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BASIC DETERMINANTS OF INTEGRAL PEDAGOGY

ABSTRACT

Objectives: The aim of the study was to present the basic determinants in integral pedagogy. The term ‘basic determinants’ was used in the topic rather than, for example, ‘basic assumptions’, as it was considered that this formulation would better protect pedagogy (the discussed approach – integral pedagogy) as a field of science leading to the recognition of the truth about education.

Material and methods: Subject literature included in the bibliography of Polish and foreign authors was used. The used method of pedagogical hermeneutics fulfills two basic tasks:

1. introduces the reader to a specific research proposal;
2. arouses interest in the described proposal.

Results:

1. Through the study of the literature on the subject, the presence of intensive scientific research in contemporary pedagogy in the field of issues specified in the topic of the article was demonstrated.
2. It has been shown that the ‘basic determinants in integral pedagogy’ also apply to the entire pedagogy, regardless of the specifications that are used in its scientific practice.
3. It has been shown that the basis of integral pedagogy is philosophical realism and the understanding of man and his upbringing initiated by the ancient Greeks.
4. The danger of reductionism was pointed out when the personalistic theory of man is rejected in pedagogy.

Conclusions: Despite the article’s theoretical nature, the topic discussed is important for formulating practical upbringing and educational activities which, if they are to be effective and helpful in human development, cannot deviate from the integral – and can also be considered holistic – approach of applied pedagogy. It seems that on the realistic and personalistic basis cited in the article, specific programs and principles can be created to avoid the danger of reductionism in educational activities.

KEYWORDS: *education, personalism, Transcendence, integral pedagogy, philosophical realism*

Referring to the meaning of the adjective *integral*, *integralis*, which means inseparably connected with the whole, constituting the whole; complete, indivisible (Doroszewski, 1980, p. 310; Dziaczkowska, 2019, p. 9), we note that, according to its etymology, integral pedagogy should take into account the entire human education. The study of education in all its complexity is the essential characteristic of integral pedagogy. Kazimierz Sośnicki held

this position. It was also confirmed by Dariusz Kubinowski (Sośnicki, 1967, pp. 26–27). Placing emphasis on building comprehensive knowledge about education is important for integral pedagogy^[1] (Dziaczkowska, 2019, pp. 9–11, Pius XI, 1932, pp.56-57). In this sense, integrity is a prerequisite for a realistic, comprehensive, and complex understanding of educational reality. It provides the best safeguard for pedagogy against reductionism, which makes the researcher focus not on the entirety of educational reality but on its parts, thus detaching pedagogical knowledge from the reality it is supposed to explain. Therefore, pedagogy becomes useless knowledge in confrontation with a real human being (Dziaczkowska, 2019, pp. 10–11; Kubinowski, 2006, p. 178).

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SETTING OUT GUIDELINES

1. WHAT DISTINGUISHES INTEGRAL PEDAGOGY FROM OTHER SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES THAT STUDY EDUCATION?

– Seeking comprehensive knowledge about education. It should examine the process of education in all its complexity.

2. WHY DO WE USE THE ADDITIONAL TERM *INTEGRAL* TO DESCRIBE PEDAGOGY?

– To capture the complexity of the education process and out of concern for the holistic development of the human being.

3. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISREGARDING THE PRINCIPLE OF INTEGRITY IN PEDAGOGY?

– This limits the development of participants in education and narrows their view of educational reality, alienating pedagogical knowledge and rendering pedagogy useless. It loses its integrity and threatens those receiving an education and itself as a scientific discipline.

Jaeger emphasised that modern pedagogy derives from the ancient Greek understanding of human beings and their education (Jaeger, 2001, pp. 40–41).

The source of this understanding is Greek philosophy and the culture and education shaped by it, which the Greeks called *paideia* (Chłodna-Błach, 2016, pp. 32–34, 64–65). The achievements of personalistic thought, especially integral personalism, should be considered to provide a complete picture of what needs to be taken into account when referring to the idea and image of integral pedagogy. This will enable us to work in education with a full philosophical understanding of human beings, as well as in the light of theological interpretations of the human person.

