Upbringing In-Between Reason and Belief  
(Insight of Philosophical Anthropology)

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The article is focused to the issue of the relationship between education and upbringing. Based on an analysis of the human spiritual situation, the authors philosophically justify the urgency of complex cultivation of human reason that cannot be simply reduced to the handing over and adopting of knowledge and developing of rationality. The belief is considered to be a constructive base of the reason. Belief gives grounds for the values the human reason is based on and, as human reason is established by values, upbringing should be oriented on values, as well.

Keywords: reason, belief, subjectivity, values, upbringing.

Research area: philosophy.

Introduction

In general, one can say that being the essential parts of socialization the upbringing and the education should provide an individual with knowledge, values, skills and habits necessary for living and participating within his or her own society make one ready for living in a human world; they should equip an individual with necessary spiritual tools. In her work Crisis in Education (2006) H. Arendt wrote: “The problem of education in the modern world lies in the fact that by its very nature it cannot forgo either authority or tradition, and yet must proceed in the world that is neither structured by authority nor held together by tradition (Arendt 2006, p. 192). Raising the question ‘what is to be done?’ she strengthens the importance of responsibility, value-based behaviour as the essential goals of education and upbringing: “Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them...”
in advance for the task of renewing a common world” (Arendt 2006, p. 193).

An objective piece of knowledge is seen as a seemingly decisive spiritual tool; as it distinguishes fiction from reality, and this way it enables rational behaviour. However, an objective piece of knowledge cannot be decisive for human life because a human being is not just a part of objective reality; a human being is part of reality based on the relationship between the objective reality and his/her true self (i.e. the subjective human world). This dynamic relationship is expressed by the means of human values.

Modern society is often defined as the Age of Rationality – everything is considered to be purposefulness, productivity and effectiveness. Rationality seems to be a primal spiritual attitude subordinating everything. However it’s a relational category – something is not rational itself but in relation to something else accepted as valuable by human beings.

A human being cannot manage his or her own life just on the ground of objective knowledge. Being an expression of objectivity, knowledge is an abstraction. It abstracts from the subjective, i.e. it expresses reality only partially and thus in a deformed way. Abstracting from subjectivity is, in the first place, morally unendurable because it, in a buck-passing way, rids human beings of responsibility for the world they co-create.

The plurality of rationality forms – primarily most radically mentioned in post-modern philosophy (Lyotard 1984, p. 60-65) but also noticed in the current philosophy of science (Lenk 1986, p.12) – has led to the idea that rationality is not the autonomous ability of our consciousness because it cannot justify its own assumptions; on the contrary, rationality must result from certain external assumptions. At the same time, initial assumptions cannot be irrational because they do not directly oppose rationality; they are beyond rationality and as such they are of a trans-rational character.1

Speculating on the means of human activity as rational, we justify them as adequate to the required target. If the target can be effectively achieved, the means are rational. Otherwise, they are irrational. However, partial objectively justifiable targets also assume an ultimate target, all other partial targets are related to. Choice of the life target (sense of life) cannot be justified in an objective way because human beings are not just tools for the achievement of objective targets and their existence (free and conscious living) is not determined by objective conditions solely. A human being is not just an object between other objects, living being between other living beings unconditionally subordinated to the external world of objective things; alongside human is a co-creator of own world. His/her life, as a subjective existence, is co-determined by the values that the human being gives the meaning of.2 Human being is the activity of objectivizing, a rendering of the world and of beings in terms of what they mean. The human being is no thing, but rather a “becoming,” a “between,” a “self-transcending being.” Scheler (1976, p. 186). The fact of natality is fundamental to all upbringing and education, because at the most fundamental level refers to the fact that human being are born into a world, and are continually in need of being introduced to the world and other beings. In the opinion of Arendt, it makes natality “the essence of education” (Arendt 2006, p. 177).3

This is obvious on an ethical level, no reference to objectivity (human objective ‘natural essence’ or objective state of matters) can justify an ethical decision because to be ‘objective’ and ‘natural’ do not mean to be ‘good’. Human beings are creatures able to suppress their own objective natural desires, which they do continuously.4 Morality as a human way of regulation of relationship is based on the particular limitation
of objective instincts, needs and predispositions evaluated by a human being as undesirable. This distinguishes human beings from animals. Mere living beings, by contrast, relate to objects in their environment not as objects, but as that which satisfies the drives. Animals' are neither 'good' nor 'bad' because they are spontaneous and behave objectively.

