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Społeczno-polityczny kontekst edukacji o Holokauście w poradzieckiej Rosji

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Abstrakt

Artykuł przedstawia genezę edukacji o Holokauście w Federacji Rosyjskiej. Nauczanie o Holokauście na świecie jest współcześnie monitorowane przez International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, organizację która nie uwzględnia jednak stanu nauczania o Holokauście w Rosji, skupiając się na krajach europejskich. W tekście zostały ukazane wybrane wątki badania dotyczącego społeczno-politycznych wymiarów nauczania o Holokauście w rosyjskim systemie edukacji szkolnej i pozaszkolnej oraz próby zilustrowania „rosyjskiej opowieści" o Holokauście w obliczu dominującej ideologii.

Słowa kluczowe

Edukacja, Holokaust, memory studies, pedagogika pamięci, Federacja Rosyjska

The Socio-Political Context of Holocaust Education in Post-Soviet Russia

Abstract

The article presents the genesis of Holocaust education in the Russian Federation. Holocaust education in the world is currently monitored by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which, however, does not take into account the state of Holocaust education in Russia, focusing instead on European countries. The text presents the selected themes of the study on socio-political dimensions

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of teaching about the Holocaust in the Russian system of formal and non-formal education and attempts to illustrate the "Russian story" of the Holocaust in the face of the dominant ideology.

Keywords

Wprowadzenie

Miejsce, jakie w nauczaniu historii II wojny światowej w rosyjskiej szkole zajmuje pamięć o eksterminacji Żydów przez nazistów, wyznacza „podwójny paradoks" pamięci. Po pierwsze, współczesne ramy polityczne i prawne stwarzają ogólnie korzystne warunki dla rozpowszechniania wiedzy o Holokauście w Rosji. Niemniej, ramy te mają bardzo niewielki wpływ na praktyki i dyskursy, które mobilizują pamięć o tym aspekcie II wojny światowej. Po drugie, to, co w Rosji nazywa się „Wielką Wojną Ojczyźnianą", czyli konfrontacja państw Osi (głównie Niemiec) z ZSRR w latach 1941–1945, stanowi dziś filar rosyjskiej „powieści narodowej". Jej miejsce i rola w dyskursie o przeszłości przybiera coraz bardziej na znaczeniu. Nie prowadzi to jednak do lepszego poznania historii Holokaustu ani do włączenia tego wydarzenia historycznego w ramy praktyk upamiętniających. Sytuacja jest tym bardziej paradoksalna, że 2 mln 600 tys. – 2 mln 800 tys. Żydów eksterminowanych przez hitlerowców, pochodziło z terenów ZSRR, w tym 120 tys. z terytorium Rosji w jej obecnych granicach, z wyłączeniem Krymu i obwodu kaliningradzkiego (Altman, 2002).

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie i krytyczna analiza mechanizmów kształtujących nauczanie o Holokauście w systemie rosyjskiej edukacji. W szerszej perspektywie, autorka stara się przyjrzeć następującym zagadnieniom:

- Jakie są ramy historyczne, polityczne, prawne i instytucjonalne, które sprzyjają lub przeciwnie, uniemożliwiają upowszechnianie pamięci o Holokauście w szkołach w Rosji?
- Kto i jak działa na rzecz włączenia tego aspektu historii do szkolnej narracji o wojnie?
- W jakim stopniu i w jaki sposób temat Holokaustu jest dziś zintegrowany z nauczaniem historii II wojny światowej w szkole – czy wręcz przeciwnie, jest z niej wykluczony?
- Jakie miejsce zajmuje w rosyjskich „formalnych programach nauczania" temat Holokaustu?

Zastosowane badanie interdyscyplinarne łączy kilka podejść i metod: jakościową analizę krytyczną treści podstawy nauczania historycznego w Federacji Rosyjskiej – *Standardu historyczno–kulturowego* (*Istoriko-Kulturnyj standard*) i *Koncepcji nowego kompleksu edukacyjno–metodycznego w zakresie nauczania historii ojczystej* (*Koncjepcija nowowo uczebno-mietodiczieskowow komplieksa po otcziestwiennoj istorii*); jakościową analizę krytyczną treści obowiązujących podręczników do historii ojczystej[2]; jakościową analizę materiału empirycznego. Informacji na temat zjawiska, które leży u podstaw badania, dostarczyły wywiady epizodyczne[3] przeprowadzone w oparciu o scenariusz z listą dyspozycji (Flick, 2000). Wywiady on-line przeprowadzono z pięcioma nauczycielami z Czelabińska oraz pięcioma nauczycielami z Moskwy, w okresie sierpień – październik 2021 r.

