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Subjectivity. From the idea of interiority to the project of oneself in the social structure. Selected pedagogical implications

**Podmiotowość. Od idei wewnętrzności do projektu siebie
w strukturze społecznej. Wybrane implikacje pedagogiczne**

Abstract: The article concerns the issue of subjectivity understood here as a specific interiority. It shows, using selected examples, the development of this idea in philosophical thought, presenting its essential points of reference and breakthrough moments in its self-development. Next, using the example of structuration theory, it highlights its essential features related to self-reflexivity, self-reflexivity and the subjective autonomy of building an individual's own life project from a social perspective. The summary of the above analyzes is the isolation and presentation of selected threads important from the point of view of creating subjective pedagogy.

Keywords: subject, interiority, reflexivity, pedagogy.

Introduction

The aim of the article is to show the development of the idea of subjectivity, understood here as the specific „interiority” of an individual/person in the perspective of the possibility of designing his or her own identity in the social structure. The very idea of subjectivity has appeared with greater or lesser intensity in the landscape of philosophical thought almost from its very beginnings. The breakthrough moment for its rapid development was the thought of first Descartes and then Kant and Hegel. At the turn of the

18th and 19th centuries, the very idea of subjectivity as the internal driving force of an individual ceased to be just an idea, but began to materialize in the lives of individuals and communities in often violent social changes (cf. Zamoyski, 2015). In turn, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, this idea of the subject's agency and cognitive power was also reflected in the broadly understood culture, including the rapid development of specific sciences, including social and humanities, including pedagogy. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to search for both historical and ideological sources of the establishment of the idea of subjectivity in pedagogy, which, after all, concerns the subject itself and „strives” for the upbringing of this subject. The analyzes below do not claim to be exhaustive analyzes that ultimately complete the task presented above. Rather, they signal them.

From gnōthi seauthon to the essence existing in itself as absolute spirit

The central category of the topic is subjectivity. According to Charles Taylor (cf. 2001, pp. 212), when we talk about subjectivity, we always refer to some kind of interiority. Subjectivity, then, is first interiority. When trying to reconstruct the development of thinking about the sphere of man's interiority in ancient Greek philosophical thought, we will first encounter Socrates, for whom knowledge itself is hidden in man's interior. The specific ethical intellectualism born from this belief showed that the truth of the interior determines the external actions of man. The interior takes precedence over the exterior. The ancient gnōthi seauthon (the historical meaning of the expression explains, c.f. Reiser, 1993), „know thyself,” revealed, perhaps in an intuitive form, the fundamental dominance of subjectivity in modern thought (c.f. Merlin, 2020). However, before this happened, Greek thought in this area found its creative continuator in the person of Saint. Augustine. After his conversion, Augustine creatively adapts Platonic thought to Christian thought. The knowledge hidden inside a person is, above all, knowledge about the experience of God himself existing in me. Existing in me even more than I exist in myself. In this context, the condition for finding one's own subjectivity is to find God within oneself. An example of this attitude can be found in the following fragment of Augustine's „Confessions”:

This is what I love when I love my God. And what is this? I asked the earth. She replied, „I'm not.” And everything in it gave the same answer to me. I asked the sea and the abysses and the living creatures crawling in them. They replied, “We are not your God. Search above us.” I asked the wind, and all the air and the beings living in it replied:

„Anaximenes is wrong. I am not God.” I asked the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars. „Neither are we,” they said, the God you are looking for. So I turned to all the things crowding at the gates of my senses: „You told me about my God that you are not him. Tell me something about himself.” With a loud voice they cried out, „He created us.” My question was just looking at these things, and their answer was their beauty. Then I turned to myself and asked - Who are you? I answered: „Man” (Augustyn, 2007, pp. 282-283).

In the above passage, Augustine’s turn from the external to the internal is clear. The entire reality, available to sense cognition, finds its explanation not by passing through the „gates of the senses”, but by „turning to oneself”. It is crucial in Augustine’s thought to permanently embed the belief that not only knowledge begins from the human interior, but above all the subject itself finds its identity there in its causality and purposefulness of existence. This thread was taken up in modern times, first by Pascal, who wrote:

Let man, returning to himself, consider what he is compared to what exists, let him look at himself as something lost in this corner of nature, and let him from this small cell in which he is kept (I mean the universe) , he will learn to judge the earth, kingdoms, cities and himself according to a just assessment. And what is man in infinity? (Pascal, 2003, pp. 19-20).