The adoption of particular basic values of our life is an act of subjective formation that also becomes the criterion of purposefulness regarding human activities and thus also rationality. Human reason can be regarded as an instance superior to rationality. The reason, as a spiritual centre of a human being, which manages a human life as a whole, has two levels: pragmatic (where rationality and irrationality should be differentiated) and value-based. The value-based level is a trans-rational level. The actual differentiation between rational and irrational is based on which choices and decisions we make in life, what we consider to be valuable and to be a sense of our life, what we want to live for and thus, where we see the meaning of life by which we measure rationality (purposefulness and effectiveness) and the derived meaning of partial activities.

Human subjective existence means the choice and own endeavour. Endeavouring to do something human beings promote a particular value they believe in. In this meaning, belief is a determinative power of human life.

**Human in-between reason and belief**

All people believe in something. Besides various beliefs in the partial and often not very important character, human beings also share fixed and strong beliefs. They are conviction of essential impact on the human being. Conviction represents believing the human beings consider to be main and significant in their life, what they devote their lives to, hold by, what their wishes and desires are focused on. Particular incorrect prejudice is that conviction is imperfect mode of truth. Contrariwise, it's much more significant, as it’s a proof of human openness towards the world, expression of basic human freedom.

There are objective truths that we approach impassively. We determine them and use them with partial unconcern. There are matters that we consider truthful: multiplication tables, principle of logic, chemical and physical formulas, geographical data and historical facts. With confidence, we can apply such kinds of truths in practical life and we do so. We calculate, produce plastic materials and take medications; we build and construct, travel, remember and search for lessons in history. We learn about objective truths, we respect them and rely on them in theoretical and practical life. They give us particular certainty; but this certainty only relates to the secondary matters of our lives. They shine like street lamps that guide us on our way home but they cannot (and they do not) determine our destination, the meaning of life. Is there someone whose belief will be based on the classification of chemical elements, rules of logarithms, a geographical map of Europe or chronological summary of events that happened in the 19th century? Belief in the form of conviction can be considered only in relation to what touches the depths of our soul, our mind and what is primary and decisive for us. Tell me what is the most important for you and I tell you what you believe in. Conviction is an attachment, the main and primary tendency that determines life, opinions, standpoints and actions of a human being.

Human being is able to care, strengthen, deepen, clear, cultivate or rationalize his/her own beliefs or create own worldview. He/she can elaborate the content in the form of dogmas and symbols; belief can be institutionalized in the form of religion or ideology; belief can be also ignored, suppressed, despised; one can also be
mistaken about one’s beliefs. But one thing is impossible – living without belief.

There are also hostile opponents; however, the more these “unbelievers” fight against, the more evident is that they strive to enforce something they consider to be more dominant and important, something they believe in, they consider to be the truth. When someone emphasizes that he/she is adherent of no belief, it means he/she is an adherent of his/her own belief. Emphasizing no belong to a particular group of believers, he/she just expresses the belonging to own one called e.g. party, pact, society, union and system.

Some persons formulate their beliefs in an open way. But many persons hide their beliefs; the others approach belief sceptically or without interest. But nothing can free a human being from the necessity to believe. One must have a particular goal in life, particular values they aim, particular sense of life. It is understandable that there are persons who would rather not speak about their beliefs. There are also persons who have no idea that one’s belief should be reflected and cultivated. If we won’t consciously form our beliefs, we might not support what we consider good in life; it could also happen that we might serve something that won’t bring us happiness but suffering.

To be able to justify the necessity and importance of belief, we need to formulate a spiritual principle that controls human life – the principle of assimilation (Petrucijova, Feber 2009). It is an essential relationship between belief and personality. Human being gradually becomes similar to what he/she believes in. Belief as a subject of particular internal desire (conscious or unconscious) continuously penetrates and subordinates the human soul. Belief as a central spiritual principle consequently integrates the personality in terms of the basic, essential task (consciously reflected as the meaning of life) and thus, it forms or transforms the personality. The more conscious and valuable the belief is, and the more powerful its influence is. This might reach the form of fanaticism if the person excludes intolerantly other beliefs. The tautology is: we believe in what we live, and we live what we believe in – human being is a living integrity of what he/she lives and what value he/she realizes through the lives because believing in.

From an ethical point of view, the principle of assimilation is neutral. It can subordinate in the name of good or bad. Thus, it is important what one believes in and therefore the consciousness cultivation of belief is of essential importance. The principle of assimilation explains the living power of belief as a primary and determinative power of human life. Regardless of being wise or stupid, naive or artful, wholesome or harmful, comfortable or agonizing, utopian or reasonable – belief always shows the way through life, impacts the human relationship to him/herself, to the other people, nature and everything considered to be important in life.

