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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Critique of Religious Pedagogy and the Possibility of Religious Education as a Practical Metaphysics

Din Pedagojisinin Eleştirisi ve Pratik Bir Metafizik Olarak Din Eğitiminin İmkânı

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Abstract

While the science of religious education was established in the 19th century in the West, its more recent history commenced in Türkiye in the 1980s. Though the science of religious education has a close connection with religious sciences due to being the education of the Islamic religion in practice, it originally falls under the category of human sciences and takes its scientific principle from educational sciences. The purpose of this study is to discuss the possibility and conditions of reforming the science of religious education, which characterized by its pedagogical nature, into a practical metaphysics. Practical metaphysics unifies all discourses and non-discursive formations that arise from humanity's pursuit of meaning by focusing on the modality of subject as its topic of research. How the Islamic intellectual tradition divides sciences into two categories (i.e., the traditional and the rational sciences), the weakness of the link between sciences and institutionalization, and even fiqh's limited interest in ethics and politics despite being a practical science show how important having a scientific discourse about the general image of subjectivity in a sociality is. In addition, religious education as a practical metaphysics can play a crucial role in this context by exploring both the discursive and non-discursive conditions of this concept, ultimately revealing the unity of this image. The study is based on a document analysis and consists of two sections. The first section provides a critical assessment of religious pedagogy, while the second section elucidates the general characteristics of religious education as a practical metaphysics, which proposes a profound transformation in the meaning of education by addressing the inadequately studied relationship among the natural sciences, the human sciences, and the religious sciences and by addressing educational activities within the structural nature of the historical image of human beings.

Keywords: Religious Education, Pedagogy, Religious Education as a Practical Metaphysics, Religiosity, Religiosity Modality

Öz

Batı'da 19. Yüzyılda kurulan din eğitimi biliminin Türkiye'de tarihi yakın zamanda, 1980'lerde başlamıştır. Din eğitimi bilimi, uygulamada İslam dininin eğitimi olduğu için dini ilimlerle yakın bir bağının olmasına rağmen asıl olarak insan bilimleri kategorisinde yer alırken bilimsellik ilkesini eğitim biliminden almaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, yapısal özellikleri itibariyle pedagojik olan din eğitimi biliminin pratik bir metafizik olarak güncellenmesinin imkân ve koşullarını ele almaktır. Pratik bir metafizik, özne kipliklerini araştırma konusu yaparak insanın anlam arayışının ürünü olan bütün söylemleri ve söylemsel olmayan oluşumları kendinde birleştirmektedir. İslam düşünce geleneğinde ilimlerin naklî ve aklî ilimler olarak ikiye ayrılması, ilimlerle kurumsallaşma arasındaki bağın zayıflığı ve hatta uygulamayla ilgili bir ilim olmasına rağmen fıkhın ahlak ve siyasete olan zayıf ilgisi, bir toplumsallıkta öznelleşmenin genel genel imgesiyle ilgili bir bilimin\söylemin ne denli önemli olduğunu göstermektedir ki pratik bir metafizik olarak din eğitimi, bu bakımdan söz konusu imgenin söylemsel ve söylemsel olmayan koşullarını inceleyerek imgenin birlikli halini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma doküman analiziyle yürütülmüştür. İki bölümden oluşan çalışmanın ilk bölümünde din pedagojisinin eleştirel bir okuması yapılmış, ikinci bölümde pratik bir metafizik olarak din eğitiminin genel özellikleri açıklanmıştır. Pratik bir metafizik olarak din eğitimi, eğitimin anlamında köklü bir dönüşüm önermekte; doğa bilimleri, insan bilimleri ve din bilimleriyle yeterince incelenmemiş ilişkiyi olduğu kadar eğitim faaliyetlerini tarihsel insan imgesinin yapısallığında ele almaktadır.**Anahtar**

Kelimeler: Din Eğitimi, Pedagoji, Pratik Bir Metafizik, Dindarlık, Dindarlık Kipliği.

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Introduction

Understanding, interpreting, and shaping reality are existential characteristics of human beings. Aristotle expressed this with the statement "All men by nature desire to know."[1] But knowledge is rarely organized in a singular way, and beside the knowing subject arrives at a judgment about things within a discourse. Discourses, or disciplines in more limited terms, systematically bring together sets of concepts, theories, basic propositions, literature, and common beliefs to form an internal consistency. Additionally, the sciences are commonly viewed as having developed cumulatively. Again, an established understanding often exists that the knowing subject's activity of knowing is abstracted from other activities, and Aristotle, who gave internal consistency to thought through logic, played a major role in this. However, Foucault criticized the idea that the sciences develop cumulatively,[2] instead arguing that the knowing subject's activity of knowing cannot be a pure act.[3] One of the most important contributions of this heterogeneity as to knowing for a practical metaphysical[4] expression is the use of the term discourse in place of science. Despite the fact that Aristotle's teacher Plato also argued that the activity of knowing is not pure in the ordinary condition[5], science, or episteme in its more specialized form, has been justified by the tautological character of conclusive propositions (*apodeictical*) since Aristotle. In Plato's classification of knowledge, the sciences correspond to the activity of *pistis* [faith] and contain a distorted images of reality, even if they are essentially apodeictic.[6] Foucault's

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1 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Hope (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1968), par. 980a.

2 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 21 ff.

3 Michel Foucault, *Lectures on the Will to Know*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 202 ff.

4 The expression "a practical metaphysics" as an original conceptualization refers to a discourse that deals with the synthesis of concepts and non-conceptual elements by overcoming the dependence that metaphysics, which is an abstraction at the highest level, has on concepts, which are only discursive in nature and are therefore actually a secondary image. A practical metaphysics sees metaphysics as an unfinished project and analyzes the ways in which concepts and non-conceptual elements that constitute the structure of subjectivity are interconnected. Thus, at the end of the analysis, both the general image of the subject that emerges as well as the deficiencies embedded in its historicization can provide future insights, because the subject is always an incomplete construction in essence, even at the moment of the highest level of abstraction. According to a practical metaphysics, the most general image of the subject is absolutely religious in formation.

5 Plato, *The Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari, trans. Tom Griffith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), par. 511e.

