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In search of the place of psychotransgressionism in contemporary education and self-education. An overview

W poszukiwaniu miejsca psychotransgresjonizmu we współczesnym wychowaniu, samowychowaniu. Zarys problematyki

Abstract: The starting point for the deliberations in this article was highlighting an important human ability to transcend one's ability in the construction of one's life path, especially as the need to possess this ability is justified by the contemporary reality, which is characterised by dynamic changes in all areas of human life. In order to function efficiently in this rapidly changing world, people need to adapt to these dynamics. Such rapid changes mean that a man constantly faces new, hitherto "impossible" decisions in various areas of life. The dilemma whether – and how – to push the limits of one's abilities has to be solved. In the article, I note that a person should be mentally prepared for crossing these boundaries. I indicate the need to develop this skill in educational activities, including self-education, so that what was previously "impossible" becomes "possible". The objective of this article is to present the issues concerning contemporary education and self-education, taking into account the place of psychotransgressionism in educational processes.

Keywords: transgression, education, self-education, youth.

Introduction

The intense changes of the surrounding world, its ambiguity, chaos and ambivalence force young people to constantly adapt to this unpredictably changing world. There is no stable canon for the perception of this world, which lacks any order based on such unambiguous categories as, for example, unity, purposefulness and coherence. Young people have become used to "jumping" uninhibitedly from one cultural discourse to another, from one lifestyle to another, or from one form of identity to another. Their identity then resembles the Rubik's cube that cannot be arranged, as there is a constant rotation of its fragments in a constant process of reconstruction without purpose (Melosik, 2015, p. 25). This may not be conducive to a young person's "settling" in this world.

The following questions appear: How can we help young people to find their way in this complex reality? Does modern education have anything to offer here, especially as we are moving away from the kind of education that has a clearly formulated system of standards and values?

Characterised by respect for the autonomy and individuality of the young person, contemporary education is a process that, in contrast to traditional education based on discipline, pressure and limited freedom, focuses on developing social, emotional and intellectual skills. It emphasises the development of independent thinking skills, decision-making skills and creativity. It is based on the implementation of the idea of fostering the development of a young person's potential. After all, education is also about shaping consistent and person-specific behavioural characteristics in changing situations. Through education, young people not only acquire knowledge and skills, but also spontaneously and purposefully develop stable value orientations and relatively stable action competencies, i.e. attitudes. This is supposed to take place through such education which would foster a young person's attainment of not only an attitude of kindness towards others, but also of competencies to actively work for one's own benefit and for the common good in the closer and further social environment (Kwieciński and Śliwerski, 2019, p. 7). This definition of contemporary education prompts a reflection on how to support young people in their life journey. If we assume that education means supporting a young person in their comprehensive development and the acquisition of relatively stable competencies for action (attitudes), it is probably necessary to educate young people so that they can find their way in both personal and social life, so that they create themselves, acquire competencies for activity for their own and common good (Remiszewska, 2022, p. 11), so that they can manage their own development, set valuable

goals, want to strive for self-fulfilment, are not afraid to transgress the limits of their abilities, and undertake transgressive actions.

The issue of transgression is taken up by many researchers, for example Cris Jenks (Jenks, 2003), Emil P. Torrance (Torrance, 1993, 2002). In my reflections on transgression, I refer to the theory of Józef Kozielecki, a promoter of the idea of transgression in psychology.

The objective of this article is to present issues concerning contemporary education and self-education, taking into account the place of psychotransgressionism in educational processes.

Self-education

The concept of "self-education" is a difficult term to define, and it arouses a lot of controversy, especially when we consider the debatable issues among researchers examining human behaviour, which concern the classic antinomies of freedom and coercion, individualisation and socialisation, consciousness and unconsciousness, intentionality and accidentality (Śliwerski, 2012, p. 264). Consequently, the understanding of the term "self-education" in pedagogical sciences is ambiguous. According to some researchers, self-education is included in educational activity and it is called self-formation. It can occur when an individual normatively masters their own self-development process at a pace outlined by the educator, in accordance with educational activity. The effectiveness of this process depends to a large extent on the cooperation between the educator and the person being educated, especially when the initiative to cooperate with the educator comes from the person being educated (Znaniecki, 1973, p. 181). For other authors, self-education is a process in which there is a conscious and voluntary change in the main characteristics of one's personality. For this process, it is not only the course of activity that is important, but also its final result, in which the person being educated plans to achieve the most favourable relations with the environment (Pacek, 1978, p. 215). Self-education is also considered to be a type of education in which an individual undertakes educational activity in relation to themselves. In this activity, they define the goals of education, choose procedures and undergo internal supervision, evaluating their own self-education activities. Since self-education results from previous external influences on an individual, it is therefore secondary in nature. The methods of working on self-development, the requirements and established objectives, as well as self-evaluation are then consistent with what one has previously assimilated (Muszyński, 1976, pp. 28-29). Some researchers see self-education as education that prepares an individual for autonomy, in this

