

“You shouldn’t” Three observations on the necessity of moral education ¹

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Abstract: The goal of this study is to deal with three reasons explaining the importance and necessity of moral education – not just in schools but in general. The research question is: Why do we need moral education? Each subchapter of this study will provide answers or grounds from which the necessity of moral education will be deduced, and which I intend to expose in this study. They apply to three particular areas: 1) the nature of the human being as a moral being, 2) the nature of moral reality itself, and 3) the specific nature of the postmodern situation in which we recognize the need for moral formation. The analysis of the three phenomena provides an argument for traditional moral realism which not only grounds any moral education but also makes it possible. Moral education proves to be not merely necessary but also philosophically legitimate.

Keywords: morality, education, human nature, modernity, post-modernity

1 “Why?” questions in moral education

There is not much room in the educational sciences for the “Why?” questions today. This seems to be a side effect of modern pragmatism which redirected the focus of people’s questioning to a methodological “How?” instead. It is an understandable phenomenon in the context of the Enlightenment paradigm of human autonomy in which we busy ourselves: how to make ourselves better, more open-minded, civilized, advanced, etc. The development of new techniques and technologies that make communication, travel, production, medicine – as well as killing – easier has been so hasty that there’s been not much time to ask “Why?” Nor has there been a reason to ask whether all the new scientific advances are necessary, whether people want them or need them, or whether the cost is worth it. Why question the meaning, purpose or goals when we have the undisputable “progress” generating and sanctifying means which keep us busy enough and protect us from the annoying and difficult meta-questions? (cf. Wilson, 1991; Toulmin, 1990)

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Modern pedagogy has not been an exception. For the last one hundred years it has been frantically trying to keep up with the times but continues to fall short. Reform after reform, theorists and practitioners of education have been working hard for more and more effective methods, empirical sciences supply pedagogues with technical achievements of every sort, research overflows with “how-to” applications (and they are good applications) – but in spite of all these we continue to fall short of the hoped-for universally harmonious and well-developed humanity. Pavel Floss, for example, states that contemporary schools “are reduced merely to the *functional* aspect of education, producing efficient employees or experts but failing to cultivate the whole humanity of an individual” (2005, p. 26). And the “why” questions still are not in the course. Teachers can’t allow themselves such a luxury. They must invest most of their time and energy in maintaining their qualifications: that is, they have to keep their communicative, methodological, organizational, diagnostic and other competencies in shape. And with the arrival of post-modernity, the situation is not much better – in fact, it is quite the opposite. Educators now regularly have to put all of their pedagogical arsenal to the test of hermeneutical doubt, and at the same time adapt to the almost unadaptable conditions of the times. On top of all that they have to make sure their products are appropriately marketable, for the God of Quantifiable Growth demands his due (compare Palouš, 2008; Rýdl, 2002).

I am convinced that the crisis of the modern paradigm, which today’s world so intensively experiences, can be used for the good. We thought we knew “how to” but it has become apparent that we do not. We hoped that moral refinement would blossom, flourish or prosper with rational knowledge and science but it hasn’t. We believed that the more a person knew the more human they would be but it is clear that it is more complicated than that. The dissolution of our illusions is never pleasant but, however, if its side effect is to bring a certain amount of humility and willingness to once again ask the basic questions about what exactly we are doing and why, then it is not in vain. The pedagogical “why” always precedes and defines the subsequent “how.” It would therefore be a mistake to leave it out or ignore it altogether. We intuitively resist senselessness, and it is a human characteristic to want to know the reason – to know why we do what we do. Moral education is no exception to this. Therefore, in this study the reasons for the necessity of morally-educated conduct are dealt with.

The grounds from which the necessity of moral education is deduced and which I intend to expose in the following paragraphs apply to three specific areas: (1) the nature of a human being as a moral being, (2) the nature of moral reality itself, and (3) the specific nature of the postmodern situation in which we recognize the need for moral formation. To prevent misunderstanding concerning the goal(s) of this study, let me define its boundaries in the very beginning. I do neither aspire to present a complete theory of moral education nor any specific instructional strategy of character formation.² Such themes go far beyond the possibilities and scope of this essay. All I plan to do is to make preliminary philosophical observations, to clarify the foundations or reasons for our specifically human acting which we call moral education.

