts:

József Halasy-Nagy, who has already been quoted, elaborated on the concept of good in the following manner: the description of good is a hard assignment because good is not an objective value, but it is the designation of the inner tendencies and directions of personal life (Halasy-Nagy 2002: 80–81). Good can be found in the subjectivity of personal life as a wonderful virtue which guides people internally in terms of their way of thinking, behaviour and deeds. Formerly, a classical philosopher and education historian provided the basis for this thought: education is nothing else but the summary of virtue (Herbart 2003: 178). Richard Pring, a contemporary English education philosopher, articulates it more concretely. He claims that the “holy mission” of education is how a person can become a good person, or an even better person if he is already a good person (Pring 2004: 22). It is obvious that it would be good if Pring’s definition became more widespread among and accepted by practising pedagogues and researchers of education. Finally, I will draw the attention to a remark of the Hungarian philosopher György Lukacs. It is again an excerpt that is unknown to many of us. It is about his early essay entitled “On the Poverty of the Soul” which is particularly important in regard to our topic:

If goodness occurs in us, then paradise shall have become reality. [...] Goodness is leaving ethics, [...] as ethics is universal and obligatory, [...] goodness is miracle and mercy, [...] “obsession”. In the soul of those who are good, all psychological contents, every cause and consequence cease to exist (Lukács 1977: 540–541, 543).

It is a wonderful realization. Good can be considered a wonder, a gift from destiny, a heavenly state of mind, or a kind of obsession. In other words, it is not a prescriptive moral requirement. It is not compulsory. Consequently, not all of us are ready to accept it and capable of realising it.

### ***The Challenge of Pedagogy: Educating Towards Being More Virtuous***

Basically, from that point on, we could start doing particular pedagogical research which would discuss what kind of thoughts that are in direct connection with education could enrich the elaboration on the topic of happiness. As a first step, I shall recommend a few theoretical reference points and philosophical conclusions regarding education as a summary of the analysis up until now.

Despite the fact that the concepts of happiness and goodness are not identical, it can hardly be contested that goodness can be experienced as a kind of sensation of happiness. The link between them is that both stem from the inner world of the human being, and include a superior virtue in themselves. In addition, many thinkers state that happiness is the ultimate good. Nevertheless, several responses were given to the question of what good is, such as knowledge, love or peace. I cannot and do not wish to be a judge, but I am certain that, just like happiness, goodness is a wonderful virtue and should occupy the highest position in our value system. It is a paradox that although happiness and goodness are independent from our will and determination (we cannot say that we will be happy and good from tomorrow), we can be more open and susceptible to them. We can mobilize the depths of our soul, we are capable of acquiring knowledge on these two phenomena, we can become examples to ourselves and others (especially to our children and students). We can become virtuous if we get used to being virtuous (Ulmann 2020: 13).

Without a doubt, happiness comes together with unhappiness; along with goodness one can find evilness. Nevertheless, we should believe in the old life truth that happiness and goodness can manifest their true power and wonderful effects when they are obliged to work in negative social circumstances. Happiness and goodness do not automatically come into being by themselves. They can be realized only through struggles and suffering. This is because we should be capable of taking on the everyday fight against emerging conflicts, selfishness, jealousy and injustices in society. No matter how mysterious it might sound, we can prepare for absorbing happiness and goodness which seem to be uncontrollable by reason. The big challenge of pedagogy (and psychology) is *learning how to be virtuous*.



## INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION

In order to achieve this goal, philosophy, education philosophy, ethics, psychology and pedagogy could do more than it might seem at first glance. The pedagogue (along with the family) has a greater role in and responsibility for it than anybody else. To me, it is obvious that only pedagogues who possess these virtues are capable of educating towards happiness and goodness. I do not believe in the statement that 87% of pedagogues consider themselves averagely happy in terms of their job (Kun-Szabó 2017: 302). According to my own experience, these 87% regard themselves as averagely unhappy in terms of their job (proving this statement would be the scope of another study). Nevertheless, it would be desirable and needful to look more thoroughly and tenaciously for those thoughts, forms and methods that could help us get closer to understanding and accepting the virtues of happiness and goodness.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

**Bulgakov, M. (1997).** *Master and Margarita*. London: Penguin Books, p. 368. The novel has been adapted by several forms of art, and it was not without fruitful results.

**Dante (No Date).** *Divine Comedy*. Feedbooks, p. 34.

**Füst, Milán (1976).** *Napló*, (Diary) I. k. Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest, pp. 178 – 179, translated by Erik István Papp. Milán Füst stated elsewhere that *we could learn more from Gogol's Dead Souls than from a dry scientific work*. Let me have the same remark in connection with the diary of Füst: one can acquire deeper knowledge on education from it than from a large number of pedagogical works.

**Grecsó, Krisztián (2008).** *Tánciskola (Dance School)*. Magvető, Budapest, p. 136. I think that the author hits the jackpot with this thought. Nobody could have articulated the significance of the pedagogue's work in such a beautiful and condensed manner. I shall note that the science of pedagogy can also profit a lot from the relevant literary works of art. We should not forget that the writer, "the engineer of the soul", digs down into the depths of the soul which cannot be reached by the representative of sciences.

