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Wanderings of the nomadic subject: on becoming, relationality and interdependency as a space of subject's autonomy in education

Wędrówki nomadycznego podmiotu: o stawaniu-się, relacyjności i współzależności jako przestrzeni autonomii podmiotu w edukacji

Abstract: In recent years, the voices of representatives of agential realism and new materialism (Latour, DeLanda, Barad) have become increasingly important in the field of scientific reflection and social theory. The paradigm change has resulted in shifting a strong interest on the language, meaning, text and discourse towards lived, real body and matter experiences rooted in everyday life in connection with the natural world, but also the world of things, artefacts or new technologies. This ontological turn towards the multiplicity and diversity of material-discursive entities also inspires researchers in educational studies (Adams St.Pierre, Masny, Semetsky, Taylor and Hughes, Chutorański i Makowska, Chutorański) in the field of which I situate the presented article. It aims to show the most important theoretical assumptions of contemporary philosophical currents, which create different contexts for rethinking and reconfiguring both discursive and material aspects of human subjectivity, difference, identity, relations between different entities or, finally, practices of producing knowledge and arranging educational reality. Pedagogical reflection, research and educational practices inspired by a new paradigm make possible to transcend the limitations of critical currents which mainly focus on the social oppression and exclusions inevitably determining the identity of the subjects. It allows to rethink education as a dynamic process of generating the communities of learning, building

relationships and connections that, apart from the limitations also arouse impulses for the perpetual actualization and realization of potential forces existing in the very subject.

Keywords: nomadic subject, becoming, relationality, interdependency, Deleuze and Guattari, education, affirmative ethic, autonomy.

Introduction: becoming subject in the multiplicity of what is real

In the light of philosophical assumptions presented in Thousand Plateau... by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) reality forms an inseparable entanglement between the world of matter and the world of symbols. But the unity of the entangled, rhizomatic reality does not imply its totality, completeness or definite and fixed identity, but only certain determinations, dimensions and intensities that are constantly changing. All entities are produced in some complex, dynamic, fluid arrangements, they are in a constant process of becoming-world (becoming reality). In Deleuzian philosophy, discursive and material entities share the same ontological status, what makes it known as the „flat ontology" (Feely, 2016, p. 7). It creates a framework which let us avoid thinking of reality in terms of fixed structures that impose specific hierarchies. This way of thinking makes it possible to combine philosophy understood as the practice of creating concepts with sociocultural practices, which also generate an interesting basis for developing educational theories (Semetsky, 2008). According to the everyday life philosophy reality is heterogeneous and fragmented but at the same time its elements are interconnected, forming dynamic systems in which art, science, power organizations and social displacements, the whole complex micro-politics of the social field, intermingle. It is made up of working devices because each multiplicity is constituted by elements and functions that form certain systems. Thus, there are physical devices, biological devices, social devices, ideological devices, devices for loving and for thinking, creating and teaching. Joanna Bednarek (2012, p. 292), writing about Deleuze's philosophy, notes that in reference to his concepts being is differentiated, immanent and homogeneous, actualizes itself in events in which different forms of being are distinguished, but what is produced cannot be distinguished from the process of creation itself, which is based on desire-production and becoming.

Karen Barad (2007, 2012), referring to the deleuzoguatarian philosophy assuming that cognition and being are not separate but entangled (entanglement) with each other, acknowledges that we should not separate the

realms of ontology and epistemology. Rejecting the metaphysics of a pre-existing relationship between things and words (there are things, phenomena and concepts that we can name with words), he proposes instead a posthumanist, performative and relational ontoepistemology, where the practices of cognition and becoming of human and non-human entities, are entangled with questions of corporeality and materiality. The basic is an assumption that the primary ontological and semantic units are not things or words/signifiers but material-discursive phenomena and practices that produce boundaries between entities. This is why K. Barad (2008, 2012) considers as an adequate epistemological approach the optics of diffraction, a dispersion derived from physics, which, as a tool of critical analysis, allows us to think in parallel about the social and the scientific, without the post-Cartesian division into what is inside (subjective) and outside (objective). Diffraction can be metaphorically described as a „cartography of interference" (Haraway, 2012, p. 593), an overlapping and production of successive layers of meaning and a particular illumination of the places where differences do not so much appear, but rather where the effects of these differences appear as a result of the engagement of different contexts in.