2 Neither angels nor demons: The ambivalence of human nature

Humans are rather ambivalent beings. As opposed to every other thing in one's environment, a person's nature or essence is not given ahead of time like, for example, an earthworm is given its earthwormness, wood its woodenness, or a square its squareness. A square can't do anything to change its squareness. It can't degenerate into something less square, nor can it become more square. But a person can. A human being is capable of both humanity and inhumanity (Sokol, 2002). A person can consciously choose and act, and does so every single day. How can that be?

We are capable of overwhelmingly beautiful and noble things, we're able to create, to write poetry or to sing in a way that gives life to another. We can not only desire, think, explore and invent but also keep the power and depth of our thoughts and discoveries completely under control. Furthermore, we can laugh, rejoice, love, reach out to one another, be courageous, selfless, even risk our own life. Moreover, we are able to forgive, be reconciled with one another, help others, deny ourselves, return a lost wallet full of money... unbelievable! Our philosopher forefathers said that it is because humans are spiritual beings. The three basic spiritual qualities that separate us from mere matter are *reason, will and emotions*. That is the ability to appreciate and be touched by *truth, goodness and beauty* (Odehnal, 2001).

² There is a number of other authors who developed such theories and strategies. See for example Holmes (1984), Hoge (2002), Vacek (2008), Olivar (1992), Glanzer (2014). For Comenius' unique notion of moral education see my studies *Character formation: A forgotten theme of Comenius's didactics* (2011a) or *Vzdělání mravné a nemravné: vztah poznání a ctnosti v Komenského pedagogice* (2011b).

Extraordinary nobility sharply contrasts with remarkable depravity. People can be evil, and not only as a by-product of failing at something or missing a goal; but truly and completely intentionally they prove to have evil designs, to want evil, to be evil-minded. And not only that, they are capable of meanness, lust, spite, cowardice, infidelity, ruthlessness; they are proud, rude, selfish, they know how to lie very cleverly, how to steal, cheat, wound, rape, invent machines of torture and even take the life of their neighbour. And most astonishingly of all, coming to such evil they demonstrate their willingness to use their depravity to the fullest. As G. K. Chesterton said (1992, p. 12), mankind is the only being that can experience a very special and exquisite pleasure in skinning a cat alive.³

The inconsistency of human nature is so mystifying and unsettling that we often resort to various shortcuts or evasive manoeuvres. For example, it would be a lot more bearable if human good and evil could somehow be neatly localized in space or time: good and evil, us/them, east/west, modern/ancient, light/darkness, believer/pagan, angels on the left, demons on the right. Then it would be clear, predictable, black and white.⁴ But of course with humankind it matters are more complex. The good and evil dwell together. A person is a “living oxymoron,” as Peter Kreeft (1990) put it nicely, “noble depravity, depraved nobility (p. 28).” We are a puzzle to ourselves, added Thomas Morris (1992, p. 129), the greatest mystery is residing in us. How can one and the same creature produce, at the same time, indescribable beauty and unbelievable abomination? How can it be that one species can be responsible for such excellent good and appalling horror? How can there be unprecedented benevolence married to unheard-of cruelty in one being? Blaise Pascal (1995, frag. 131, 34) showed similar amazement in his immortal anthropological meditation: “How strange man is! How original, how monstrous, how chaotic, how paradoxical, how vast! The judge of all things, a lowly worm, a fountain of truth and a murky cesspool of error, glory and the shame of the universe!”

³ A loose paraphrase.

⁴ Yet another popular strategy for comparing the ambivalence of human nature is the method we could call “the blind eye” (Kreeft, 1990). There is not anything easier than to turn a blind eye to one or another side of human nature, to trivialize it, to pretend it is nothing, and so on. Those who elevate the spiritual aspects of mankind at the expense of those lower physically-grounded ones are usually identified as adherents of Platonism, Gnosticism, Pantheism and other forms of humanism. Alternatively, followers of the opposite camp either question the validity of or ignore altogether the spiritual side of life and instead only consider what is tangible. These are the Marxists, Freudians, Behaviourists and Darwinians.