The *sine qua non* of pedagogical thinking is understanding the whole truth about the human being (Wilk, 2003, p. 16; Kiereś, 2017, p. 213; Wilk, 1996, p. 81). This remark seems to apply fully to integral pedagogy and to all pedagogy. Fabio Gianotti notes that modern technology has not given humanity new educational truths. Beyond the nihilistic dogma that *everything is relative*, this thinking suggests that the world and human beings should be understood solely by their function. Any arguments based on existential, ethical, or religious reasoning are prohibited. He highlights that the popularisation of such thinking, this mental framework, has hindered the development of authentic education and favoured absolute forms of education (Gianotti, 2012, pp. 14–15).

PHILOSOPHICAL REALISM AS THE BASIS OF INTEGRAL PEDAGOGY

Pedagogy is primarily influenced by philosophy. A philosophical dispute arose about a certain, indisputable source of knowledge about the world. The opposing views are realism, which is defined by natural, spontaneous experience relating to real existence independent of human cognition; idealism, which recognises that natural cognition is uncertain and illusory^[2] (Król, 2023, pp. 277–299; Król, 2024, pp. 221–245), and irrationalism. As Kiereś emphasised in his critique of idealism, its greatest shortcoming in answering philosophical questions is detaching cognition (explanation) from reality, resulting in different visions and models of reality. This confusion in contemporary thought has a powerful impact on the debate about human nature, dignity, and rights^[3] (Kiereś, 2015, pp. 82–84; Krąpiec, 2007, pp. 666–669).

The realistic position recognises the reality of entities that make up reality. Man can interpret the laws that govern reality and act according to these laws. This knowledge and understanding lead to a pedagogy that, by integrally interpreting human nature and its inherent laws (guiding nature), recognises in it the capacity for potentialising human abilities. This requires an integral, holistic approach to human beings, consistent with their nature and its laws, both in theory, which should indicate the appropriate methods of *cultivating nature*, and in educational practice, which should be consistent with theory (Chłodna-Błach, 2016, pp. 65–66). Recognising the aforementioned reality of existence and understanding that reality does not owe its existence to itself, leads to the discovery of the absolute as the first cause, which is the origin of everything. The realistic perspective emphasises that all human rationality is the ability to interpret the laws of existence. From the perspective of the theory of existence, one also seeks the relevant truths and categories relating to human beings and their rational culture, which is a derivative of the world's rationality and manifests itself in a series of laws. Human beings are tasked with skilfully interpreting these laws, which allows them to determine the true purpose of human life – this is important for pedagogy and education (Kiereś, 2015, pp. 68, 70, 82–84).

POTENTIALITY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE, ITS PERSONAL DIMENSION, AND TRANSCENDENCE

The discovery of the potentiality of human existence by the ancient Greeks gave meaning to educating people, which they understood as the actualisation of human potentiality in three spheres: physical and emotional, volitional, and rational. This realistic view provided an understanding of what it means to be human, and it was used to set educational goals and select educational methods and tools; virtues that were used to actualise potentiality. As Maryniarczyk notes, *a clear vision of the object (subject) and the goal of education served as the determinants of the methods and theories of education that were developed* (Maryniarczyk, 2019, pp. 23–24). Integral pedagogy should highlight the classical, universal understanding of human beings, as other developing

sources of knowledge about humans, such as medicine, genetics, psychology, anthropology, ethics, and pedagogy, are not sufficient on their own if they break away from the universal, integral Greek model. Following Aristotle, we notice that a full understanding of the self is the fundamental condition of human development; according to Maryniarczyk, *much, if not everything, we do depends on this knowledge* (Maryniarczyk, 2019, p. 24). A small error at the beginning becomes a great error at the end (Maryniarczyk, 2019, p. 24). Without knowing who they are, human beings cannot act consciously. This knowledge is a fundamental issue in education and pedagogy because it is only in this area of human culture that the object of action is identified with the subject, the human being. Integral pedagogy determines the validity of a given educational system, educational programme, or school system by asking how it relates to the truth about human beings. Will it promote the development of all human potentiality? In the integral approach to differentiation in pedagogy and education, it is not an idea, worldview, religion or some *cultural matrix* that comes first, but real human potentiality that is revealed in human action rather than in thinking about human beings (Maryniarczyk, 2019, p. 25).