6 Oğuz Haşlakoğlu, *Felsefece* (Ankara: Hece Yayınları, 2021), 34.

conclusions using the methods of archaeology and genealogy justify the historical examples of Plato's allegory of the cave. In line with Plato's metaphysics, another significance of Foucault's methods and conclusions of the methods for a practical metaphysics is the interaction and correlation between knowledge and power. Micro power, meso power (the state) and macro power form society beginning with the encounter of at least two people and generalizing with the participation of more people, institutions, and organizations.[7] Still, power relations are insufficient for the historicization and actualization of a subject and sociality. As Aristotle reminded, the will to truth is an existential feature, and therefore power relations need knowledge. In Searle's description of how knowledge becomes a speech act,[8] in order for knowledge to cease to be a proposition or collection of propositions and to become performative, knowledge must mediate power relations and the flow within them. In addition, knowledge imitates and substitutes power relations, with power imitating knowledge.[9] As mentioned above, sociality is formed through the interaction of knowledge and power relations, and the nexus points where knowledge and power relations become entangled are the moments when they imitate each other. If knowledge imitates power and power imitates knowledge, then i) the knowing subject's activity of knowing involves the power's imitation of knowledge in a way that one may not even realize, and ii) when expressed in words or symbols, an act generates the knowledge effect, and this removes the one dimensionality and homogeneity of the connection between knowing subjects. Therefore, the answer to the question of which propositions of a book written by a knowing subject are pure knowing acts and which propositions are the imitation of knowledge of power will at least to some extent remain forever suspended. Similarly, which acts of power actors, as well as where and how they are articulated into propositions, remain unclear. This conclusion from Foucault's analysis and this postulate for religious education as a practical metaphysics "discursivizes" the ayahs[10] that inform how the life of the world is play and amusement. Human beings are born into a world of conjecture *(doxa)*, become agents in the world of conjecture by binding with knowledge and power relations, and are thus afflicted with the doubled problem

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7   Michel Foucault, "Power and Knowledge," in *The Japan Lectures: A Transnational Critical Encounter*, ed. John Rajchman (New York: Routledge, 2023); Süleyman Gümüş, *Din Okuryazarlığının Doğuşu: Modern Dindar Öznenin Soykütüğüne Giriş* (İstanbul: DBY Yyınları, 2023), 55.

8   John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 16.

9   Michel Foucault, "Prison Talk," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 51–52.

10   *The Noble Qur'an*, 6:32, 29:64, 47:36, 57:20.

of being surrounded by a world that is ontically inauthentic and by hypothetical relations. According to practical metaphysics, human action lacks value in itself, and its agency must be justified by a point external to the person. On the other hand, subjectivity is constructed within a social life, and while subjectivization is subjective in the sense that its material is individual existence, it is objective in the sense that the conditions for the historicization and actualization of the subject are the knowledge and power relations of a given sociality. However, no form of subjectivity can exhaust human existence, as as the human being is an empirical-transcendent reality.

The science of religious education, namely religious education as religious pedagogy, is focused on the concept of teaching rather than the concept of education. As Kant stated, education is an activity that makes a human being human.[11] Whereas teaching is concerned with the student's acquisition of a certain goal, education in its broadest sense is the actualization of being human. In fact, this actualization necessarily takes place within a sociality where learning is necessary for education, and the theological character of the most general image of the subject necessitate the reconstruction of religious education as a practical metaphysics. Without a parallel metaphysical foundation, religious education being ultimately contingent on the teaching of a given religion will perpetuate the traditional Islamic society's distinction between traditional and rational knowledge. Due to the modern character of pedagogy, religious education may not correctly assess educational principles within the naturalness of this division, and, most importantly, it may fail to recognize how teaching perpetuates a particular conception of subjectivity. While the teaching of the Islamic religion in traditional Islamic societies posed no significant challenge due to operating in accordance with the dynamics of the society itself, this is an issue that cannot be overlooked for the contemporary individual who has been subjectivized by Western sciences and institutions.

The aims of this study are to provide a critical evaluation of the current science of religious education, to propose its reconstruction in the form of a practical metaphysics, and to outline this proposal. The main hypotheses of the study are as follows: i) While the current science of religious education constitutes a critical stage in the process of the scientization of religious education, it has been structured over time as a pedagogy of religion; ii) a unique and authentic configuration of religious education is possible through its reconstruction as a practical metaphysics. The article is based on an analysis of the works included within the scope of the study. The article consists of two main parts. The first part

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11   Cemal Tosun, *Din Eğitimi Bilimine Giriş* (Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayınları, 2021), 13.

presents a critical analysis of the current religious education in Türkiye, while the second part explains the definition, purpose, and basic assumptions of religious education as a practical metaphysics.

1. Religious Education as a Pedagogy of Religion: A Critical Evaluation

The science of religious education in Türkiye is generally accepted as having been established between 1980-1990.[12] In this regard, Prof. Dr. Beyza Bilgin's works on the field, especially her works *Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi ve Liselerde Din Dersleri* (1980) and *Eğitim Bilimi ve Din Eğitimi* (1988), have particular value.

Religious education as a pedagogy of religion was institutionalized in a rather late period, depending on many interrelated dynamics. Experts in the field naturally noticed that religious education, unlike other forms of education, is about human's duties and responsibilities toward God and the prophet. While Bayraklı had deduced the general principles of religious education from the Quran,[13] Canan advocated a Sunnah-centered religious education.[14] Cebeci implied that, because the Prophet Muhammad was the first person to teach religion, religious education is a continuation of his mission and emphasized that religious sciences are essential for religious education.[15] According to Aydın, religious education is a process that affects the whole of life.[16]

The science of religious education is a pedagogy, despite its connection to the Qur'an and Sunnah and the strategic importance theological disciplines have in providing religious education through their principles and materials. The most obvious example of this is seen in Tosun's analysis of the concepts and realities of religion, education, science, religious education, and science of education with regard to the science of religious education.[17] In this analysis, while science of education has the status of scientificity at the second level, religious education is only an activity. This is because the scientific principle of the science of religious

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12 Recai Doğan, "Prof. Dr. Beyza Bilgin ve Din Eğitimine Katkıları," *Dini Araştırmalar* 23, no. 58 (2020): 40; Tosun, *Din Eğitimi Bilimine Giriş*, 41; Suat Cebeci, *Din Eğitimi Bilimi ve Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2005), 26-27; Nurullah Altaş, *Din Eğitimi* (Ankara: Nobel Akademi Yayınları, 2022), 39-81.

13 Bayraktar Bayraklı, *İslam'da Eğitim: Batı Eğitim Sistemleriyle Mukayeseli* (İstanbul: Bayraklı Yayınları, 2009), 129–89.