"Corruptio optimi pessima"⁵ says the wise old proverb, because there really is not anything worse than the combination of brilliance or genius and evil. The greater the potential, the greater the splendour if it is activated positively – but the greater the horror if otherwise. And the potential of mankind is immeasurable. If it were possible to morally corrupt ants or earthworms there would undoubtedly be a problem, and they could commit all kinds of harm, because even they are endowed with a certain potential. However, it is not possible to take the comparison with humans very far, for a person's intellect, creativity, imagination, resourcefulness, will and many other capacities make him or her at once the greatest and the most abysmal creature under the sun. If practical consequences of the ambivalence of human nature were not so tragic, it would be laughable how they prove the (often nasty) jokes which people invent and that highlight our various human failings. We laugh at our own humanity. Potatoes, earthworms and dogs do not do that because they do not find anything funny about their potato-ness, earthworm-ness or dog-ness. Humans can't help themselves, sometimes they simply have to laugh at themselves – at other times they have to cry. And sometimes they have to do both at the same time.

Neither angels nor demons. Angels are perfectly holy, demons are perfectly corrupt. One does not find such extremes amongst humans. In reality you're more likely to encounter a loving and hard-working father of a family whose potential includes various debasing tendencies, for example, selfishness or a desire for power; it does not have to be a lot of power, just a little is enough, maybe in the office, at work or in the Parliament. Or you meet a clever adolescent, excellent at sports or programming, who, however, diminishes his ability to love with pornography every day. Or you observe your nice, decent neighbour, the greatest expert in solid welding in the whole area, kind and sweet who wouldn't hurt a fly, naturally shy and retiring – allowing his humanity to be crushed by his uncontrollable desire for alcohol, by conceit which prevents him from reconciling a broken relationship with his brother or by his relationship with a television which completely takes over all his free time and which has dulled his mind over the years. By continually giving in to our animal instincts, we gradually become mere animals.

⁵ "The corruption of the best is the worst of all."

What a strange pot a human is where a mixture of the good and evil, the noble and ignoble, and the positive and negative are found perpetually boiling together. If the good predominates, if it is ever to become one's habitual character, it won't happen automatically or without work (Guroian, 1998). Humanity does not come ready-made, it is not a given; instead it must be recognized as work, a calling or vocation which is requested of people to mature them. That is to fill one's nature with some value or worth, the noble and dignified, and by that to prevent the atrophy which every dimension of humanity necessarily suffers if those qualities are ignored. And precisely that essential incompleteness of human nature is what gives meaning to moral education. If we were perfect – perfectly good like angels or perfectly evil like demons – moral (or any other kind of) education would not be needed. But because we are people whose humanity oscillates throughout our lives between opposing poles and tendencies, moral education has its place. Among all the forces in one's life it can become an important if not the key factor that helps people to fulfil their true nature; that is to become the person they *should* be (cf. Johnson, 2005).

In brief, human beings are special beings. Therefore we need special care: moral education.

3 “You should/not.” The problem of moral law

The second reason why we need education is the existence of moral reality, or the moral law as such. It discloses itself to human beings in common everyday situations in a way that calls for educational and self-educational actions. Consider for example the situation of interpersonal strife or disputes. Every one of us has been either a participant of or a witness to some disputes. In such situations we either hear, or ourselves utter, sentences like: “How would you like it if I did that to you?” – “Don't jump the gun!” – “You are not going to leave me?” – “You ought to be ashamed of yourself!” – “Don't lie to me.” – “But you promised.” And so on.⁶

The interesting thing is that the one who expresses such things does not just want to say that the other person's behaviour is annoying, but is actually referring to a certain standard of behaviour which s/he assumes the other also

⁶ The following subchapter is a loose paraphrase of the completely timeless “Radio Discussions” that C. S. Lewis presented in 1943 for the BBC radio to encourage the British public during the trials of World War II. These, together with other speeches, were later compiled in a book *Mere Christianity*.

subscribes to. This assumption is immediately confirmed, either positively or negatively. The offender is either ashamed and tries to rectify the matter, or – more often – tries to explain or justify his/her actions. For example, s/he argues that there was an extenuating circumstance which required or authorized them to behave that way; or that something had happened which prevented them from keeping a promise, etc. In any case it is evident that both parties are subscribing to a particular kind of law or criteria of decency, honesty and morality as if they had agreed on it. Although such an agreement is completely “silent”, that is, latent and without sophisticated philosophical verbalization, it is quite real.⁷ Without it, no kind of moral discourse would be possible. People could fight with one another like animals but they could never argue in the human sense of the word. To dispute or argue means to try to show another person that s/he’s in error, or is guilty in a way. However, that would make no sense if the arguing had no common agreement as to what is right and what is wrong. It is like playing football with no rules, and then claiming someone fouled. To take that further, if there are no rules, there is either no game at all or it is a very dangerous game.⁸ That is precisely why it is necessary to have this particular art called moral education which teaches not only the rules but also respect for the rules (cf. Sokol & Pinc, 2003).