In addition to the potentiality, a person also has characteristics that reveal its transcendent dimension in relation to other people and communities. Human beings are social beings who form various relationships but are not the products of those relationships. Relationships are necessary for development, but they do not *create* human beings as human beings because human beings are always fully human. Any educational measures and institutional educational and pedagogical efforts can only function based on subsidiarity and are supposed to help humans develop to the full extent of their natural potentiality. They reveal the transcendent dimension of the person in relation to the natural world (biology) and the purpose of education, which is ultimately linked to the spiritual life of human beings (Maryniarczyk, 2019, pp. 26–27).

PERSONALISM AS THE BROADEST FOUNDATION OF INTEGRAL PEDAGOGY

An approach in pedagogy that fails to recognise the claims made above leads to a disastrous reductionism, which manifested most painfully in Marxist and Nazi education systems, etc. (Kiereś, 2017, p. 44).

Integral pedagogy has its basis in personalism, whose foundation is philosophical realism. This stance is always open to any truth about human beings and to any action aimed at the good of human beings or the human person (Kiereś, 2015, p. 46; Kowalczyk, 2010, pp. 193–194). Openness to every truth does not mean rejecting or dismissing universal truths previously discovered, including the most important truth for personalism and integral pedagogy, which views the human being as an individual substance of a rational nature (Kiereś, 2017, p. 17).

This spiritual and personal dimension distinguishes humans and is the reason for human cultural and civilisational activity. This dimension is closely related to education and pedagogy as a field of knowledge (Kiereś, 2017, pp. 17–18). Education and pedagogy, viewed this way, are based on the classical, integral concept of the human being as a person. The fact that human life continues to develop dynamically – actualising in all dimensions (it has potential, it is given to humans and is their task) – forms the basis for the existence of pedagogy as a theoretical and practical field of knowledge. In the classical view, the actualisation of human potentiality involves the rational and purposeful cultivation of the world and oneself according to human nature.

The human potential dynamism emerges in a realistic view of what is human and is therefore universal, ahistorical, and cognitively neutral. It is not bound by reductionism that makes absolute claims about human beings or perceives them as instruments of some ideology (Kiereś, 2017, pp. 18–19). Every human being knows the truth, loves, i.e., is capable of affirming other human beings, is free to make rational choices in the pursuit of good, is subject to laws, is a sovereign being (exists by their own act of existence), and possesses religious dignity. All these properties are goods that contribute to human personal life (Kiereś, 2017, p. 18; Krąpiec, 1974; Krąpiec, 2005). Fundamentally, contemporary pedagogy recognises and duly appreciates all of these characteristics of human existence, except for recognising the

human person as capable of establishing a relationship with God. Fundamentally, this tendency is linked to a specific goal of education, the *ideal of the human being*, which, in turn, is conditioned by the previously accepted concept of the human person. Nowak notes that this trend is already evident in the statements of the ancient Romans and Greeks about the human being as *homo humanus*, about *the child of God* in Judaism and Christianity, in the idea of a harmoniously developed personality in neo-humanism, and the concept of *homo faber* in modern times (Nowak, 2000, pp. 316–317). Nowak observes that this tendency to forget the religious dimension is so strong that it also affects Christian educationalists. Nowak explains this state of affairs by referring to Rodhe, who noted that non-Christian educationalists do not abandon their worldview in their educational thinking. However, this is sometimes the case with Christian educationalists who, by engaging in reductive reasoning, exclude religious premises from their thinking (Rohde, 1963, p. 2; Nowak, 2000, p. 317).