Choice ‘not to believe’ is senseless, because it would just be self-delusion. It is more reasonable to subject the belief to philosophical reflection and decide upon a particular belief. Also, particular institutionalization of belief is beneficial for society. A typical example of this is religion with its indisputably positive role in history.

Being important what we believe in, several questions appear: What should I believe in, what values should I subject my life to? On an individual level, there is a highest criterion for human belief – death. The risk of dying raises the questions about the value ground of our existence and about personal life as a whole. The human life is meaningful under condition it is led by the value, the human is ready to fight for and/or even die for. Because if it’s not worth dying for, it’s also not worth living for.

In everyday life, thoughts about the meaning of life, religion, truth and goodness seem to be
pathetic, unnatural and rather ridiculous. They are beyond civil life targeted on support of all kinds. Contemplating the meaning of life seems to be needless or even harmful because it might question the established order and even paralyze it. Such thoughts require a willingness to re-orient oneself, divert from everydayness continuously trying to impose on us through its objective power. Any endeavour to abstract away from these thoughts might look like escape from reality into the world of illusions, unnecessary utopias. If we don’t want to be an easily influenced part of the objective world, to be the part which doesn’t do what it wants and is subordinated to alien, then such thoughts are necessary. They are necessary as a spiritual example of creating a personal life strategy. If I won’t subordinate to myself, I will be subordinated to someone/something else and I won’t be living my own life but the life of someone else.

The assumption is a human life is human if not inhuman. An inhuman life is an objective life because it loses the basic principle of human life – subjectivity as an ability of autonomous desire and the willingness to realize such desire. On the level of the individual, this ability is defined as the human personality. Personality is a being that doesn’t just do what others want; it is a being that does what it wants. In other words, personality is able to stand on own two feet and live own life (not the life of someone else, i.e. an objective life). The human life thus becomes free.

Freedom can be defined as a value-based self-determination, i.e. freedom is a state when life is not determined only by external conditions (i.e. objectively) but also subjectively, i.e. by values that we create ourselves, values we decide on and values we realize by free acting (sometimes with significant endeavour).

Achievement of subjectivity is not a gift; it is a task. To fulfil this task, one must exert huge endeavour. Such endeavour has two levels: a) pragmatic level, i.e. it is necessary to adopt means for the achievement of targets (spiritual means, i.e. mainly rationality based on objective knowledge and material rationality, i.e. mainly the suitable method and methodology), b) value-based level, i.e. it is necessary to adopt the ability of autonomous willing. If what I want determines my life value, then it makes sense to learn how to understand the values, it makes sense to learn to formulate the values, reflect, compare and choose the values that express my own wishes, not the desires of someone else.

Basic human values (our reason rooted in) cannot be proved because to prove means to derive derived from something truer than the object of proving. Proof is based on finding such a convincing arguments (reasons) that no proof is necessary.

Every proof (except ‘a stupid infinity’ – Hegel) has its ultimate ground, everything else is derived from. Such an ultimate ground is the truth I am so strongly convinced of that I don’t think it should be further justified. The basic values of our life are self-evident truths of reason.

In other words: within each proof the proved is secondary to arguments. The meaning of basic values is absolute, i.e. unconditional, consequently our effort to prove them by external, objective arguments (conditions) is senseless and undesirable because it would mean losing freedom. The cognition, our human life is based on, always results from particular transcendental sources, from particular adopted evidence that it is primarily justified by. No evidence, as it is primary, can be proved because it would thus become something derived, secondary and would not be evidence at all. The proof is applicable only for secondary truths of our life; not for the basic truths we derive everything else from. Evidence, as a primary truth, is independent of proof.

However, evidences don’t suggest themselves. It is a sensual experience that
suggests itself however the sensual experience cannot be considered a source of evidence. The sensual experience is based on sensual perception and the sensual perception, besides being superficial, random and often misleading, it is not primary – it is always a kind of apperception. To sensually perceive something means to somehow understand what our senses provide us, i.e. the sensual perception as contact with the world is always intermediated by our reason. (This is documented by the fact though our sense organs have no changed for the last thousands of years, we perceive and understand the world differently than our ancestors did). Thus, we should search for evidence rather in reason than in the senses. Moreover, it is reasonable to share the concern that the sensual experience is not the source of evidence – more likely, it hides evidence.