Furthermore, there is another reason for moral education which is related to the existence of moral truth/reality. Aside from this common understanding that we should behave in a certain way, there is also the fact that nobody actually does behave that way all the time. Even though we know there is a moral law, which we admit when we say “I should”, we fail to observe it.

To avoid misunderstanding, I am not saying that as humans we are incapable of doing any good at all in our actions, motives or intentions. On the contrary, using the words of C. S. Lewis (1993) I want to draw attention to the fact that probably “this year, or this month, or, more likely, this very day, we have failed to practise ourselves the kind of behaviour we expect from other people” (p. 13). In our defence we can usually enumerate a host of “extenuating circumstances” which we tend to “work out” an excuse with or silence that

⁷ For a beautiful example of the intuitive experience of moral reality see Karel Čapek’s story *Výkřik* (Cry) in his collection called *Boží muka* (Calvary).

⁸ The football minded reader can easily imagine what would happen in a game if they suddenly stopped adhering to the offside rule or ignored the borders of the field; or if a player added the help of a baseball bat.

relentless demand “you should(n’t) do that.” Such self-defence can have many forms: “I know I behaved badly to my wife but I was so tired.” “I had to cover up that questionable transaction or I would be fired, and how would I pay off the mortgage then?” “The thing I promised to my neighbour and never did; I would have never promised that if I had known how much work would be piled on me.”

It does not matter whether the excuses are legitimate or not. The point of these illustrations is to demonstrate our awareness or consciousness of the moral law which is a human characteristic that is with us, in us, always part of our conscious awareness. If it were not so, we wouldn’t need to defend ourselves when we act against someone or vice versa. Nor would we know what it is to have a “clear conscience” when we act in accordance with it.⁹

It is worth noting one more moral-psychological situation with major relational-social implications. The difficulty of the process of admitting moral guilt usually leads to an ethical disproportion: behind my moral failure there can always be someone or something else; my morally good behaviour, on the other hand, is always only my own doing. Moreover, the truer the accusation of guilt is, the more intense is the tendency to transfer blame. Therefore, one of the key components of good moral education is rooting out these undesirable human tendencies (Guroian, 1998).

4 Everything is permissible: A note on the postmodern situation

The third reason we need moral education is the moral situation which the Western world finds itself in. In the last several decades we have observed something we could call renaissance of ethics. Not, however, because of an abundance of morals; quite on the contrary for a lack of them. The ethical “deficit” that is currently felt in Western society is generating a demand

⁹ The concept of “clean conscience” is problematic, as we can see, for people have a remarkably wide range of psychological means at their disposal by which they can keep their conscience subjectively “clean” without reference to objective moral reality. But that in itself shows even more clearly the need for moral education which would teach a student to apply that understanding to moral experience by desirable means. Regarding the problem of conscience, see for example Anzenbacher (1994).

on schools to get involved in the education of character.¹⁰ And it does not only concern developing decent socio-psychological habits, communication, cooperation or positive self-image which make human interaction easier and more pleasant. It involves much more: in fact, the discussion is about nothing less than an ethically inhabitable globe. For the first time in history, our planet is being threatened by its own (morally corrupt) inhabitants, or in the words of E. Fromm, the "physical survival of the population" is at stake (citation in Vacek, 2008, p. 6). If things continue as they are, the planet will become uninhabitable. As Lipovetsky (1999, p. 11) has written, "the 21st century will either be ethical or it will not be at all."

What is the cause of this situation? Is it simply that people today are more corrupt, more morally decayed than people in previous generations? I do not think so. Anthropologically speaking, the essence of human nature remains the same; what changes is the climate in which the moral potential of our humanity is realised or developed – whether upwards towards a greater humanity or downwards towards inhumanity. If you convince yourself on a philosophical level that there is no such thing as an objective moral law, it makes it very difficult to behave morally on a practical level. This is what happened to modernity. Our present era of philosophy that we have festooned with critical attributes such as post-modern, hyper-modern or super-modern recognises the crisis of modernity and the specific ways of formulating moral thoughts and behaviours of people (Bauman, 2004).