Such attitudes are criticised by Guardini, who considers them *a grotesque charade: acknowledging that God exists but, in educational practice, acting as if He did not* (Nowak, 2000, p. 317). Perhaps this is also influenced by a peculiar *inferiority complex* mentioned by Father Woroniecki in 1946, which is reflected in the smaller number of religious pedagogical studies representing integrally understood Catholic pedagogy compared to those inspired by secular ideas (Woroniecki, 1947, pp. 3–6).

It also appears that the omission of the religious dimension today may be encouraged by a climate in contemporary culture that is unfavourable to religious references in education, strongly influenced by secularisation and secularism, which postulate the aforementioned primacy of human autonomy in the areas of ethics, moral norms, education, and pedagogy^[4] (Król, 2023, pp. 277–299; Król, 2024, pp. 221–245). These trends are also consistent with the dominant scientific outlook in contemporary culture, where it is generally accepted that only the natural sciences constitute the intellectual foundation of knowledge, while religion and ethics fall within the realm of private subjective opinions, feelings, and beliefs. Taken together, these phenomena create a scientific framework of credibility that is accepted unconsciously and has made the Western world, in particular, a secular world, a place where religion and education rooted in religion are dismissed as superstition

(Moreland, 2021, pp. 21–27; Król, 2024, pp. 221–245). Personalism is a great help to integral pedagogy. It emerges as a protest against any *objectification of the human being*. It highlights the central position of human beings in the hierarchy of created beings, which also implies that they are the purpose of social life. Human beings can never be material for some *great idea* or a means to an end for an organisation, a state, or humanity (Dec, 2007, p. 122; Kiereś, 2017, pp. 22–23). Personalism can provide pedagogy with a true theory of the human being (an understanding of the human being), on which a sound theory of education can be built. Unfortunately, many currents of thought claiming to be forms of personalism are, in fact, incompatible with personalism from an anthropological point of view. The source of this diversity lies in different philosophical assumptions, resulting in different anthropologies (Granat, 1962, p. 13; Kiereś, 2017, pp. 22–23). Dec emphasises that a complete understanding of the human being is possible within the theistic-Thomistic personalism, as it is built on the previously mentioned basis of cognitive realism (Dec, 2002, pp. 57–58; Kiereś, 2017, pp. 26–27). This observation is important because, as Kiereś notes, the term *personalism* is often used in contemporary pedagogy, while consciously or unconsciously referring to various concepts of the human being around which educational models are built, emphasising individuality, uniqueness, dignity, freedom, and human value. On this basis, it is impossible to construct a theory of human beings as the foundation for a certain theory of education, and only a *certain theory* can be responsibly applied in life (Kiereś, 2017, pp. 21–23; Pius XI, pp. 61–65). Personalism cannot be based solely on the aforementioned ontological features of human existence, as it stems from the thought of ancient Greece (philosophy) and Rome (theory of state and law), which was adopted and synthesised within Christian culture based on its own personalistic concept of the human being understood as a person (Kiereś, 2017, p. 20; Krąpiec, 2004). Two points appear to be significant:

1. Greece, the discovery of human nature – humans as living and rational beings (Greek: *zoon logikon*);
2. Christian philosophy – the distinction between nature and person (Kiereś, 2017, pp. 20, 85–87; Krąpiec, 2004).

The Greek metaphor of the *prosopon* mask suggests the uniqueness and individuality of human beings, who are not defined solely by their external appearance; beneath the mask, there is someone whose essence is not determined by anything external. Or, as Krąpiec puts it, the *I is not existentially identical with what is mine, which proves that the I transcends what is mine. In other words, everything that is mine does not equal the subject I* (Krąpiec, 2006; Kiereś, 2015, p. 94).

The achievements of Christian philosophy, influenced by Trinitarian and Christological findings, go much further and see in the personal life of human beings the image and likeness of God. (Kiereś, 2017, pp. 20–22, 27–29). Referring to Galarowicz's observations, Rynio notes that Wojtyła also assigns the development of a coherent theory of the person to Thomistic thought. Based in particular on the experience of action, he goes further than Saint Thomas, who focused primarily on the theoretical dimension of the person. Wojtyła answers the question of who the real human being is. For integral pedagogy this reality of the person considered from the perspective of human action is vital (Rynio, 2004, pp. 36–38; Galarowicz, 1996, pp. 72–73).