14 Tosun, *Din Eğitimi Bilimine Giriş*, 50.

15 Cebeci, *Din Eğitimi Bilimi ve Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi*, 24–25.

16 Muhammet Şevki Aydın, *Din Eğitimi Bilimi* (Kayseri: Kimlik Yayınları, 2021), 104 ff.

17 Tosun, *Din Eğitimi Bilimine Giriş*, 6 ff.

education comes from the science of education, and without the principle of science, religious education can only be an activity suitable for common sense. In order for religious education to go from being an activity to gaining scientific status, it must provide the education-based scientific principle. It can be said that this is not the only route for religious education to become a science, but the institutionalization of the science of religious education in Turkey has followed this route.

Therefore, what does religious education being pedagogical mean? Pedagogy in its simplest terms is the adaptation or even reduction of reality to the milieu (environment) in order to make it teachable.[18] Making a reality ready to be learned in a way that children can understand or in accordance with their needs as determined by the sciences means to reform that which does not exist in its nature. Similarly, considering factors such as age, gender, occupation, and psychological state involves adapting reality to the milieu. In fact, education is inevitably pedagogical. What makes a pedagogical religious education problematic is the essential difference between the world of Islamic civilization in which Muslim subjectivities have been constructed and the world in which modern pedagogy has emerged. To assess the structural features of pedagogical religious education across a few aspects involves the following:

First, the ground of modern pedagogy's conception of the milieu is the natural state. Modernity is the externalization and embodiment of the natural state. The leading thinkers' discussions of the natural state while establishing the modern world[19] involved a new narrative about the problematic of origins. All societies in the traditional world linked the origin of humanity and the world to God through revelation or mythos. The natural state refers to an imaginary neutral time in which no meanings, concepts, communications, or institutions existed. The rational secular character of modernity is that humans have become the unique constitutive authority due to the connection between God and man having been suspended

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18   Chris Watkins and Peter Mortimore, "What Do We Know? Early Childhood Pedagogy", in *Understanding Pedagogy and Its Impact on Learning*, ed. Peter Mortimore (London: Paul Chapman, 1999), 3.

19   Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive or The Citizen*, ed. Sterling P. Lamprecht (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1949), 21-31; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), 82–86; John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Civil Government* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1986), 8–14; Charles Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3–7; David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2005), 373–86; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 96–103; Immanuel Kant, *The Science of Right*, trans. W. Hastie (Radford: A&D Publishing, 2009), 63–65.

in a natural state. This is a conception of a perfect milieu reflected in pedagogy. Due to everything being neutral in the natural state, everything in modern society, which is the embodiment of the natural state, is first and foremost always political, whereas everything in traditional society had been primarily theological. Hence, the highest human image in modern society is citizenship. Because no category exists above citizenship, the lower modes of individual subjectivity do not lead to a division in the image of citizenship. Namely, believing or not believing does not positively or negatively affect citizenship. Nevertheless, to say that the natural state is entirely original would be incorrect. The natural state is actually a modification of Aristotle's closed universe model. When Aristotle interpreted Plato's notion of ideas, he developed a closed model of the universe by canceling the openness of ideas (*eidê*) to the divinity of ideas. In Aristotle's model of the cosmos, the non-personal God, which Muslim thinkers later recognized, is the unmoved mover. Because God has no agency toward the universe, He has no special names or attributes, nor does He speak or demand. When the unmoved mover is removed from the system, a one-dimensional universe of the natural state emerges, which refers to itself not only physically but also ontically. Due to the natural state and its boundary being identical, the natural state milieu is perfectly homogeneous. God and other entities are not ordered by categorical distinctions on a hierarchical scheme. Bacon criticized the way of thinking that dictates categorical distinctions in the understanding of things and delayed the transition from Aristotle's closed universe to modern society as follows:

> There is nothing sound in the notions of logic and physics: neither substance, nor quality, nor action and passion, nor being itself are good notions; much less heavy, light, dense, rare, wet, dry, generation, corruption, attraction, repulsion, element, matter, form and so on; all [are] fanciful and ill defined.[20]

In the universe of the natural state, the modern pedagogical milieu is characterized by the interrelationship of completely isolated variables. All that a pedagogy of religion can achieve in such a milieu is to reach objectives that are divided into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor behaviors. The goals of education are not to establish an authentic connection between God and human. The clearest example of this is that the ultimate goal of an individual life, and therefore of education, is *self-actualization.* The goals are not concerned with becoming a servant of God in the traditional sense or, more specialized, with reaching *nafs al-kāmila* [the Complete Self]. Self-actualization means balancing among the innate potentials, desires, and environmental factors that are the given circumstances of the milieu. The

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20 Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 35 (Aphorism XV).

content of this balance is derived not from religious sciences but from psychology in particular[21] and its surrounding discourses. The higher the correlation among the potentials, self-image, and the self, the closer the individual will be to self-actualization. The ultimate and legitimate goal of religious pedagogy is to help realize the ultimate goal of life. Preventing radicalization, correcting widespread mislearning, and keeping the competition between religious and secular micro-powers at an acceptable level are the tasks of religious education as a pedagogy of religion. As such, religious education is not located on the axis of self-actualization but rather follows the axis from the outside along the boundary between positive and negative variables. In other words, the priority of religious education is to keep the individual away from what should not be.

The bridge between the natural state and education is childhood. The natural state is imaginary, and no historical evidence can be found for it. However, each new birth represents the natural state and the pre-social human. The mind of the newborn is a *tabula rasa* [blank slate], where no trace of sense or institution can be found. With these characteristics, childhood turns traditional society inside out; in a sense, the deconstruction of traditional society is namely realized through childhood.

Secondly, the universe of the natural state is not opposed to all possible theologies but instead is theological in its own unique way. Revelational theology is invalid in the natural state, with revelational theology being replaced by natural theology. Reasoning is a common quality between revelational theology as a discourse and natural theology. But whereas all arguments in natural theology consist of reasoning about nature,[22] reasoning in revelational theology is for the understanding of revelation. Natural theology deduces the idea of God from the natural order, and its aim is not to justify belief in a personal God but instead to rationalize the idea of belief in God in general. Although natural theology uses the data of science, the propositions of natural theology are not scientific knowledge.[23] In natural theology, belief and disbelief in God are the result of arguments of equal force, and both options are equally reasonable. Thus, neither belief or disbelief triggers a distortion in the image of citizenship. When a religion based on revelation and binding rules

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21 Öznur Özdoğan, "Kendini Gerçekleştirme Açısından İnsan-Din İlişkisi," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 37 (1997): 359–64.