Paradoxically, when the modern paradigm was born, it looked very promising for ethics. The popular slogan of the Enlightenment philosophers' was: *sapere aude* (dare to know), which then became "Man, trust your own reason!" It was a reaction against the medieval tradition of trust in external authority. The Enlightenment understood itself as the age of the adolescence of humanity: as that great moment in history when humanity finally gathered the courage to liberate itself from the clutches of ignorance. Thus the newly discovered human *ratio* became the instrument of emancipation by which humanity hoped "to uncover, describe and explain the entire natural order of things" (Wright, 2004), and it would come about completely autonomously.

¹⁰ This is evident in the vast amount of literature that has been produced on this subject in recent years. Besides classics such as Piaget or Kohlberg, see for example: Lickona (2003), Schaps, Schaeffer and McDonnell (2001), Berkowitz and Bier (2005), Hoge (2002), Čapek (2008), Lorenzová (2010), Olivar (1992), Vacek (2008), Erikson (1968), Fuchs (2003), Kohák (1993), Lipovetsky (1999), and Perry (1970).

In addition to a belief in the nearly omnipotent power of reason, the scenario of the modern story was also based on a belief in the moral progress of humanity. Stanley Grenz (1997, p. 14) expressed it well:

The modern scientist considers it as axiomatic, that what knowledge discovers is always good. This assumption of the inherent goodness of knowledge made the enlightened view of the world optimistic. It led to the belief that progress is inevitable, that science, together with the power of education, will finally rid us of both our vulnerability to nature and all social slavery.

Encouraged by the developments in the field of science, modern humanity began to believe in advancement in the field of morality as well. After all, the one who knows “rightly” will also act “rightly,” (won’t s/he?). The question of the connection between *scientia* and *conscientia* was itself not new but the assumption that science and education will be automatically the humanizing factor in the process of refining humanity got its doctrinal form only in the modern story (compare Menck, 2001). Modern humanity has believed that progress towards better future is certain and that is only a matter of time; thanks to the unstoppable expansion of knowledge we will be able to control the natural world, even to “command the wind and rain”¹¹ and ultimately achieve the long sought-after heaven on earth.¹²

In the story of the twentieth century, however, modern hope began to slowly disintegrate. It became apparent that even though knowledge does bring unprecedented technical capabilities to humanity, that alone cannot ensure humaneness and moral refinement. It is clearly true that the one who knows has power, as Francis Bacon already noted.¹³ Likewise, it is indisputable that it is necessary to be led to knowledge that is to be taught. Historical experience has revealed, however, that knowledge and education can be used for evil as well as for good. When we think about the atrocities of the twentieth century in which science actively participated, the assumption of the modern period, i.e. that science is automatically humanizing, seems ridiculous and even criminally naive. Today, instead of gratefully indulging in the care of scientists, we tend to watch them with increasing suspicion

¹¹ This was a popular slogan of the protagonists of the communist regime who believed it is just a matter of time when science enables us to control the nature.

¹² I discuss elsewhere the specific pedagogical implications arising from the continuing optimism of the modern paradigm. See Hábl (2011c).

¹³ The idea that *scientia potentia est* was repeated by Bacon more than once in his period of revolutionary reflections. See for example Bacon (1974, p. 89, 186).

and apprehension. Who knows what kind of abuse their techno-scientific creations could be used for again (cf. Bauman, 2004)? The extraordinary development of technology and science which offers western society unprecedented power and wealth has also produced a host of problems which have grown to global proportions and can no longer be managed. The culture of abundance and prosperity contrasts sharply with the reality of poverty for millions of starving, destitute, illiterate and marginalized individuals and even whole nations whom the "civilized" world cannot help because it has enough problems of its own. Its advanced technocracy has generated a series of anti-human phenomena like the objectification of mankind, the alienation of individuals and the depersonalization of interpersonal relationships. Instead of the longed-for heaven on earth, sociologists point out the reality of the dramatic decline of moral literacy, declining social capital (no-one trusts anyone anymore), threats of global self-destruction, clashes of civilizations, various forms of extremism, etc. Human being is even considered to be an "endangered species" (Sokol, 2002).