In the Deleuzian philosophy of immanence, human and non-human subjects are produced in continuous flows, processes of becoming that prevent permanent rooting and embedding in permanent structures. Their nomadic, itinerant condition is marked by constant updates and re-configurations occurring in ever new, dynamically changing relations and arrangements. The existence of subjects in the world is becoming, a process expressed by the intertwining of possibilities, the subject's potency (what is virtual) and the present location in a network of interdependencies (what is actual). As a result of continual actualizations, the subject is not influenced and shaped only by the dominant forces of external discourses, but its subjectivity is expressed „by a ceaselessly becoming biological body in a dynamic relationship with its environment" (Feely, 2016, p. 11). Thus, we can see subjects becoming in some educational environments (students, teachers, parents, artefacts, activities) as subjects always 'affected by its material environment and embodiment as well as by its position in discourse' (Braidotti 2011; Protevi 2009 after Felly, ibidem).

As Wojciech Burszta (2015, p. 127) notes, the metaphor of the nomad, which appears in Deleuze's philosophy, describes the condition of contemporary society, whose members are in a process of constant adaptation to an ever-changing reality, only temporarily able to nomadize in a given place, providing a makeshift sense of rootedness. The nomadic subject, although

constantly on the move and not recognizing formal boundaries, is not defined by movement but by the way in which he or she inhabits a space and establishes relations with other entities in the area of a given territory, the nature of the temporary location and the dynamics of the relations of a given field, while at the same time being open to new sets of relations and moving towards new territories (Deleuze, Guattari, 2015, 468-471). In results, as Christian Beighton noticed "our experience involves more than simply the sense data we commonly associate with it" (2017, p. 112) and which have their stabled or typical references. The ability to change, transform, transform appears as a desirable and even necessary competence of subjects, as the nomad is always deterritorialized. The subjective identity, too, tries to liberate itself from the oppression of the self and, defending itself from being frozen in specific structures, takes on nomadic characteristics. This fluidity and mobility of the subject moving between different territories is conveyed by the Deleuzian metaphor of a „body without organs", an embodied subjectivity that does not allow itself to be confined within specific boundaries.This shifts the focus from the subject itself (what the subject is like), its qualities, properties and limitations to its possible actualizations and entanglements and thinking rather in the perspective of what the subject could have become (Hickey-Moody and Page, 2015, p. 4). As we can see the ontological assumptions are very close to what we consider indeed as a core of pedagogical thinking.

Knowledge production, learning assemblages and becoming of subjects in education

If reality, which is the intertwining of the world of matter and the world of symbols, is characterized by an incessant flow, if it is an area of continuous happening and becoming of many different entities, then its cognition must attempt to grasp the processes of this happening, flow and actualization of subjects in relation to others. Cognition and thinking, and therefore also learning, is at the same time an activity embodied in the subject, it becomes problematizing and making claims, a journey, a wandering, a deterritorialization and a search for new places, an exploration by wandering and following the line of development (line of flight) of a given flow. It is at once being (becoming) and doing and un-doing what has been done in various kinds of relations with other entities. To know and to learn is to be in the world. Anna Hickey-Moody and Tara Page write about „knowing-being", Karen Barad about „practices of knowing in being" and Etienne Wenger names it „knowing in practice" (borrowing after: Hickey-Moody and Page, 2015,

p. 12). Understood in this way, cognition is not subject to any structural or generative patterns, it is not a mapping of reality, but is rather the construction of an open map that connects various fields and is subject to various modifications, the shape of which is influenced by various elements of the situation in which people, things, words, their material nature (embodiment), impressions, affects, etc. are involved. The movement of thought is guided by the question not of what something is but what it can do (produce/create) in different constellations of relationships. Thus, nomadic thinking seeks to recognize the arrangements, assemblies and differences that make it possible for given elements of reality to move between different areas and produce new connections and new possibilities. Real-world learning situations involve many diverse entities expressing their causality and learning processes. Coming back to A. Hickey-Moody and T. Page, they are created and modified as "the empirical and conceptual nature of our engagements with knowledge are co-constitutive of knowledge itself" (2015, p. 4), in which affects can play a huge role. Affections, desires arising as responses to the world shape the subjects' ability to act, whereby action and thinking (body and mind) are not treated separately but form a unity. A. Hickey-Moody and T. Page write that "[...] to be affected is to be able to think or act differently though" and easily turn into a habit (2015, p. 17). Therefore, knowing and learning have to „[...] create and adopt new ways of responding and being affected" (ibidem).