22 D. Q. McInerny, *Natural Theology* (Elmhurst Pa: Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, 2005), 2; John Polkinghorne, *Faith, Science and Understanding* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 61–62.

23 Cafer Sadık Yaran, "Natural Theology in Christianity and Islam: Is There a Common Core?" *On Dokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 11(11) (1999): 37.

regarding behavior is situated within natural theology, prophecy is the institution that undergoes a strategic transformation in meaning. If the conceptualization of a personal God is not a constitutive authority, then all conceptions of a personal God have been reduced to a kind of mythological narrative and are now a matter of personal and conscientious acceptance.

In the current situation, the theological arguments of religious education as a pedagogy in Türkiye are not entirely based on natural theology. Prophethood is still the second domain of learning in religious education practices and follows the learning domain of belief, which includes the conception of a personal God. However, this is because the irrational nature of faith resists voluntary modernization, and to return to Foucault again, power in traditional micro power relations in particular disseminates a knowledge effect into the order of discourses. As the evolution from the traditional to the modern accelerates, the influence of natural theology will be demonstrated more prominently. As in the physical and biological fields, the idea of law in social life[24] shows that religious learning depends on the natural state through natural theology.

Thirdly, religious education as a pedagogy of religion can be classified under the human or social sciences, regardless of the differences between them.[25] Both names are modern and both reflect a modern understanding and construction of reality. For human beings, the world is not just the physical world: Human's existential powers such as consciousness, imagination, and willing go beyond the experience of the physical world and create a second world that is uniquely human. These disciplines have emerged to explain the entities and realities outside of natural phenomena, for in the absence of these sciences, the question of what is human truth would remain unanswered to a large extent. Such a silence would serve as a reminder of the chain of meaning linking to God. The directives connecting words and things would become dysfunctional, the contradictions of modern macro power would emerge on the surface of discourses, and the modality of subjectivity would collapse inward. As such, the equality Dilthey carefully tried to establish between life and history is the postulate of the human sciences,[26] where the equality between life and history is the deep gap that convinces one that nothing transcendent exists

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24 Beyza Bilgin, *Eğitim Bilimi ve Din Eğitimi* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1988), 26; Aydın, *Din Eğitimi Bilimi*, 176.

25 Cebeci, *Din Eğitimi Bilimi ve Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi*, 28; Tosun, *Din Eğitimi Bilimine Giriş*, 8–11; Altaş, *Din Eğitimi*, 61.

26 Wilhelm Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in Human Sciences: Selected Works Volume III*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel & Frithjof Rodi (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), 152–60, 296–302.

that needs to be understood behind the physical phenomena.

Given that the concept of law finds its most solid foundation in the natural sciences, the development of religious education as a pedagogy within the realm of religion can be situated within the context of the natural sciences. In addition, the concept of milieu first emerged in physics and then was used in biology.[27] Because the most precise knowledge is acquired in the natural sciences, the natural sciences are the discursive pillars of the universe of the natural state. By determining the meaning of matter, physics has set the outer limit of the understandability of the universe. For example, in the modern origin problematic, the big bang (just like childhood) theorizes a semi-imaginary zero point, thus confirming the imaginary zero point of the natural state universe. In Foucault's words "…nature no longer speaks to him of the creation or the end of the world, of his dependency or his approaching judgement; it no longer speaks of anything but a natural time."[28] Biology for its part has put an end to the distinction between human and non-human life (i.e., between *bios* and *zoe*) with the single notion of vitality. Biology, with its monopoly of explanation regarding life, includes the truth of death in its perspective. The second category in the establishment of religious pedagogy is the human sciences. While the human sciences have their own specific themes, their mission is to historicize life and "…since the human being has become historical, through and through, none of the contents analysed by the human sciences can remain stable in itself or escape the movement of History."[29] While the natural sciences give arguments for a materialist theory of sense, the human sciences articulate the natural sciences to human history. Psychology explains *psūkhḗ* empirically with the concept of behavior borrowed from biology. With regard to biology as the discourse of vitality, the *psūkhḗ* and the body overlap, and the *psūkhḗ* can no longer experience the process of perfecting itself as it had in the traditional world. For example, wherever biology's conceptualization of vitality occur causes the propositions about the stages of the self in Sufism to lose their discursive character. Religious experience is thus situated in a conscientious context. Conscience has an important role in religious pedagogy because the faculties of good and evil are unified at a single point through conscience so that human beings can be sealed off

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27 Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 36.

28 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 402.

29 Foucault, *The Order of Things,* 404.

with themself.[30] Sociology, which closes the parenthesis psychology had opened, examines the general themes crystallized in history. While psychology provides explanations specific to the individual, sociology generalizes and analyzes them at the institutional scale. While sociology recodes traditional society according to modern society,[31] psychology both looks for the principles of social institutions in human psychosomatic features and limits agency to biochemical reactions, the nervous system, and organs such as the brain. However, the empirical and transcendental existence of human beings always being stronger than the rationalizing processes weakens the human sciences, which try to maintain their stability by borrowing the concepts and methods from the natural sciences. Thus, psychoanalysis on one side and ethnology on the other have created a gap between the rationality of the human sciences and human beings.[32]

Fourthly, once the concept of behavior was defined in psychology, a general outline of education emerged. The existence of educational sciences within the discursive limitation is not therefore indispensable. The novelty of educational sciences is the envisagement of a special childhood. In traditional society, childhood is a potential adulthood. In modern society, however, adulthood is a kind of disintegration of childhood. Adulthood differs from childhood in its rationality and productivity, but the shadow of the unconscious continues to fall on the adult from childhood until death. Another characteristic of the envisagement of modern childhood is the revolution in the perception of truth, despite its contributions to solving certain theological problems such as original sin in Western thought. Both in Islam as well as in the works of philosophers such as Plato and even in myths, human beings observe the truth before birth. Therefore, childhood in a way is the period when one is closest to the experience of truth. Contrary to this, spiritualism, animism, and artificialism, which Piaget accepted as the main features of a child's cognitive development,[33] as well as his biological epistemology and

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30 Süleyman Gümüş, "Din Pedagojisinin Doğuşu," in *Modern Dünyada Çocukluk ve Çocuk Eğitimi: Temalar, Tartışmalar, Kuramlar* ed. Süleyman Gümüş and Z. Şeyma Altın (Ankara: Nobel Akademi Yayınları, 2022), 67.

31 Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, Vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 5–6.

32 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 414.