The Christian religion in its dispute with empiricism and rationality often very rightly points out the fact: “A person is not satisfied only with what they see, touch, hear – they are also looking for other ways to approach reality. This is called religious faith and in this religious faith, people also find a decisive moment of looking at the world as such.” (Ratzinger 2004, p. 16). Faith “belongs in the area of basic decision making... One cannot avoid this circle. Every person must believe in something.” (Ratzinger 2004, p. 30). This thought is an initial point of our contemplations. Belief is an anthropological invariable – every person believes, must believe and as long as being human will always believe.

Belief is defined as an unjustified conviction; this is what differentiates belief from justified knowledge. Any justified knowledge is secondary knowledge, i.e. derived from something regarded as primary (obvious, evident). Unlike derived knowledge, belief is immediate, i.e. primary conviction, not derived – moreover, everything else (any partial knowledge) is being derived from the belief.

To believe seemingly means not knowing; meanwhile knowledge requires no belief – for example, I don’t believe that the sun shines because I know that it does. I can believe that my daughter gives birth a healthy baby because I don’t know it; when I know that, it is no longer belief but knowledge. Thus, in relation to the belief, knowledge seems justifiable and thus truthful. But all justified knowledge results from particular initial assumptions (reasons) by means of which we justify; however, these assumptions (reasons) are not subject to justification.

Rationalism as a concept postulating the requirement of autonomous rationality with its requirement of thoughts purged from belief and subjectivity – must be designated as a myth. We can paraphrase what Étienne Gilson applies to theology and, what in our opinion, applies generally: “If we believe that God spoke, then everything in variance with God’s word can be and must immediately be excluded as untruthful because what God says is truth.” (Gilson 2002, p. 8). For example, from the sensual point of view: If we believe that the senses are a true source of knowledge, then all opposing the senses is untruthful. Or from the rational point of view: If we believe that thinking is a true source of knowledge, then all opposing thinking is untruthful. And further from the Marxist, phenomenology, positivist, pragmatic point of view.....: If we believe that the true source of knowledge is practice, the natural world, the transcendental ego, science experience, effectiveness... then all opposing that is untruthful.

No rational thinking is autonomous; it always results from adapting a particular transcendence – something that goes beyond the given thinking and cannot be deducted from the given thinking; on the contrary, transcendence gives a base to the actual thinking and justifies it. Such always present transcendence is adopted evidence, i.e. belief in it. Therefore, for example,
the authority of believing in God’s Word cannot be replaced by the authority of the autonomous mind (as rationalists would like) but e.g. by the authority of believing in powerful human mind or in sensual experience as a source of derived thoughts and as a means of justification of their truthfulness, i.e. the authority of religion belief can be replaced by the authority of any form of secular belief.

The present science puts itself in the role of a consistent advocate and personification of rationality that we wrongly identify as reason. We refuse this opinion and would like to join the postmodern criticism of scientific rationality due to its unauthorized and, in our opinion, harmful effort in cultural hegemony. In our opinion, it is more human-like to put reason above rationality (even scientific). Scientific rationality should not be and in reality is not hegemony in the human world – the cultural world existing and creating by the reasonable human activity.

For many of us, the belief in science becomes the justification of own resignation to think individually. It is even seen as an advantage, a sign of higher rationality, although the objectivity of science leads to the loss of subjectivity. However, is it wise to lose oneself?

Human reason, the only one able to govern our life, contains two mutually assumed and complementing spiritual abilities of the human. Primarily, its ability of awareness of the world and self-awareness and including the content of its consciousness as something that varies from the actual reality and doesn’t have to be in direct conformity with such reality. By this primary doubt, a human being overcomes naive realisms of pre-reflective consciousness and start recognizing in a specifically human way. Thus, the significant feature of human reason is ability of human being to realize that consciousness, i.e. what we think about reality and how we perceive it, differs from the actual reality. The process of recognition means an active spiritual process of human efforts to overcome such a difference. Human recognition is based on initially spontaneously originating and later consciously formed and continuously improved rational means that enable deeper perception and awareness of reality. The correspondence between the consciousness and acknowledged fact traditionally called “the truth” is not an initial state immediately rooted in perception (position of naïve realism); it is a desired state the human perception aims to approach to. Being a desired result of the recognition the truth is secondary to consciousness. Presupposing the statement that initial assumptions are evidence, then their selection is not possible based on external reasons (for the consciousness); it is only possible based on free and intentional choice. Human being faces with the choice of assumptions his/her conception of reality will be derived from. Such an assumptions are values determined by the being of human, i.e. something determined by our own reason.