Pascal’s thought continues the belief initiated by Augustine’s thought that reason and senses alone are insufficient in achieving the truth about man and his identity. We can talk here about „subjectivity in need of completion.” Man, being „only” a creature, will remain incomprehensible to himself without reference to the Creator. Therefore, he needs grace, the completion of his knowledge by the Creator himself. The belief in the powerlessness and imperfection of human cognition also accompanied Descartes’ doubts when considering his contemporary state of knowledge:

I have always wanted very much to learn to distinguish truth from falsehood, to be able to clearly recognize my actions and walk confidently through life. (...) in this way I gradually freed myself from many errors that can obscure our natural light and weaken our ability to understand. But having spent several years studying in this way in the book of the world and gaining some experience, I decided one day to delve deeper into myself and use all the powers of my mind to find the paths I should follow (Kartezjusz, 2002, pp. 12).

Descartes, like Augustine or Pascal, „discovers” the meaning of interiority itself in the process of knowing and understanding the world. This „resolution to delve into oneself” reveals to him the role and meaning of thought itself. The landscape of human interiority is reflected in the content of the act of thinking itself. Almost three centuries later, at the beginning of the 20th century, Husserl made Descartes’ thought the basis of his reflections by writing his „Cartesian Meditations”. With the motto „back to the point”, he tries, like Descartes, to restore philosophy to its essential meaning, revealing a reliable method for knowing the truth. He is painstakingly building the edifice of phenomenological thought, in which what we really know is the phenomenon of things itself, which is part of our external world. In his philosophy, Husserl combines what is external with what is internal in the process of cognition. Starting from what is directly given, Husserl highlights the value of the inner experience itself, the experienced world, and assumes the existence of an eidetic structure of reality. Husserl defines:

The *eidos* itself is a visible, (...) object of a general character, something pure and unconditioned, (...) with its own sense that can be grasped intuitively, it is not conditioned by any fact, it retains priority over all concepts taken as the meanings of words that , on the contrary, as pure concepts, they must be created in such a way that they are compatible with them (Husserl, 1982, pp. 102-103).

Following Husserl or being inspired by his way of thinking, the following appear on the stage of philosophical thought: phenomenology of values by Max Scheler, phenomenology of the person by Dietrich von Hildebrand, Existential phenomenology by Jean Paul Sartre, hermeneutical phenomenology by Martin Heidegger, phenomenology of perception by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, critical philosophy , emancipatory, pragmatism, as well as various varieties of sociology, psychology, and pedagogy cultivated in the spirit of various varieties of phenomenology (cf. Ryk, 2011, pp. 131-192).

In turn, for Jürgen Habermas, the modern problem of searching for self-confidence became apparent at the end of the 18th century, both in philosophy itself and in historical and social changes. The Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution contributed to highlighting the ideas of subjectivity previously discussed in the theoretical considerations of thinkers.

Only in Hegel does the process of modernity breaking away from the norms of the past external to it advance to the rank of a philosophical problem. Indeed, as part of the critique of tradition that takes up the experiences of the Reformation and Renaissance and responds to the beginnings of modern natural sciences, modern philosophy, from late scholasticism to Kant, articulates the self-knowledge of modernity (Habermas, 2000, pp. 25-26).

In modern philosophy after Descartes, the foundations for the idea of subjectivity were laid first by Kant with the idea of understanding truth as an event taking place in the human intellect. This truth, as the philosopher noted, is based both on objective foundations, but also requires subjective causes in the mind of the subject himself (cf. Kant, 2010, pp.415). Further, Hegel saw in the philosophical landscape of his times the emergence of a new era - the era of the domination of the spirit as one which: „has broken with the previous world of its existence and imagination and intends to push it down into the past. He is now engaged in the work of transforming himself” (Hegel, 2010, pp. XIII). Moreover, Hegel wrote about the mutual relations of the spirit:

referring to itself – as a subjective spirit that is free with its own inner freedom; in the form of the reality of the existing world - as an objective spirit in which freedom is a necessity for the realization of natural law, and as the unity of the objectivity of the spirit and its ideality - as an essence existing in itself - expressed as an absolute spirit (Hegel, 1990, pp. 404).