Practices of knowledge production and learning should therefore refer simultaneously to different areas and domains, seeking connections between them, grasping their interrelationships and interactions in ever-changing arrangements at the level of micro-political realm which G. Deleuze and F. Guattari (1987, 2015) called minor (relating this concept to the field of education will be everyday practices of learning) and at the level of molar social machines within its they are shaped (the broader, social and systemic framework of educational practices and policies). Thus, we can speak of a multiplicity of diverse subjects comprising complex networks of learning, relations and modes of engagement that produce constantly among themselves and among other networks different kinds of connections within the „actual ontology" of practice (Hickey-Moody and Page, 2015, p. 10). Inna Semetsky (2008) uses the notion of „nomadic education" understood as processes of continuous actualization of subjects in a specific place, time and space, a nexus of dynamic forces whose necessary condition is the element of creation. This is possible through the production of new connections, thus requiring "[...] not the transmission of the same but the creation of the different" (2008, p. viii). Pedagogy and education, like art, science and philosophy

create new meanings and concepts, produce knowledge and "[...] educate us, respectively, in becoming able to fele, to know, and to conceive" (ibidem). The concepts themselves, as well as the entities involved in education, form what Deleuze referred to as an assemblage - „a multiciplity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and wich establishes liaisons, relations between them […] (after: DeLanda, 2016, p. 1) and their different natures. In its complexity and multiplicity, the assemblage „necesarilly acts" on material, semiotic and social flow (Deleuze 1987, p. 25). The diverse, internal elements of assemblage fit together but are not uniform and do not form a unified, closed whole, it is the assemblage that creates connections between them actively links these parts together (DeLanda, 2016, p. 2). Thus, the subject, concepts, knowledge and education are always relational, situational and social in nature.

Educational assemblages within which being and knowing are intertwined constitute "the process of making and unmaking the thing" (see: Jackson, Mazzei, 2012, p. 1), organizing and fitting what is knowing as in result learning becomes an embodied entanglement of doing, reading, writing, thinking, and feeling. Thus, in the learning process itself, in its perpetual flow, dynamic, variable, nomadic nature, we can find the conditions of subjective autonomy. The possible field of autonomy of self-learning and self-education is present in the very way the world exists and is learned. The production of new weaves of events that defy rules and seek lines of escape from standard ways of thinking and acting, leading towards new territories. The subject's autonomy is realized in its ability to form relationships with other subjects: people, things, plants and animals, the various elements of the learning environment and to act within them.

On the one hand, relationality and interdependence in changing networks can be limiting (in the perspective of critical educational theories, they are often interpreted as domination and oppression), but on the other hand, the subject, by searching for an outlet line and moving between different assemblages, gains agency and autonomy, is not just a passive recipient of external influences because, in a certain time and space, he or she actively participates in the creation of ever new connections and modes of action that produce new entities that transform reality. This is how the process of learning and education occurs, which, to use a Deleuzian metaphor, is "[...] the entanglement of matter and learning and teaching pedagogy" (Hickey-Moody, Page 2014, p. 12). In this sense, we can also speak of a similarity between educational practices and art. As A. Hickey-Moody and T. Page write, "practices, teaching and art production practices are modes of thought

already in the act [...] calling us to think anew, through remaking the world materially and relationally" (ibidem, p. 1). According to K. Barad (2012), it is the dynamic relations that shape phenomena that are causality, understood not as a property, a certain trait, an attribute of the subject but as a constant reconfiguring, renegotiating, and performing of the world because we come to know the world by being in it. Reacting to the world, responding to it (resonances) is an education in which the territories of educational practices delimited so far are, on the one hand, limiting, not free of conflicts, tensions, and domination, but at the same time also intrinsically allowing for the emergence of new territories as they always draw lines of inquiry towards new paths and lands.

Conclusions: interdependences and affirmation as a space of subject's autonomy

Autonomy, understood as the actualization of identity and the creation of new connections in the processes of thought and action, is not an individual act, it is a certain emancipatory potency of subjects. Its diffuse presence is linked to the very construction and operation of social devices, which have their lines of outlet and can therefore be subject to deterritorialization resulting in the loss of previous contextualizations and the initiation of a new process of becoming. The capacity of social entities to change, to move and to constantly transform, makes the production of new identities go on and on and on, as a response to desire. The condition for this is not external criteria but derives from the causal power of the entities themselves, whose identities are not fixed, unchanging or once and for all defined. In a reality thus defined, the principle of its organization in the form of relatively fixed hierarchical structures and the consequent ethics of representation are replaced by the principle and ethics of relation and recognition of differences emerging from ever new arrangements of existence. The ethics of relationality points to the sites of production of connections and "[...] interactions, in which diverse and constantly transforming entities are entangled" (Golańska 2018, p. 198 and 215).