context understood as proper education. Thus, it takes place simultaneous-
ly in accordance with humanistic and personalistic philosophy, as man is
seen as a personality in it (Śliwerski, 2007a, p. 53). Understood in this way,
self-education is an endless creative process lasting throughout an individual's
life, in which their personality is being shaped. Its driving force is human
curiosity to learn about the world and about oneself; the more one learns,
the more one wants to learn. An individual's self-development only takes
place when they shape their personality based on supra-personal values and
the setting of supra-personal goals that give meaning to life (Hessen, 1931,
pp. 75, 219; 1939, p. 213). It is also assumed that if a person deals with various
personal tasks in the practical or theoretical area, guided in this by certain
rules of thinking and acting at such a level as is dictated by the conditions
and capacities of their mind, then self-education can be defined as activity
based on a set of rules according to which a person makes choices of internal
and external activities that facilitate the achievement of established objectives
(Śliwerski, 2012, p. 264).

Perfectionism and perfectiorism in self-development
　　In the humanities, researchers refer to two opposing approaches in the
theoretical presentation of "self-education". The first approach treats self-ed-
ucation as a Socratic activity ("towards the self"), while the latter sees it as
a Promethean activity ("away from the self") (Śliwerski, 2012, pp. 264-267).
　　Self-education in the first approach is activity in which the subject
changes themselves in a relatively independent way. It is an act aimed at
developing desirable personality traits in oneself. It should be noted, how-
ever, that the motive for these changes is the pursuit of perfection as an end
in itself. A self-educating person is guided primarily by autotelic qualities.
Qualities such as willpower, strength of character, moral perfection or the
development of certain mental qualities are important to such persons. To
a large extent, this is "abstract perfectionism" associated with great effort
in achieving perfection in things that are difficult and rare (Śliwerski, 2012,
pp. 64-66). This type of self-education is associated with both an idea of
intensive work on oneself and dreams of inner strength. Through this kind
of self-education, certain character traits can be achieved, which are built
through the shaping of one's personality. A person can strive for personal
excellence through deliberate intrapersonal activities. By subjecting oneself
to training that is directed towards a specific ideal or model of one's own
self, one enriches one's personality. The Socratic model of self-education is
triggered when there is a discrepancy between the ideal self-image (ideal

Self) and the current degree of development (real Self), which, in turn, causes dissatisfaction with oneself. Such dissatisfaction is associated with a sense of lacking something or low self-esteem. This causes tension to build up and triggers defence mechanisms in counteraction to lowered self-esteem. The real self then becomes the object of manipulation and change. This leads to falsification and distortion of self-knowledge. A process of apparent change takes place which, as it generalises, causes a person to lose touch with reality. The "self-concept" at the stage of uncritical self-satisfaction can lead to inflated self-esteem, which is associated with self-admiration and uncritical self-satisfaction with one's achievements, and this can be the cause of difficulties in socialising and inhibit self-education. Authentic self-education occurs when, as a result of a "coupling dissonance" between the real self and the ideal self, an individual takes steps to change the real self. The right conditions for this must then be created, both socially and psychologically (Śliwerski, 2010, pp. 137-140).