33 Jean Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*, trans. Joan Tomlinson and Andrew Tomlinson (New York: The Humanities Press, 1951), 207, 253.

the relationship he established between learning and schema,[34] position cognitive development perfectly within an evolutionary framework. On the other hand, while extra-discursive elements inevitably occur in a discourse, some discourses, of which education is the foremost with regard to such sciences, are much more strongly intertwined with power relations. For example, Piaget built a theory that takes into account the individual development of learning in the West, where individuality is a primary value, whereas Vygotsky developed a theory in line with a communal perspective. This is because education transfers societality and subjecthood to each other. In fact, this is the primary meaning of education. By focusing on education's discursive features, definitions of education take into account its scientific efficacy in terms of behavior acquisition. To say that religious education is discursively a sub-branch of educational sciences would also not be wrong these days.[35] Educational psychology, in particular with its sub-disciplines, is the unique discipline that explains the relationship between behavior and learning. In educational sciences, behavior is divided into three sub-domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The whole of religious development corresponds to one of these three forms of behavior. In addition, moral development, one of the three main dimensions of religious identity acquisition, is systematically explained in educational psychology, such as in Kohlberg's theory of moral development. In the aftermath of Thorndike's work on educational psychology, the field of educational psychology expanded in Türkiye, as well as domestic studies conducted on the subject.[36] Theories integrated with general developmental theories have been proposed about faith development, another dimension of religious development.[37] However, because the level of realization almost never rises to the level of *dianoia* [capacity, process, or result of discursive thinking] in the process of shaping

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34   Jean Piaget, *Biology and Knowledge: An Essay on the Relations between Organic Regulations and Cognitive Processes*, trans. Beatrix Walsh (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971); Jean Piaget, *The Psychology of Intelligence*, trans. Malcolm Piercy and D.E. Berlyne (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2005).

35   Cebeci, *Din Eğitimi Bilimi ve Türkiye'de Din Eğitimi*, 35; Aydın, *Din Eğitimi Bilimi*, 105; Altaş, *Din Eğitimi*, 71; Beyza Bilgin and Mualla Selçuk, *Din Öğretimi Özel Öğretim Yöntemleri: Kavramlar, Araç-Gereç, Yöntemler, İlkeler, Uygulama, Plânlama* (Ankara: Gün Yayıncılık, 1999), 26.

36   Ömer Hilmi Mart, *Eğitim Ruhbilimi*, Vol. I (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1949).

37   Ernest Harms, "The Development of Religious Experience in Children," *American Journal of Sociology* 50, no. 2 (1944): 112–22; Ronald Goldman, *Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence* (New York: Routledge, 1964); David Elkind, "The Origins of Religion in the Child," *Review of Religious Research* 12, no. 1 (1970): 35–42; James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper Row, 1981).

behaviors, the effect of education on human being is to turn them into sophists.[38] Because no ontological basis exists for the self in the expression "through one's own experiences" with regard to the definition of education, learning shows its effect on the personality rather than on the self.[39]

Lastly, educational sciences have provided sufficient conditions for establishing religious education within Western modernity. The fact that religious education was founded in the West in the 19th century[40] shows how the general paradigm of human sciences and natural theology have a direct relationship with religious education. In the case of Islam, however, these have been insufficient in societies with their own unique religious education practices. In Islamic society, revelation divides history between the good and the bad from the beginning to the apocalypse, with the Prophet Muhammad as its holy person being the prime example of what being a good person means. A very strong tradition of revelatory theology also occurs in Islamic civilization, and lastly it has the authority of the traditional pedagogies of objective and subjective religiosity modalities. Therefore, religious versions of the human sciences needed to be systematized, with religious variants of the human sciences having emerged and developed since the late Ottoman Empire. In the absence of theological faculties, however, these remained subjects of the human sciences. The strategic importance of theological faculties is related to the complex logic of knowledge production in modern society. As such, the disciplines of the psychology of religion, the sociology of religion, the history of religions, and the philosophy of religion were rapidly established at Ankara University Faculty of Theology in the period following 1948. These disciplines have historicized religious sciences in coordination with general human sciences, with sub-disciplines such as the history of kalām and history of fiqh having triggered a hermeneutic movement through the historical contexts of the discourse founders. While traditional society has been reshaped through modern codes, the principles, values, theories, and justifications used in religious sciences are linked to the relevant modern sciences and have been rephrased using modern terminologies. The psychology of religion interprets religion according to concepts such as the individual need for belief and the search for meaning.[41] It is "a border area between general psychology and

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38 Haşlakoğlu, *Felsefece*, 25.

39 Süleyman Gümüş, "Değerler Eğitimi," in *Modern Dünyada Çocukluk ve Çocuk Eğitimi: Temalar, Tartışmalar, Kuramlar*, ed. Süleyman Gümüş and Z. Şeyma Altın (Ankara: Nobel Akademi Yayınları, 2022), 206.

40 Aydın, *Din Eğitimi Bilimi*, 175.

41 Osman Pazarlı, *Din Psikolojisi* (Ankara: Remzi Kitabevi, 1968), 32 ff; Neda Armaner, *Din Psikolojisine Giriş,* Vol 1 (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 1980), 80-81.

theology, especially between the normative disciplines of theology."[42] The sociology of religion deals with religion in the context of humans as a social entity;[43] whereas the history of religions addresses religion in the context of the chronology of Islam in human history along with its similarities with other religions, and the philosophy of religion does this in the context of evaluating arguments about God based on human cognitive characteristics.[44] These disciplines have facilitated conceptualizing religion as a human reality. In a sense, they have all functioned as sub-disciplines of a phenomenology of religion. These discourses form a function where the axes of desire and consciousness intersect on the unconscious, and an endless and an infinite hermeneutic activity externalizes concepts and images as doxology along this function. For example, although Imam Maturidī was an authority on religiosity modalities, no one would be disturbed by saying anyone had perceived him as a theologian in today's sense. As a result, the human sciences and the sub-disciplines of the human sciences that deal with religion paralyze the image of the historical human that had given traditional Islamic civilization its unity and transferred and imported the image of the modern historical human (i.e., the individual) that is embedded in Western macro-power.

As a result, while religious education as a pedagogy of religion is structurally situated in the universe of the natural state and theologically bound to natural theology, discursively it is part of a matrix of natural sciences, human sciences, educational sciences, and the religious sub-disciplines of human sciences and therefore lacks the capacity to contribute to a proper modality of religious subjectivity. Therefore, the construction of religious education as a practical metaphysics in search of a new pedagogical logic without rejecting all possible pedagogies becomes a historical task.