A field of autonomy is shaped between the embodied subject and its power to make transgressions and displacements, to constantly become-nomadic. According to Rosi Braidotti's point of view (2008, pp. 62-75), the nomadic subject is constituted on the desire for becoming, thus gaining the power to make things happen, and its desire/desire is linked to multi-level relations, the merging, the intertwining of different forces in a continuous process of flows, which to some extent allows it to be disconnected from

linguistically mediated systems of meaning. Identity becomes a condition for the expression of the positive, a creative force that weaves in a sense of interdependence and bonding in with other human and non-human entities/subjects. The sense of common destiny becomes the source of ethical needs that shape the politics of locating nomadic subjects in a shared space, the politics of inhabiting shared territories (Braidotti, ibidem).

The concepts of nomadic philosophy and the ontology of multiplicity underlie the construction of political-ethical projects in which the ethics of care for the self (which can come dangerously close to narcissism) and care for others (in which actions for and on behalf of others can result in domination and violence) are transformed into an ethics of becoming, change, transformation, which also becomes an ethics of subject affirmation. As R. Braidotii (2008, 2012) notes, referring to the concepts of Spinoza, Bergson and Deleuze, the pragmatic philosophy of nomadic subjects emphazises issues of action and experimentation with different ways of creating subjectivity and inhabiting our corporeality, so that the ethical project that grows out of its foundation is primarily revealed in the numerous modes of everyday life (2012, p. 290; see also Rzeźnicka-Krupa 2019, p. 171-173). According to R. Braidotti, the subject is a concept that requires rethinking from the perspective of affectivity, vitality, inter-relationality, territories and resources, locations, and forces. Subjects strive for endurance and duration, which form the ethical principle of the affirmation of the subject as potency and the task of transforming negativity into positivity. The persistence of the subject simultaneously implies a change, a transformation, which the subject also initiates around itself, in the community. The subject is „a fragment of living, sensitive matter", physiologically embedded in the corporeal materiality of the self, but at the same time, as a nomadic subject, it is also perpetually an „entity in between" (2012, pp. 292-293). Subjects differ in terms of their bodily-embedded aspects, and have different thresholds of permanence, powers of affect and powers of action that can manifest with varying intensities. In the radically immanent, dynamic, intense body-subject, forces, flows, intensities, and passions actualizing themselves in time and space meet, forming a complex configuration (assemblage). In its abiding, the subject moves towards an understanding of ensoulment that comes with the realization of our limits and boundaries. Ethics becomes an allegiance to the omnipresent desire for becoming, the affirmation of life forces through connectivity with other entities and forces, based on interdependence and interconnectedness, relationships and encounters with others, our ability to stimulate and be stimulated, to set in motion and be in motion. An ethically

empowering orientation is about arousing the impulse of becomingness and positive energy, and is not only determined by historical, economic, social, or political contexts, but by relationships - it is encounters with others that sustain self-transformation and self-creation, that allow us to affirm our own existence in connection with other entities. Ethics, therefore, understood as an intense becoming, is a search for encounters and a way of continuously actualizing different forms of transformation (Braidotti, 2012, pp. 290-293; Rzeźnicka-Krupa, 2019, pp. 171-173). Thus, there is no single, defined pattern according to which social entities can be formatted; their differentiation, their capacities and abilities are always only partial, fragmented and conditioned by physicality, gender, emotions, history. Understanding and constructing identity in processes of becoming is above all about recognizing all those conditions, thresholds and boundaries that mark the subject's existence and that, on the one hand, determine and limit it, but on the other hand, can also become a place of connection with others, initiating new flows and transformations of boundaries.

In the area of pedagogical reflection, thinking about education and performing in education such an approach makes possible to transcend the limitations of critical approaches mainly focused on unmasking oppression and exclusion, which inevitably determine the identity of the subject. It allows to rethink education within the relations and connections, which can include moments of enslavement, but which also arouse impulses for the perpetual actualization and realization of potential forces dormant in the subject itself and leading to its constant development in many possible dimensions. As Roland Bogue writes about G. Deleuze, the educational dimension of philosophy and life itself is also „the dimension of discovery and creation within the ever-unfolding domain of the new. It is also the dimension of freedom, in which thought escapes its preconceptions and explores new possibilities for life" (2008, p. 15). Following the Bogue's thought, we can say that a very being-in-learning shape the possible and immanent space for subjects' autonomy within education. Autonomy which is always contextualized, as a relation of interdependency, emboded and expressed by connections with other subjects.

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