As it has already been mentioned, the second understanding of self-education can be considered in the category of Promethean activity ("away from the self"). It signifies a spontaneous, non-intentional activity of a man who extra-subjectively transforms reality, i.e. the surrounding world or the environment. Reaching for this form of activity, a man does have, as it were, an obligation to become a perfect person, but it is not an end in itself here. Perfectionism associated with an individual's aspirations is replaced by perfectiorism, which is a concept that refers to a person's extensive involvement in doing good, and thus in their continuous improvement (Wojtyła, 1957, p. 303). An individual seemingly forgets the self, but in creating the self, they undertake transgressive actions with the aim of acting "beyond". This type of self-education is imbued with love, creativity and altruism. In this kind of self-education, there are no conflicts between the individual, the personal, and the social. Changing oneself does not exclude changing the environment. An individual directs their activity towards things, people and/or symbols. They undertake multidirectional social interactions, become able to understand others as well as themselves, and their behaviour is highlighted by factors related to relying on oneself and meeting the expectations and requirements of the social environment, while at the same time maintaining a balance in these actions (Śliwerski, 2012, pp. 267-268). As a result of self-education, self-realisation and self-actualisation of an individual take place.

Self-realisation is a drive, a tendency to develop one's innate capacities, a striving to continually exceed one's current state. Self-realisation is understood here as a Hessenian form of autonomy, in which predetermined

personality standards (e.g. some kind of the ideal self) are not taken into account; a person – through self-realisation – accepts themselves as they are (acceptance of one's own and others' imperfections) (Śliwerski, 2010, pp. 146-147). Self-actualisation, on the other hand, is associated with the natural tendency of people to strive towards development and the realisation of their own potential. The need for self-actualisation activated in an individual is an important motivational factor for growth. Individuals who satisfy the need for self-actualisation are able to transcend their own previous achievements in various areas of their activity by implementing transgressive behaviour appropriate to specific situations (Ślaski, 2012, pp. 92-93).

In conclusion, it is important to state that self-education is a specific type of human behaviour directed towards a particular goal. Self-education can be considered as a pro-subjective activity ("towards the self") or as a extra-subjective activity ("from the self"). An individual can refer to these activities within self-education by undertaking one or both of them. What these activities have in common is the way in which a decision to embark on a particular activity is made, which may be heteronomous or autonomous, externally or internally stimulated, as well as the changes taking place in one's personality. Although self-education is an intra-psychic process, it always requires some kind of internal or external initiation (Śliwerski, 2007b, p. 32).

Psychotransgressionism

Psychotransgressionism is Józef Kozielecki's original concept embedded in psychology (Kozielecki, 2007). The ability to transgress boundaries, primarily individual boundaries embedded in a person, or a transgressive subject, is a key issue addressed in this concept. Psychotransgressionism is associated with creative activity – both innovative (which aims to expand the boundaries of human cognition) and expansive (which involves transgressing previous boundaries) (Lasota, 2008, p. 69). The creative process in Kozielecki's concept is primarily associated with the category of "boundary". The fulfilled act of creation is the effect of an activity of a human being who consciously transgresses boundaries. In the concept of psychotransgressionism, various types of boundaries can be found, e.g. material (financial resources, infrastructure), socio-cultural (customs, moral prohibitions and orders), symbolic (the limit of existing scientific knowledge) and personal (determined by each individual's own capabilities, hitherto used intellectual potential, verified abilities) (Kozielecki, 2004).

In his numerous scholarly works on the concept, Kozielecki does not offer a clear definition of transgression. He defines transgression in a descriptive form. He explains it as:

– the ability to transcend oneself, to go "beyond oneself";
– "beyond"-type actions stemming from heterostatic motivation (growth and development) and going beyond current needs and beyond maintaining *the status quo*;
– crossing the previous limits of achievement and creating or assimilating new values; these include all human activities and mental acts in which a person crosses the previous limits of their own capabilities, including material, symbolic and social ones, creating new forms and structures that enrich the world of values;
– going beyond what an individual is and has; going beyond the previous limits of one's own capabilities, striving for mastery of nature, introducing technical innovations, taking steps towards self-development;
– consciously transgressing existing material, social and symbolic boundaries, transforming the existing reality into a new one, eradicating structures that are already obsolete, going beyond the limits of the existing world; such actions can be described as an act of creating, expanding the world (Kozielecki, 1983, pp. 506-508; 1987, pp. 10, 44, 47; 2001, p. 18; 2002, p. 43).