**Halasy-Nagy, József (1991).** *A filozófia (Philosophy)*. Reprint Kiadás, Budapest, Pantheon, p. 166. The depth of the author's thought further strengthens my view that it has been a huge mistake of Hungarian academic life to disregard such a witty philosopher. However, he was not the only one in such a position.

**Halasy-Nagy, József (2002).** *Az erkölcsi élet (Moral Life)*. Pro Philosophia, Kolozsvár – Szeged, pp. 177 – 178. Good is therefore the intrinsic value of the individual upon which all other characteristics depend.

**Halasy-Nagy, József (2002).** *Az erkölcsi élet (Moral Life)*. Pro Philosophia, Kolozsvár – Szeged, pp. 80 – 81. According to him, good is such a virtue that makes the ideal value become reality. He also states that we should fight for the realization of goodness in the same way as we do for the realization of happiness. We could hardly contest the truthfulness of this statement.

**Herbart, J. F. (2003).** *Pedagógiai előadások (Pedagogical Lessons)*. In: *Neveléstörténet (History of Pedagogy)*, *Szöveggyűjtemény* (ed. Mészáros István és mts.). Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, p. 178. To put it more precisely, the gist of education is that all virtues should be summarized in it.

**Hódi, Sándor (2010).** *Életpszichológia (Philosophy of Life)*. Vajdasági Magyar Művelődési Intézet, Zenta, pp. 115, 224. Although people can distinguish between good and bad, in reality they do not act upon this distinction.

**Houellebecq, Michel (2019).** *Szerotonin (Serotonin)*. Magvető Kiadó, Budapest. The book implies a very pessimistic attitude. Nevertheless, I would like to highlight as a peculiarity that the title of his first volume of poetry is *The Pursuit of Happiness* (1992).

**Hugo, V. (1966).** *Nyomorultak (The Miserables)*. Európa Könyvkiadó, Budapest, III. k., pp. 137–138, 141. Jean Valjean's generosity completely enchanted Javer. In addition, we must believe that goodness does not exist only in tales, but it can win in reality as well.

**Kant, I. (1991).** *A gyakorlati ész kritikája (Critique of Pure Reason)*. Gondolat, Budapest, pp. 173, 509 – 510. In his other work, he claims that moral good as a virtue is nothing else but the maxim of man to fulfil his duty, thus a good deed is a duty. *Antropológiai írások*. Osiris – Gond – Cura Alapítvány, Budapest, 2005, p. 232.

**Kun, Ágota-Szabó, Anett (2017).** *Boldogság tényezők a pedagógusok munkájában. (Happiness as a Factor in the Work of Teachers)*, *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle*, Vol. 72, Issue 3, p. 302. I question the validity of this statement of the author. We are in urgent need of such pedagogical research on this matter.

**Lukács, György (1977).** *A lelki szegénységről (On the Power of the Soul)* In: *Ifjúkori művek (Works of Youth)*. Magvető Kiadó, Budapest, pp. 540–541, 543. Translated by Erik István Papp. It is peculiar news that a South Korean education philosopher draws the attention to the idea of the Hungarian philosopher in an English

language education philosophy journal. Kwak, Duck-Joo (2010). Practising Philosophy, the Practice of Education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 44, No 1, pp. 74 – 75.

**Nyíri, Tamás (1991).** *A filozófiai gondolkodás fejlődése (Development of Philosophical Thinking)*. Szent István Társulat, Budapest, p. 97. The way in which the author articulates his standpoint is straightforward: moral good secures the happiness of the individual.

**Oláh, Attila (2012 ed.).** *A pozitív pszichológia világa (The World of Positive Psychology)*. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó. The thought is mentioned in many of his lectures. Of course, we could refer to other psychology researchers who also investigate the concept of happiness, such as Gábor Szendi, Péter Müller, Franciska Berkecz, etc. However, I do not wish to present and analyze their endeavours to provide a definition of the phenomenon.

**Peters, F. H. ed. (1893).** *The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle*. London, p. 16. This definition is literally a traditional reference: there are no worthwhile psychologists who do not cite him.

**Pring, Richard (2004).** *Philosophy of Education*. Continuum, London, New York, p. 22. The book has nearly become a classical reference in the philosophy of education.

**Seneca, L. A. (1975).** *Erkölcsei levelek (Moral Letters to Lucilius)*. Európa Kiadó, Budapest, p. 116. We can reflect on his statement that a happy person is not the one who is surrounded by many people.

**Ullmann, Tamás (2020).** *Ma még nem változtatok (I Have Not Changed My Opinion Yet)*, *Pszichológia*, XII. évf. 2. sz. 13. The author rightfully puts the emphasis on the fact based on the observations of Aristotle and David Hume on how important customs are in our life. In fact, we can also practice the virtues of happiness and goodness through customs.

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