SVOBODOVÁ, Zuzana (ed): *Svobodný čas: pedagogika volného času jako výchova ke svobodě.* 2023. 188 pp.

The publication explores a concept of leisure-time pedagogy inspired by Comenius's ideal of humanity. The editor builds on the thesis that through the exploration of paths to freedom, human beings mature into freer and more responsible persons. Education, in this context, serves as a means for living a responsible life—towards oneself and others. The authors advocate the urgent need to revitalize the classical concept of *scholé* within educational programs in the field of leisure-time pedagogy.

Spanning eleven chapters, the publication adopts an interdisciplinary approach, interweaving theology, philosophy, pedagogy, and psychology. This plurality of perspectives arises from the fact that all contributing authors are affiliated with a single academic institution (Faculty of Theology, University of South Bohemia). The diversity of viewpoints is seen as enriching, as it coherently reflects the intellectual priorities of the department on the chosen theme. The publication is structured into two main domains: theoretical and applicative.

The theoretical part provides a dense and reflective examination of philosophical questions related to freedom and personal development in education. The authors draw on the thoughts of Plato, Aristoteles, Dostoevsky, Berdyaev, Pieper, Taylor, Arendt, and Lipovetsky. The second thematic section focuses on specific educational approaches applied in leisure-time contexts. It presents four applied dimensions: experiential pedagogy, experimental drama, non-directive animation approaches, and literary education. The section on experimental drama includes the presentation of original research data.

A fundamental premise underlying the interpretation is a latent response to the values and preferences of contemporary hyper-consumerist and information-driven society. Technological development steers our thinking toward instrumental rationality, as society becomes increasingly socialized within a virtual, online reality. Paradoxically, this very society promotes the value of freedom as a basic human right. Yet, in reality, freedom must be reclaimed as a precondition for a meaningful and self-/responsible human life—not as a vehicle for enslavement to one's desires, passions, or materialistic appropriation. Freedom in the context of self-knowledge stands in opposition to the illusion of freedom shaped by social manipulation in the technocratic world. A one-sided emphasis on human productivity as a value leads to dehumanization.

Drawing inspiration from the ancient, medieval, and modern intellectual traditions, the authors highlight how each period conceptualized freedom through its own epistemological paradigms. From this comparative analysis, the authors argue that absolute human freedom can lead to enslavement and anxiety, whereas freedom understood through a transcendent dimension—connected with faith in God—guides the person toward truth and goodness. Leisure-time

education plays a vital role in this transformation by reshaping human consciousness. This transformation leads the individual toward a spiritual path, thereby granting access to genuine freedom. The medium for such transformation is leisure, which offers a temporary release from the obligations and pressures of everyday life. Within this space, a social environment emerges in which authentic free action can occur.

From the modern period to the present consumer society of the Western world, Protestant ethics has prevailed—emphasizing individual achievement through work and profit, while rest has often been framed as idleness. The fear of inactivity was linked with the anticipation of growing vice and criminality. This gave rise to the binary division between *work* and *leisure*, accompanied by value-laden judgments presenting the two as opposing categories. Neglected in this dichotomy was the ancient notion of *scholé* as a form of creative passivity rooted in holistic perception and understanding of one's surroundings. This kind of passivity enriches the human spirit. Through *scholé*, one remains human and avoids becoming a mere speaking, instrumental machine or worker. In *scholé*, a person is granted insight into the essence of things through contemplation, which is the path to the highest form of knowledge.

The etymological and conceptual analysis offered by the publication forms a robust foundation for orientation within leisure-time pedagogy. It is particularly valuable that the authors provide thoughtful interpretations of key terms, thus avoiding vague definitional constructs that often characterize discourse on leisure and education. The theoretical analysis of ancient terms related to leisure-time pedagogy (*scholé*, *ascholia*, *paideia/paidia*, *educatio*, *educere*, *noésis*, *dianoia*, *metanoia*, *theoría/contemplatio*) and their ontological implications are not isolated; they are complemented by examples of good practice in the second part of the publication. This integration of theory and application is a major contribution, serving the didactic function of clarity and comprehension. The reader is thus equipped with a rich set of materials for further study and deeper understanding of the significance of leisure-time pedagogy.

This publication is warmly recommended to students of educational sciences. It provides both philosophical grounding and practical applications for the field of leisure education. It also serves as a valuable resource for professionals, as it raises many relevant issues for further discussion across intersecting discourses on the meaning and practice of leisure in contemporary society. Finally, the clarity of its exposition makes it accessible to those outside the field. The reflection on leisure prompts discussions on the values of today's globalized civilization, encourages readers to reflect on their lifestyles, and suggests ways to pursue eco-social sustainability. As the editor notes in the *Summary*, the publication is an invitation to a dialogical journey within the educational event.

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