In psychotransgressionism, human beings are perceived as transgressive systems. Kozielecki notes that people transgress, in various activities, the previous limits of their achievements in various forms. Transgressive activities, according to Kozielecki, are activities primarily of an expansive, creative and expressive nature that go beyond the existing state of affairs, and their results exceed one's material, cognitive and social achievements.

In the course of transgressive activities, a person overcomes their limitations and imperfections as well as their finiteness. This affects the possibility of creating new values and realising ambitious undertakings. Examples of such human transgressive activities are, for example, mastery of nature, scientific discoveries, technical inventions, development of art, breaking conventions, shaping one's personality (Kozielecki, 2009, p. 333).

Kozielecki distinguishes four levels (worlds) of transgression, and the transgressive actions leading to it form a "four-dimensional space": "towards things", "towards people", "towards symbols", and "towards the self".

The first level of transgression ("towards things") comprises actions directed towards the material world with the aim of expanding possessions and occupying new territories.

The second level of transgression ("towards people") comprises activities in which not only altruistic transgressions, but also communal transgressions, power transgressions, and emancipatory transgressions can be distinguished. In these transgressions, a man can not only help others, unite with others, direct others, but also find fulfilment in freedom, which is "freedom from" and especially "freedom towards".

The third level of transgression ("towards symbols") comprises activities in which man expands data concerning reality, reconstructs and integrates them, revealing a variety of hitherto unexplained phenomena.

The fourth level of transgression ("towards the self") comprises activities in which one can self-improve, undergo self-development, enrich oneself with one's own experiences in this peculiar self-transgression. "Transcending oneself", one shapes one's own personality or lifestyle, goes beyond one's cognitive and volitional limitations. It is a self-creative activity that leads to self-development. It is a more introspective, spontaneous, committed activity, oriented towards change (Kozielecki, 2002, pp. 49-52, 66-67).

Every positive transgression that leads to the achievement of a set goal is a developmental step for a person. Every act of going "beyond" is shaping a person's personality.

Kozielecki puts strong emphasis on the occurrence of a hubristic need (*hubris*) in transgressive actions, i.e. the need to confirm one's own values. It can be of a competitive nature (defeating others) or can take the form of being directed towards the pursuit of personal perfection/excellence. Hubristic motivation is the main driving force behind transgressive behaviour; it implies the striving for confirmation and growth of one's own self; it is largely egoistic and hedonistic in nature (intensification of pleasure and experiencing mainly positive feelings).

A person who undertakes transgressive actions becomes at the same time the doer, the expert and the judge of their actions, thus becoming intrinsically steerable and immune to external opinions. Such a person is guided by their own standards, which constitute a challenge in relation to intended actions (Okraj, 2016, pp. 24-25).

In psychotransgressionism, a number of phases are observed in the transgressive process that are revealed during the implementation of transgressive behaviour (Kozielecki, 1989, 1995, 2001):

- the motivational phase which occurs when there is psychological tension in a person, related to their needs, resulting from the discrepancy between the current state and the desired state, when they want to achieve certain goals. Goal-orientation plays a crucial role in transgressive behaviour (it determines the way an individual thinks and acts). Goal-orientation is associated with the development of a person in both the individual and social spheres. It fosters satisfaction and results in satisfaction with life.
- the action design phase related to the process of anticipation of various goal-oriented actions. Developed cognitive skills are required here to ensure an appropriate balance between social expectations and self-expectations. This phase may be accompanied by affective shifts with a positive connotation (joy, hope or pride predominates) or a negative connotation (anxiety, shame or fear), therefore attribution may often occur in this phase to help the individual identify their own resources and predict the consequences of taken actions.
- the phase of assessing the probability and value of success. This is the phase of subjectively assessing the possibility of achieving or not achieving a set goal. In this phase, an individual determines the consequences of their action.
- the decision phase related to making a decision to take appropriate goal-oriented action. External freedom (facilitation of crossing social and material boundaries) and internal freedom (unfettered freedom of thought) of an individual can play an important role in transgressive actions.
- the action execution phase. An individual takes appropriate action so as to achieve a favourable satisfactory outcome. In this phase, two spheres are distinguished: expectations and surprises. In the sphere of expectations, as a rule, assumptions regarding the achievement or non-achievement of anticipated goals are confirmed, while the sphere of surprises is where previously unforeseen events may occur that are positive or negative regardless of the achieved outcome (concurrent event).
- the consumption phase related to satisfying a person's needs, including the hubristic need. It allows a person to take advantage of the results achieved in a chosen field.