However, when it comes to educational theory, an equally important prerequisite for a proper understanding of the person is to recognise the unchanging nature of human beings. Thanks to rational thinking, the Greeks recognised three levels of human nature: 1) vegetative life; 2) sentient life; and 3) intellectual/volitional life, which is unique to humans as a pursuit of what is good – such behaviour is characteristic only of human nature. Human beings act according to nature when they act according to reason. This intellectual and volitional dimension of human life manifests in personal life. An important feature of human nature is the inseparability of two levels, animality and rationality, which define its nature and essence. Separating these two levels results in reductionism – materialism or spiritualism. On the other hand, human nature is constant and unchanging in its three inclinations (*appetitus naturalis, sensitivus and intellectualis*). Inclinations lean towards the good of the human being and set natural norms in which the law of nature is expressed. Norms, however, do not apply automatically. People should learn about them and act and behave accordingly, remembering that the constant and unchanging human nature is dynamic. One can strive for self-fulfilment

only when one acquires knowledge and improves one's conduct (Kiereś, 2015, pp. 85–93; Kiereś, 2017, pp. 19–20; Woroniecki, 1986; Jaroszyński, 1993; Pańpuch, 2001, pp. 216–231).

A good example of the application of the integral approach in pedagogy is the concept of integral education developed by S. Kunowski. In this concept the pedagogical activity is seen in four factors that integrally encompass the human being, i.e. bios, ethos, agos and fate (Kunowski pp. 171-259). It seems that the monograph redacted by E. Domagała-Zysk 'Personalistic integral education of school-age children', published this year, is an example of translating the theory of the integral approach in pedagogy into pedagogical practice. The authors make an interesting observation from the point of view of the integral perception of education and pedagogy, noting two other factors that are particularly important today: logos – communication, technos – technology. This study provides a number of practical instructions for educators on how to specifically apply the theoretical principles of integral education in pedagogical practice (Domagała – Zyśk pp. 22-40). However, in relation to the nature of this study, broader references to pedagogical practice exceed the scope of the article.

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ENDNOTES

- [1] For example, Lucyna Dziaczkowska writes that an integral understanding of human beings and education should be an attribute of all pedagogy.
- [2] Human autonomy is one of the main pillars of contemporary secularisation and secularism, and its reductionist influence is strongly evident in modern culture, education, and pedagogy.
- [3] *Jeśli poznanie nie wychodzi od spontanicznie dostrzeganej rzeczywistości lecz od refleksji nad własnym poznaniem, wówczas tworzy ideologie (polityczne, społeczne, gospodarcze) i mity. Wykreowane w ten sposób ideologie i mity (utopie) uczyniono ostatecznym odniesieniem dla ludzkich czynów; nie rzeczywistość lecz jej wytwory w postaci mitów i ideologii mają stanowić sprawdzian ludzkiego działania. Zatem, jeśli nie odczytywanie i zrozumienie rzeczywistości lecz ideologie i mity legną u podstaw ludzkiego działania – wówczas działanie, jako dobre lub złe, słuszne lub niesłuszne, będzie się mierzyło skonstruowaną ideologią. [If cognition does not originate from spontaneously perceived reality but from reflection on one's cognition, then it creates ideologies (political, social, economic) and myths. The ideologies and myths (utopias) produced in this way have become the ultimate reference point for human actions; it is not reality but its products in the form of myths and ideologies that are supposed to be the test of human action. Therefore, if it is not the reading and understanding of reality but ideologies and myths that underlie human action, then action, as good or bad, right or wrong, will be measured by a constructed ideology.]*
- [4] Human autonomy is one of the main pillars of contemporary secularisation and secularism, and its reductionist influence is strongly evident in modern culture, education and pedagogy.