2. The Outlines of Religious Education as a Practical Metaphysics

In a dialog between Moses and Pharaoh as mentioned in a Qur'anic story, Pharaoh asks Moses to define the nature of God: "What is the Lord of all things?"[45] Moses answers this question not by explaining the essence of God but by talking about God's actions. Ibn ʿArabī interpreted this question and answer as an answer of identity (*huwiya*) to a question of essence (*māhīya*).[46] According to him, Pharaoh

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42 Bedi Ziya Egemen, *Din Psikolojisi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1952), 18.

43 İhsan Çapçıoğlu and Fatma Kenevir, "Türkiye'de Din Sosyolojisinin Kurumsallaşması Sürecinde Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi," *İslâmi İlimler Dergisi* 12, no. 1 (2017): 50.

44 Kamuran Birand, "Dinin Mahiyeti Üzerine," *İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 6, no. 1-4 (1957): 124.

45 *The Noble Qur'an*, 26:23.

46 Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, trans. Binyamin Abrahamov (New York: Routledge, 2015), 165.

was a master of discourse trained in essence (i.e., in what a thing is). The question of what God's essence is can be answered by considering the commonalities between God and other beings, namely the association that has been examined in the Islamic intellectual tradition under the subject of '*umur al-'âmma'*.[47] The answer to this question is therefore a conceptualization of God. In contrast, a prophet is not a master of discourse. Because prophets do not carry out a discursive activity, the revelation they communicate (*tablīgh*) cannot be reduced to a discourse. In order to establish a centered system of identity, practical metaphysics separates the monism of Aristotelian metaphysics and the theological theories of kalām into two parts: truth and human knowledge concerning the reality of things. This distinction can also be traced back to Plato's philosophy, who divided the world into *noeton* and *horaton*, with knowledge of the *horaton* being divided into sensory knowledge (*eikasia*) obtained through the senses and the attribution of objectivity to things in terms of their sensibility (*pistis*). The knowledge of the *noeton* is also divided *Dianoia* is the discernment and interweaving of things as *genoi* , which probably corresponds to the word wisdom (*ḥikmah*) as distinguished from revelation. The state of dianoia with respect to doxa is inferential thinking, which grounds itself in the reflection of thought on itself, and *nóēsis* as the observation of the *eîdos*. *Nóēsis* is attainable when the knowledge acquired through *dianoia* is negated by *anupothetos*.[48] Consequently, because scientific knowledge relies on the sensory perception of objects, it results in replacing imitative objects with their originals:

> *The soul cannot make any progress towards a first principle, since it is unable to escape from these assumptions and move in an upwards direction. Instead, it treats as images the things which were treated as originals, and copied, by what was in the section below them, and which are thought of as clear by comparison with those images, and valued for their clarity.*[49]

The issue with *dianoesis* is that, without *nóēsis*, it leads to classical metaphysics. Aristotle's closed universe model is the manifestation of the transformation of thought into a closed system through this metaphysics. Thus, knowledge is considered to have the same nature for God, prophets, and humans. However, the Idea of the Good is distinct from the entities it gives its truth to:

> *For the things which are known, say not only that their being known comes from the Good, but also that they get their existence (*eînai*) and their being (*ousíā*) from it as well - though the Good is not being, but something far surpassing being in rank and power.*[50]

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47 Yasin Apaydın, *Metafiziğin Meselesini Temellendirmek: Tecrid Geleneği Bağlamında Umur-ı Amme Sorunu* (İstanbul: Endülüs Yayınları, 2019), 239–309.

48 Oğuz Haşlakoğlu, *Platon Düşüncesinde Tekhnê: Sanat ve Felsefenin Ortak Kökeni Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme* (Bursa: Sentez Yayınları, 2016), 112–22; Haşlakoğlu, *Felsefece*, 34–35.

49 Plato, *The Republic*, par. 511a.

50 Plato, par. 509b.

In practical metaphysics, the knowledge reached through the activity of *pistis* is not accurate knowledge, because ignorance is what allows human beings to carry out these acts. One can reason through one's ignorance. In Plato's terms, ignorance is potential (*dunamis*), while knowledge is actuality (*energeia*). One transforms ignorance into knowledge by synthesizing it with common sense and the *nóēsis* given in *pistis* naturally. *Dunamis* is infinite[51] and not limited or undefined in itself.[52] The knowledge to be synthesized through reasoning has no limits, and no one can reach this limitlessness.[53] This synthesizing process is carried out at the social level by knowing subjects depending on the historical *a priori* conditions of knowledge, which Foucault expressed with the concept of *episteme*. However, *nóēsis* is not a discursive knowledge but rather a knowledge reached through the transformation of the soul (*psūkhḗ*), in which discursive knowledge is negated. This principle is crucial for practical metaphysics. Classical metaphysics, or its counterpart *kalām*, violates the distinction between the religiosity of the prophet and that of other people by relying on the certainty of *dianoetic* knowledge. It assigns a value to individual life and sociality that is incompatible with the contingency of worldly life. For the knowing subject, the Qur'an consists of propositions that must and can be comprehended, and the conclusions reached by the knowing subject through reasoning are considered equivalent to the Prophet's knowledge. However, an insurmountable gap exists between the discourses and the Prophet. The knowledge of the Prophet isn't discursive, and what prevents his knowledge from being discursive is the divine unity of knowledge and power. As a whole, revelation is like this; however, especially in miracles, the identicalness of knowledge and power is more apparent. Desire is also a *dunamis* for humans, and the complete exoneration of desire is impossible.[54] In discursive activity, the absolute separation of desire from the power relations that are a derivative of desire can never be assumed.

As interpretations, discourses cannot be a substitute for the truth. The image of historical humans within the societality formed in the synthesis of religious sciences and power relations following the death of the Prophet Muhammad have imitated him through mimetic representation. Although faith gives a transcendental meaning to this mimicry, this general image of the historical human is worldly. Moreover,

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51 Platon, *The Timaeus of Plato in Plato's Cosmology*, trans. Francis Macdonald Cornford (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), par. 52d.

52 Plato, *Philebus in Plato's Philebus*, trans. Donald Davidson (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), par. 31a.

53 *The Noble Qur'an*, 12:76.