Moreover, governing the human life reason cannot be based only on knowledge because any knowledge relates to something given (actually or potentially). However, the human world is not a given because it is the world continuously created by our activity. A human being spreads the limits of objective possibilities and gradually is also able to do what was at variance with the previous state of the objective world. This fact is one of the forms of human openness toward the world – basic freedom. Human truth cannot be reduced to an epistemological category and life is not subject to an objective status of matters. Thus human truth must be also perceived axiologically. Axiological definition of the truth results from the assumption that the truth of the creator can only be subjective, and living in truth is (in this sense) living in accordance with subjectively defined values. Such an axiological definition of the truth
subordinates the epistemological truth, which as an expression of objectiveness becomes only a tool for the achievement of subjective targets. Should the reason manage the life of human, it has to direct us at both the presence and the future that could exist if a human desires.\(^8\)

Both cases, the definition of initial values and definition of ultimate values, regard the rational ability of transcendence.\(^9\) A human being is never directly absorbed by the world; he/she is able to remain distant and perceive reality as a problem.\(^10\) In such a problematic reality a human faces with the necessity to solve a matter of its truthfulness. The reality opens to us as unfinished and incites us to complete it. Each of us has the capacity to renew a world that seems to each generation ‘out of joint’, yet this process is never completed, the world is never “set right” once and for all. Existence in such an open world\(^11\) impels our reason to solve two basic questions: What is reality, and what reality do we would like to live in?\(^?\). The both answers come under the competence of reason and they both are beyond rationality, they are of a trans-rational character. They regard the initial and ultimate values (evidences), which cannot be objectively justified and fall within subjective decision-making that the reason must do autonomously by its own.

Only belief as a trans-rational component of reason is able to capture the evidence beyond rationality. Belief is not the opponent of reason but its necessary constitutive base that, in the first place, enables any rationality. Two levels of belief can be defined: a) essential belief, i.e. belief justifying basic ontological and epistemological grounds of our cognition and b) existential belief, i.e. belief that justifies the subjective sense of our life. Two levels of belief as of a tran-rational component of our reason correspond with the causality and finality of belief.

Belief as an initial human conviction is a primary human evidence. Belief as an objectively unjustified conviction becomes subjective justification of the values the human reason is rooted in, hence cultivation of reason cannot mean the loss of belief, prorsus contrarium. The reason employs rationality as an important tool but the rationality in itself is not autonomous because it requires a trans-rational basis. As an instance connecting rationality and trans-rationality, the reason can define initial evidence of thinking and cognition and thus fulfils the function of meta-rationality.

Rationality and belief do not exclude each other – on the contrary, they mutually complement and assume each other. Human experience as a base for every understanding and knowledge is gained from various sources. The source of the experience is not just sensual perception, hence, experience cannot be reduced to sensual experience that mediates contact with the material world only. Experience also contains the inner spiritual life of a human being non-perceived by external senses. Internal spiritual experience is the real source of belief. Only spiritual belief opens the approach to love, responsibility, consciousness, goodness and beauty, evidence and meaning of life – to the most important and basic in the human life.

**Conclusion**

Our text introduced the statement that education and upbringing should make a human being ready to live in human world, to equip one with the spiritual means essential for life. In the text, we tried to indicate why such preparation for life cannot be reduced only to knowledge understood as the gaining of objective knowledge. If education is focused mainly on this task and cultivates rationality as an important tool of orientation in the objective world, then the aim of upbringing must be defined in a different way.

Upbringing should cultivate human reason as an assumption of human free existence.
Free human existence is based on values and therefore also upbringing should be focused on values. Upbringing should be also accompanied by a gradual acquainting with of the world of human values to be well versed in this cultural world. However, this is not the main issue because even such a acquainting is just an education. The essence of upbringing should be focused on another target – the development of human subjectiveness. Cultivation of reason should thus fulfil two main targets: To develop the ability to comprehend human values (their origin and meaning) and to develop the ability to create such values individually. This is how we understand the general requirement and meaning of upbringing in relation to freedom. Moreover, to understand upbringing in this way means to understand it as a way to responsibility for the world we co-create. We share Arend’s opinion: “In upbringing, source of authority is acceptance of responsibility for the world” (Arendt 1961, p. 94).

References

Статья посвящена проблеме взаимоотношений между образованием и воспитанием. На основе анализа духовной ситуации человека авторы пытаются философски обосновать актуальность комплексного развития человеческого разума. Его роль в области образования не может сводиться к простой передаче, принятию знаний и развитию рациональности. Вера считается конструктивным основанием разума. Вера даёт основания ценностям, в которых человеческий разум укоренен, поэтому и воспитание должно быть ориентировано на ценности и развитие разума, так как человеческий разум обоснован ценностями.

Ключевые слова: разум, вера, субъективность, ценности, воспитание.

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