Another problem of the modern meta-narrative that contributed to its own decline was its tendency towards totalitarianism, that is, to act with an exclusive interpretation of reality and the use of power as a tool. M. Foucault (2000) described it well when he noted how the modern scientific discourse has been used as a means of all-pervasive dominance and surveillance. The form of monarchist totalitarianism may change but the essence remains the same. Many a totalitarian atrocity was legitimized under the auspices of the grand narratives – whether by the colonialists in the West¹⁴ or the Communists in the East.¹⁵

¹⁴ In this context A. Finkelkraut (1993, p. 42) captured the link between the concepts of colonization and civilization nicely when he said that to civilize for the modern Westerner means, "to make one's current conditions the example, to make a universal gift of one's own habits, to make one's own values the absolute criteria for assessment, and to consider the European lord and master of nature as the most interesting being in creation. [...] Because Europe typified progress to other human societies, colonization seemed to be the fastest and noblest means for bringing the stragglers onto the track of civilization. The calling of industrialized nations seemed to be: to accelerate the path of non-Europeans towards education and welfare. It was necessary, precisely for the good of primitive nations, to swallow up their differences – that is, their backwardness – in Western universality."

¹⁵ The specific consequences of the totalitarian discourse are intimately known by everyone who lived under the communist regime which also possessed a great story about class struggle and which, as many still remember, should have led to the eschatological promise of heaven on earth.

The result is that all the simple patterns and reference points on which the modern world was solidly constructed and which facilitated the choosing of life strategies have been shattered. The next generation weaned on postmodern milk no longer perceives reality as a cohesive and coherent whole in which it is possible to find systematic meaning and logic, but rather as a confusion of random and changing events. The truth is an empty concept that means whatever anyone wants it to mean. Objective knowledge is irrelevant. Law and justice have been left at the mercy of the demon of interpretation. And where future prospects are concerned, the post-modern generation does not believe that any scientific, business or economic, let alone political, solution exists which would ensure better existence than what their parents had. For a post-modern individual, the progress of mankind has been utterly lost in romantic illusions. Moral principles have been completely relativized. Everything is permissible.¹⁶

5 Conclusion

We find that we do not enjoy living in such a world. With every further billion stolen from the state budget, with each further promise broken or deceitful advertisement, the moral malaise of the people who have to adapt to it grows.¹⁷ As a result comes the call for ethics and moral education in our schools. It is almost certain that no book, lecture or article on the theme of ethics will make people more moral. At the same time, it is evident that one (optional) hour of moral education a week will not reform the emerging generation.¹⁸ We still have to discuss thoroughly “how to do [this educating] so that people not only know what is good but they want what is good and want to do good,” and to do so “even if no one is watching,” as one of the first architects of the *mundus moralis*¹⁹ said (Comenius, 1992, p. 570). One thing, however, is sure: we need moral education. And we need it for the three

¹⁶ Compare with Dostoyevsky’s famous dramatic statement which he put in the mouth of one of Karamazov’s brothers: “If there is no god, everything is permissible.” Compare also Holmes (1984).

¹⁷ Compare Bělohradsky’s “bondage” (2007).

¹⁸ In 2010 one optional lesson (45 min.) a week has been introduced to Czech schools by the Czech Ministry of Education as a response to the „increasing decline of morality“ in the Czech society. For more details see the given ministerial measure at <http://www.msmt.cz/ministerstvo/msmt-vydalo-doplnujici-vzdelavaci-obor-eticka-vychova?lang=>

¹⁹ *Mundus moralis*, or *The moral world*, is the sixth level in the hierarchy of Jan Amos Comenius’ *Pansophy* which is one of the central chapters in his *General consultation on the reform of human affairs*.

reasons outlined in this paper. Firstly, because our humanity is inherently endowed with moral capacity. Secondly, because there is an ethical reality which appeals to human beings. And thirdly, because our experience has shown that without moral boundaries we risk self-destruction.

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„To bys neměl“ Tři poznámky k otázce potřeby etické výchovy

Abstrakt: Cílem této studie je předložit tři fundamentální důvody objasňující důležitost a potřebu etického vychovatelství – nejen ve školách, ale v principu. Studijní otázka zní: Proč člověk potřebuje jakékoli etické vychovávání? Jednotlivé části této studie budou pojednávat jednotlivé odpovědi, resp. důvody k etické edukaci. Ty pokrývají následující tři oblasti: 1) povaha člověka jako morální bytosti, 2) povaha samotné morální reality, 3) specifická povaha doby, ve které potřebu morálního vychovatelství rozpoznáváme. Z analýzy zmíněných jevů vyplývá argument ve prospěch tradičního etického realizmu, který etickou výchovu nejen předpokládá, ale též umožňuje. Z uvedeného vyplývá závěr, že etické vychovatelství je nejen potřebné a nutné, ale též filosoficky legitimní.

Klíčová slova: moralita, edukace, lidská povaha, modernita, postmodernita