54 *The Noble Qur'an*, 12:53.

religious sects, being an important problematic of religious education, regionalize this general image. When the truth of things can be comprehended accurately, to assert that individual life and societality can be formed in complete accordance with the truth also becomes plausible. The cost of this excess to traditional society is that the traditional modality of religiosity was paralyzed when confronted with modernity and imported modernity through the equivalence of propositions. One of the striking proofs of this is the principle stated in the *Mecelle* [Ottoman Civil Code]: "The requirements of the law cannot be denied to change with the changing times."

Religious education as a practical metaphysics takes its principles from revelational theology and not from the arguments of natural theology. Natural theology being a *pistis* activity and at best being able to only rise to the level of *pististic dianoia* makes it insufficient for a practical metaphysics. However, revelational theology in a practical metaphysics goes beyond the framework of the classical discipline of *kalām* as well. In *kalām*, revelation serves as the basis for inferences, yet *kalām* does not interpret the Qur'an literally. The most significant issue arising from this is its disregard for the divinity inherent in language and the destabilization of the balance between the divine essence in language and the anthropological. For example, the Qur'an attributes to God organs such as hands and faces and verbs such as to come,[55] and theology has interpreted them as attributes such as power. Within practical metaphysics, the significance of such expressions is preserved with hermeneutical activity being conducted on their linguistic concepts and the meaning of human organs and actions being expanded. Similarly, Allah's teaching of all the names to Adam[56] is not obviously meaningful for *kalām*, because the discipline of *kalām* does not have a theory of language. It has always existed within a language and has reflected the anthropological features of language to the Qur'an. According to religious education as a practical metaphysics, all languages are semi-transcendental and semi-anthropological forms of the concept of *Language*. *Language* is materialized as the codification of the series *eîdos*,[57]* *eídōlon*,[58]** and *eikon*[59]*** in a language. The difference of *eikon*s prevents the equivalence of signs in languages, whereas *eîdos*' origin allows languages to be translated into each other. This understanding presupposes that speaking goes back to before birth. The Qur'an declares that humans had communicated with God before being born

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55 *The Noble Qur'an*, 2:26, 11:37, 20:05, 20:39, 38:75, 39:56, 55:27, 89:22.

56 *The Noble Qur'an*, 2:31.

57 *   The essence of manifestation.

58 **   The form of manifestation in accordance with essence.

59 *** The materiality of the form of manifestation in accordance with its essence.

through language.[60] Accordingly, while the genealogy of human beings is placed in a divine context, language likewise has an intrinsic connection to truth through God's speaking and the primary father's use of language.

In Türkiye, Yalçın Koç's theory of language serves as an impressive reminder of the theory of language and spirit in Sufism, which is a discourse of subjective religiosity. Koç refers to the pre-birth *psūkhḗ*-logical state as transcendence, the period between birth and language acquisition as the interim stage, and the stage after the acquisition of a language as the fallen stage.[61] The level of observing the truth and the use of language are different for each level. The language theory of religious education as a practical metaphysics aims to restore the structure of language that have been deteriorated by religious disciplines such as *kalām* as well as in modern discourses related to language.

Another context for the problematic of the language relates to childhood. Agamben's *Infancy and History* meticulously addresses the linguistic elements in the modern conception of childhood and its impact on the nature of experience, but at the cost of arriving at the wrong conclusions. Agamben begins the book with the following observation: "For just as modern man has been deprived of his biography, his experience has likewise been expropriated."[62] Childhood rises from the silent waters of the all-pervading unconscious and prolongs into adulthood.[63] The silence of the unconscious is engraved in the word infancy, with *in-fanzia* namely meaning wordless. As Agamben emphasized, the irredeemable lack of truth in speech is what historicizes human beings.[64] The reason for the deprivation of truth in language is the rift between signifier and sense that begins from childhood and will never be closed. This is because the pronoun "I" can only refer to one person, yet has no single referent. The "I" within language is what enables speech, yet "I" is entirely scattered throughout language.[65] The fluidity of the "I" in language starts as the rejection of a conceptualization of language that goes back to pre-childhood.

60 *The Noble Qur'an*, 7:172.

61 Yalçın Koç, *Theologia'nın Esasları: Felsefe'nin ve Teoloji'nin Nazariyatı Üzerine Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Cedit Neşriyat, 2008), 190–204; Yalçın Koç, *Harf ve Nazariyat* (İstanbul: Cedit Neşriyat, 2021), 9–27; Yalçın Koç, *Theogonia'nın Esasları: Genesis Nazariyatı Üzerine Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Cedit Neşriyat, 2010), 19–35.

62 Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 13.

63 Agamben, *Infancy and History,* 48.

64 Agamben, *Infancy and History,* 52.

65 Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Elizabeth Meek (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971), 217–18.

If the history of the human being were to date back before birth to a divine world, childhood would be nothing more than nostalgia confirming the innocence of life or a vibration that shakes *dianoesis*. If a substantial "I" were to not exist and language, which offers the capacity to develop a discourse in which the "I" is scattered, were nothing more than a tool that enables human beings to represent their will and desire, then a life that accounts for the content of "I" is forever deprived of experience: "Infancy has its effect first and foremost on language, constituting it and conditioning it in an essential way."[66] Still, the facts that living beings other than human beings all are present in language[67] and that human beings have to reside at the starting point of ambiguity where sign and referent diverge are perhaps a result of other living beings being nothing other than human speech. Perhaps the problem lies in the incorporation of the reversal of genealogical connections within the Western scientific tradition into the ambiguous characteristic of *me ôn*, namely the onto-epistemological status of *horaton*. Perhaps unveiling the genealogy of living beings in a proper manner will assist in understanding language, and thus humanity, more accurately.

A change in the understanding of language necessitates a reevaluation of the relationship between faith and belief. The discipline of *kalām* is a discourse about belief, and equating the systematized belief within *kalām* with faith is a mistake. Belief is a discursive interpretation of faith, a way in which the individual and the community of believers understand faith. The source of faith is not human but divine. Belief is the experience of this divinity and is historical because it is discursive. Islamic scholars' understanding of faith has common features with Descartes' judgment summarized in the sentence "I think, therefore I am." The traditional Christian interpretation of faith presupposes that Satan can corrupt thought, and according to this assumption, almost no one can keep faith on their own. This interpretation of faith is what incorporated Christian pastoral power as an authority into all power relations and the governance of individual life. This sentence from Descartes, which is not only one of the most famous sentences in the history of thought but also a doctrine of faith in this article's opinion, has an internal consistency that is completely protected from the evil demon[68] that is Satan, as clearly expressed in the *Meditations*. From the very beginning, Islamic scholars had developed a highly rational discourse by acknowledging faith to be completely free from the influence of Satan. This is in line with the literal meaning of the

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66   Agamben, *Infancy and History*, 51.