From the idea of interiority to the design of social structure

This idea of self-organization is then reflected not only in the purely ideological, subjective sphere, but also becomes a specific method of organizing the entity in various spheres of its involvement in modern society (Giddens, 2002, 2003). From the internal reflexivity of the individual to the reflexivity of social structures, culture, law, moral and even religious life. Subjectivity, therefore, as a kind of interiority, is characterized by individualism, freedom, self-organization, self-knowledge, self-criticism, self-reflexivity, self-reflexivity, and self-therapy. A new identity of the subject is born with its own individual trajectory of its own life: „What to do? How to act? Who to be? For anyone living in the conditions of late modernity, these are the most important questions - and questions that each of us answers at some level, either rationally or through everyday social behavior. These are existential

questions.” (Giddens, 2002, pp.98-99). Therefore, the modern subject self-organizes its own identity. For Giddens (cf. 2002, pp. 104-112) this project of one’s own self has many specific dimensions. The first and fundamental one is the individual’s own reflexivity: „we are not what we are, but what we make of ourselves”. Next, the individual designs his or her own life trajectory in the perspective of space and time. „The individual adapts his past to the anticipated future”. The next dimension of self-organization of one’s identity is based on an attitude of continuous and constant self-reflection. The individual asks, „how can I use this moment to change?” The next area is self-narrative - a kind of dialogue conducted with oneself. “Keeping a journal and working through your autobiography are key recommendations to help maintain an integrated sense of self”. The next area of building your own life trajectory is self-fulfillment. A kind of control over your own life goals. Constantly modifying them and synchronizing them with both time and space of the individual’s life. Another area is awareness of the role and importance of one’s own corporeality in its various dimensions. “Body awareness allows you to capture the fullness of the moment and enables conscious control of sensory impressions coming from the external environment”. Next is the area of self-fulfillment, understood here as maintaining a balance between development opportunities and the existing risk of failure of a given life project. “The natural consequence of an individual breaking away from established patterns of behavior is the need to face new dangers, including the danger that things will get worse than before”. There is also the area of authenticity, i.e. the individual’s internal honesty towards himself. „Being honest with yourself means finding yourself, but because it is an active process of creating yourself - it must be oriented towards the overall goal - freeing yourself from necessity and achieving fulfillment”. Another important area of constructing one’s own life trajectory is the phenomenon of difficult transitions and life experiences from a personal point of view. Illness, death, abandonment by another person, loss of job, etc. These types of transitions differ from similar processes in traditional societies not only in the lack of rites of passage, but above all in the fact that they enter into a reflectively mobilized trajectory of self-realization and are overcome within it. The last area concerns the phenomenon of self-reflexivity in the situation of designing one’s own „I”, i.e. a specific hermeneutics of one’s own being. This self-reflexivity is circular and never really remains closed or closed in the process of building one’s own identity. The modern identity of an individual is therefore constantly open to both one’s own interiority and external experiences.

The above proposal by Giddens is, of course, only exemplary in nature and does not exhaust all possible areas influencing the construction of a modern identity of an individual. Certainly, other areas signaled by the British sociologist are also important, such as: mediated experience, dialectic of local and global, ontological security, protective cocoon, risk culture, basic trust, life plan, lifestyle sectors, increasing importance of expert and abstract systems in the lives of individuals and social structures, or rootlessness (alienation) (cf. Giddens, 2002).

Selected pedagogical implications

Subjectivity, defined as a specific interiority, is characterized by: individualism, freedom, self-organization, self-knowledge, self-criticism, self-reflexivity, self-reflection, self-therapy. The above concepts describing the reality of subjectivity itself become the leading categories for constructing subject pedagogy. Therefore, in the process of education, the subject must first ask himself the question: who am I as this individual, unique, unique self, having its own interiority. However, just asking the question is only the beginning of the process. The subject must make an attempt/attempts to answer this fundamental question, fundamental to the identity of subjective pedagogy. Therefore, when looking for theoretical foundations for constructing pedagogy in the spirit of interiority, the entire reality of education focuses, as if light in a lens, on the subject itself and in its internal activity. The very act of asking the question and trying to answer it are common to all trends in thinking about the pedagogy of subjectivity. However, within this specific paradigm of subjectivity, there may be different trends related to providing a different answer to the question asked.

Another important moment that integrates the idea of subjectivity in pedagogical theory, but also in practice, is to emphasize the importance of the internal experience of the subject, which in the description of pedagogical practice will be „present” in the form of the prefix „self” in various grammatical forms or the Greek prefix „auto”. Therefore, in order to understand himself, man turns to himself. In this attempt to understand himself, he either goes on his own, with the help of another person/specialist/therapist, or is accompanied by an idea that is important to him for some reason. It can also be God, the Absolute. Man, turning to himself, experiences his own interiority. He conceptualizes it and at the same time begins to understand it as a possible project to be implemented. There is a moment of the subject's transition from what is internal to what is external. The external emanation of the „interiority” of the subject takes place on various possible