Based on the process of transgressive behaviour outlined above and taking into account the network theory of personality, it is possible to more

precisely define a person who pursues transgressive actions. Such a person has possibilities in terms of their self-awareness and freedom of choice, and sets transgressive goals for themselves, which stem from their psychological needs. In this context, psychons, understood as relatively permanent and equivalent mental components (Kozielecki, 2007, p. 124), especially cognitive, personal and motivational ones, play an important role. Such psychons, in accordance with their properties, enable a person to cognitively identify points of transgression, to exist in terms of individual distinctiveness and to facilitate the taking of appropriate actions. A cognitive psychon (I know that), which contains individual declarative knowledge, constitutes, as it were, a "subjective" encyclopaedia, provides orientation in the world and is indispensable in the process of shaping one's comprehensive view of reality. A personal psychon (who I am) is an existential-identity component, and therefore has an important function in the life of an individual as one of the pillars of their spiritual life. The individual becomes a causal agent, and at the same time determines the unity, continuity and uniqueness of their own personality. A motivational psychon (I strive for) – also referred to as "will" – activates the motivational process, determines and maintains its general direction, as well as interrupts or finalises thoughts and actions (Kozielecki, 2007, pp. 124-137).

Psychotansgressionism refers to some extent to John Dewey's (Dewey, 1967) pedagogical credo according to which teaching cannot be reduced to a one-way transmission of information from a teacher to a pupil, or from an adult to a child. It should consist mainly in guiding the activity of young people and stimulating their development. Thus, the strategic goal of transgressive education is to stimulate the multifaceted development of the personality that regulates human actions, and above all transgressive actions, i.e. creative and expansive transgressions of the boundaries of an individual's achievements. By changing oneself, one changes the existing world (Kozielecki, 2007, p. 264).

Summary

Since we live in a world characterised by constant dynamics of change in all areas of human life, it should be said that the pace of this change forces individuals to make changes also in their own development at every stage of life. In order to be able to navigate in a dynamically changing reality, to have the ability to creatively adapt to dynamically changing external demands in the construction of one's life and to be creative, one should be mentally prepared for this from childhood. In this situation, the traditional model of

conventional and schematic education based on a unidirectional influence exerted on the pupil does not work. Consequently, nowadays education based on a one-way process is abandoned and what is promoted is a two-subject model of education in which the individual being educated has an active role in the educational interaction. The learner processes everything that they assimilate from the environment and, on the basis of their own knowledge and experience, creates an image of who they are, who the other party to the interaction is and what the interaction itself is, and creates a model of this interaction (Lubiewska, 2019). If, in the process of education, the learner is treated not only as an object of educational activities, but also as a subject, we can assume that they will activate their own self-educational mechanisms (Dudzikowa, 1993, p. 7).

In my exploration of the place of psychotransgressionism in contemporary education with particular emphasis on self-education, I noticed that if self-education is analysed as the so-called Socratic action ("towards the self"), which stresses working on oneself, striving for change towards perfection as an end in itself, in which one creates oneself in a perfectionist way, shaping one's own personality, then transgressive action in the dimension "towards the self", aiming at self-improvement through self-development, is integrated into this type of education. One can then "transcend oneself", going beyond cognitive and volitional limitations and shaping one's own personality, becoming more internally controlled. On the other hand, considering the category of Promethean activity ("away from the self") in self-education, it can be seen that in this form of human activity the perfectiorist character is revealed. In such self-education, a man develops, doing it "by chance", as it were, not only in an individual, personal context, but above all in a social aspect. In this activity, we can then see an orientation towards transgressive actions, in this case in the dimensions "towards things", "towards people", "towards symbols".

The awareness that our actions can undergo transgressive processes can make the process of self-education easier in the context of transgressing one's limits, creating oneself, directing oneself, pursuing a specific goal. By gaining this awareness, a person can change their self-perception and attitude towards life. They can move from the stage of "I can't do I" to the stage of "I can do it". At the same time, it should be noted that getting rid of the fear of exceeding one's own limits is a prerequisite for acquiring transgressive skills.

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