67   Agamben, *Infancy and History,* 52.

68   René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15.

Qur'an. However, this interpretations of the relationship between faith and action led to the construction of an over-objective religiosity modality. An over-objective religiosity has prevented the development of an appropriate subjective religiosity modality, and Sufism as the discourse of subjective religiosity, has never been able to become an objective discourse -psychology. An over-objective religiosity modality is vulnerable to a tendency toward radicalization and even to the excesses of objective discourses themselves. An over-objective religiosity modality also gives rise to problems for moral life. Similar to the image of citizenship today, objective religiosity involves a way of life everyone must follow, and observing everyone to live in accordance with the rules is enough. A practical metaphysics interprets the relationship between faith and action in such a way as to allow for an integrated construction of subjective religiosity with objective religiosity. For this purpose, the prehistory of faith[69] must be taken into account. In a practical metaphysics, both individual and social life are treated as artifacts (*ergon*), providing a more explicit and robust connection between faith and behavior than what is found in traditional religiosity. Considering life as an artifact fortifies the connection between objective religiosity and subjective religiosity and allows the issue of morality to be comprehendible within an ontological context. Other factors on the construction of life as artifact involve striving for the positive state of affections in parallel with the understanding of human beings as an empirical-transcendent reality and becoming free of the negative state because it diminishes life force[70] and the unity among the good, the beautiful, and the true.

Another point where religious education as a practical metaphysics differs from *kalām* is ontology. The atomic theory acknowledged in the discipline of *kalām*, which accepts God's intervention in the world in line with the conceptualization of a personal God, is more compatible with the literal meaning of the Qur'an when compared to the ontology of Islamic thinkers. However, the atomism of *kalām* restricts divine intervention to accidents, whereas the literal meaning of the Qur'an indicates a complete divine intervention in matter.[71] Additionally, a characteristic feature of *kalām* is its cancellation of the principle of causality in order to explain God's intervention in the universe. This attitude was impossible to maintain and later abandoned, after which the theology of the late (*mutaahhirūn*) period began. Plato's ontology is more appropriate in this respect. According to Plato, the five great genera (*megista genê*) of being (*ôn*), sameness (*tauton*), otherness (*thateron*),

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69   *The Noble Qur'an*, 7:172.

70   Benedic de Spinoza, *Ethics: Proved in Geometrical Order*, trans. Michael Silverthorne and Matthew J. Kisner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), par. 197-198 (pro. III/42).

71   *The Noble Qur'an*, 4:126, 17:44, 34:3, 57:4.

change/motion (*kinêsis*), and rest (*stasis*) are renewed by the Demiurgos in a unit of ontic time, which differs from measured time.[72] By keeping His gaze the sameness, God prevents existence from falling into nothingness. In each renewal, otherness and change (i.e., motion) are also renewed. Plato's interpretation of change and what remains the same in change also has important implications for the modality of subjectivity.

In conclusion, religious education as a practical metaphysics must propose a new definition of religious education as follows:

> *Religious education is a discourse that, based on the existential features and innate nature (*fitrah*) and beginning with the historical conditions of the realization of a singular religious subject, explains the characteristics of its cultural reproduction in each individual.*[73]

To ground existence is to try to understand the Qur'an and Sunnah literally. Because this understanding is discursive and therefore historical, the qualitative difference between discourses and primary sources is always kept. Basing on existence is a critique directed towards the current education paradigm that is grounded on discourses. The second feature of the definition is that the subject of religious education as a practical metaphysics is religiosity. Religiosity is a polysemous word often used to denote a deeper and sincere adherence to religious rules. As the subject of research in religious education, religiosity is the modality that allows humans to develop a religious identity under specific historical conditions and is how they become religious subjects. The religiosity modality, which is the subject of religious education as a practical metaphysics, is an image rather than a concept, because for a practical metaphysics, to know is to be.[74] Becoming is not the actualization of a potential reality but rather the construction of an empirically transcendent reality as a subject. On the other hand, due to religiosity being more than just a concept, it does not only include discourses or restrict itself to propositions and the interpretation of propositions: All phenomena crystallized in the network of power relations are the object of research. In other words, practical metaphysics examines forms of micro-powers, meso-powers, and macro-powers and warns subjects against the ideologies that infiltrate the historicity of these forms of power. For example, in modern meso-power, knowledge and power relations are

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72 *Oğuz Haşlakoğlu: Platon Okumaları 8*, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8h6And-3ga4; *Oğuz Haşlakoğlu: Platon Okumaları 14*, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxkfEYSEmmo.

73 Gümüş, *Din Okuryazarlığının Doğuşu*, 23.

74 Parmenides, *The Fragmentd of Parmenides*, trans. Richard Mckirahan (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2009), par. 5(4); Plato, *Meno*, ed. R.S. Bluck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), par. 87c ff.

intensified in bureaucratic spheres, and the over-charge of power in knowledge suppresses the emancipatory quality of knowledge. McLuhan's statement "The medium is the message"[75] emphasizes the transformative nature of knowledge in modern society due to being conveyed through power relations.

In the definition of religious education as a practical metaphysics, the pedagogical follows the determination of the conditions of historicization of the subject. This is because education is the replication and representation of the image of the active historical human being in a particular period and region during the processes of individual subjectivation. All activities that shape human beings (e.g., formal educational institutions, means of communication, family life) impart the features of the historical human image on people and fulfill an educational mission. In this conceptualization of education, the essential features of the modern definition of education (e.g., the specific sense of desired behavior) are naturally present due to the historical image of humans involving the highest level of productivity.

Conclusion

Throughout modernization, the natural sciences followed by the human sciences have emerged as the primary authorities for comprehending the world and human beings. Educational sciences and religious education science are included within this scope. The status and nature of the science of religious education indicate it to be a religious pedagogy. In this context, religious pedagogy serves as an informational tool rather than as something that contributes to the formation of a religious subject.

A practical metaphysics integrates all forms of discourse and non-discursive constructs that emerge from humanity's quest for meaning, centering its research on the subject's modality. A practical metaphysics in which the subject is the topic of research not only involves an analysis of subject modalities but also shows the pathways for a person to be oneself as another through its distinctive understanding of human psychosomatic attributes. Hence, the modern distinction between the practice of religious education and the science of religious education is invalid within a practical metaphysics.

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75 Marshall Mcluhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: McRaw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 9.

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