levels. Generally speaking, it takes place in two basic cognitive and action perspectives: social and cultural. However, despite various external actions, this interiority, given and constantly experienced by the subject, is always the original place of rooted identity. It is from there that the subject goes out into the world, but also there it returns from the world, as it were. However, the very transition from what is internal to what is external is often neither easy nor simple for the subject (cf. Lévinas, 2002, pp. 18-44). It involves the necessity of, at least partially, exposing one's often hidden interiority to the stage of social life. This is often related to the experience of drama (c.f. Ryk, 2008, pp. 84-96). The implementation of the intended life project of interiority does not always go according to predictions or expectations. The subject returns „to himself” changed, often with various types of fears and internal anxieties. The implementation of an internal life project may be at risk. Often, as a result of self-reflection, you need to modify your plans and intentions. In extreme cases, the subject may give up on such modifications, locking himself in his own interiority, or rejecting its meaning, losing himself in action in the external world. The process of individual self-determination and self-construction of one's own life project is therefore crucial and fundamental in this type of subjective pedagogy. The traditional relationship of educator - pupil, subject - object of education loses its ontic basis. The subject itself encompasses the „agency” and „collectivity” of the pedagogical act. However, as a result, he also becomes responsible, first to himself and then also to others, for the power of his own being in the world.

In this context, the very moment of the subject's self-determination regarding the axiological perspective, which he considers to be a specific interpretive code of his own identity, seems to be crucial. The subject is not a „lonely island” and is not fatalistically condemned to himself. It exists in a specific historical and cultural continuity, both in the personal and social and family dimensions (cf. Jenks, 1999, pp. 62-88). Creative, but also critical acceptance of this continuity allows the subject to enter the external world more gently. In turn, the rejection of this continuity somehow forces the subject to independently search for the interpretive key to his or her own experiences and life projects. Therefore, the self-reflexive, pedagogical activity of the subject itself, running from the inside towards the outside, and then returning to the inside, bears the hallmarks of a hermeneutic activity.

From the perspective of pedagogical practice, a meeting with another person, an educator with a student, a teacher with a student assumes a certain equivalence of the identity of their own experienced worlds, which are, in a way, the starting point of the entire educational process. Entering into

a dialogue with another person through a meeting should be preceded by a constant pedagogical disposition to conduct a dialogue with oneself in one's own interiority. This dialogue allows us to become more fully aware of our own identity, both individual and social. It not only allows me to become aware of my own identity, but also teaches me to respect the dignity and identity of the other person with whom I enter into this dialogue. The pedagogical act itself becomes, above all, an encounter with another person. He, like me, has his own inner world of experiences, sensations, fears, worries and anxieties. The other one somehow speaks to me through his inner world, although it all still happens in a specific, structured social situation. At this point, the traditionally understood methodology of education, understood as conscious, purposeful, planned influence of one entity on another, loses its importance in favor of a more or less common experience of each other taking place in a specific axiological perspective.

In subjective pedagogy, both the concept of education itself is reformulated, understood here rather as joint co-experiencing and experiencing one's own lived worlds, the methodology of education itself, and in a broader context, the theory of education, but also the research methodology, which in its theoretical assumptions refers to experience of an internal nature. She is aware of the uniqueness, individuality and uniqueness of what she examines. Hence, it assumes the characteristics of a subjective (idiographic) description devoid of the objectivity characteristic of nomothetic research. Other elements of the pedagogical theory itself are subject to a similar reformulation, such as: pedagogical axiology, ethics of education, teleology of education or aesthetics of education.

Summary

The idea of subjectivity, which appeared in Western philosophical thought almost from the very beginning of its existence, played the most important role in modern times, becoming a kind of first principle of philosophy, as Descartes wanted. Subjectivity itself, however, has not taken on a uniform character, despite a common starting point, that is, the turn of man seeking truth „towards himself“. This turn towards what was internal took place in various contexts. A kind of intellectualism (Socrates), theism (Augustine, Pascal), skepticism (Descartes), the self-reference of spirit (Hegel), the lived world, pure consciousness (Husserl), life (Dilthey), the heremens of Dasein (Heidegger), or the critique of rationality (Habermas). The list presented is only exemplary, but certainly not complete. The idea of subjectivity as a specifically understood interiority has permeated almost

every trend of thought today. The causative power of the subject (modernism) or its weakness (postmodernism) equally convey the message about the central place of man in designing reality and himself. The ubiquity of this idea has also been reflected in pedagogical theory and practice, although it happens with varying strength and to a varying extent both in the dimension of individual/personal and institutional education.

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