Geneza edukacji o Holokauście w Rosji

Rosja, Białoruś i Ukraina doświadczyły długiej historii antysemityzmu sięgającej czasów Imperium Rosyjskiego w XIX wieku. Poprzez podboje militarne na początku XIX wieku Rosja zdobyła terytorium zamieszkałe przez dużą populację żydowską. Ograniczona została mobilność Żydów na tym terytorium, znanym jako strefa osiedlenia. Pod koniec XIX i na początku XX wieku doszło do masowych ataków na społeczności żydowskie w Imperium Rosyjskim (Altman, 2009). Ataki te przyczyniły się do powstania terminu „pogrom", który od tamtego czasu nabrał uniwersalnego znaczenia, oznaczającego ukierunkowany atak etniczny. Pogromy wpłynęły na decyzję wielu Żydów z Europy Wschodniej o emigracji do Ameryki w tym okresie, zwłaszcza w pierwszej połowie XX wieku. Życie Żydów w Związku Radzieckim nadal było niepewne, ponieważ byli prześladowani jako więźniowie polityczni i ograniczano ich prawa do emigracji. Według rosyjskiego badacza Holokaustu, Ilyi Altmana, od połowy lat czterdziestych do późnych lat osiemdziesiątych temat Holokaustu był pomijany w szkołach i podręcznikach uniwersyteckich, encyklopediach i monografiach przede wszystkim z powodów politycznych. Ideologiczne mechanizmy wypierania przybierały różne formy: pomijania tematu milczeniem, zniekształcania faktów historycznych i bezpośredniego fałszowania (Altman, 1999). Drugim powodem stały się niewątpliwie strategie adaptacyjne społeczeństwa, związane z potrzebą wyznaczenia kierunku przynależności, tożsamości, podmiotowości. Po 1945 r. w społeczeństwach, w których władza i reguły życia społecznego zostały doszczętnie zniszczone przez totalitarne rządy, konieczne było przywrócenie minimalnej spójności społeczeństwa obywatelskiego i legitymizacji władzy. Jak opisuje podobne zjawiska społeczne Paul Connerton, przemożnym pragnieniem

społeczeństwa stało się zapomnienie niedawnej przeszłości – nastąpiło zatem przejście od „normatywnej niepamięci" do „zapomnienia konstytutywnego dla tworzenia nowej tożsamości" (por. Connerton, 2008, s.62-64). Istotą tego ostatniego jest nie tyle strata związana z niemożnością zachowania pewnych rzeczy w pamięci, ile raczej pożytek odniesiony przez tych, którzy wiedzą, w jaki sposób odrzucić wspomnienia, które nie służą żadnym praktycznym celom w zarządzaniu tożsamością i bieżącymi ideałami. W rezultacie zapominanie staje się częścią procesu, w którym nowy zasób wspólnych wspomnień jest konstruowany niejednokrotnie zarówno w oparciu o to, co pamiętamy, jak i o to, co przemilczamy (por. Connerton, 2008, s. 62-64). Sytuacyjne przemilczanie nie ma przypadkowego charakteru – tworzy swoisty wzór, a jego motywami są najczęściej przekonania o szkodliwym wpływie wspomnień na teraźniejsze działania, które mogłyby ulec osłabieniu czy zniekształceniu, gdyby pewne kwestie nie pozostały w cieniu. To, co wolno zapomnieć, tworzy przestrzeń życiową dla teraźniejszych przedsięwzięć (Connerton, 2008, s.63).

Edukacja o Holokauście w Rosji rozpoczęła się w latach 90. XX wieku dzięki indywidualnym wysiłkom nauczycieli, a nie jako inicjatywa wspierana przez państwo. W tamtym czasie rząd rosyjski zaczął odtajniać dokumenty archiwalne i udostępniać je opinii publicznej. W latach 1991–1994 rząd rozpoczął pilotażową edukację publiczną, która obejmowała międzynarodowe wystawy tematyczne, m.in. „Dom Anny Frank" (Holandia)[4], które odbywały się w Moskwie i innych miastach. We współczesnej Rosji dwie organizacje pozarządowe – Rosyjskie Centrum Badań i Edukacji Holokaustu (założone w czerwcu 1992 r. (obecnie: Centrum Naukowo-Edukacyjne „Holokaust") i Fundacja Holokaust[5] (założona w 1997 r.) – odegrały wiodącą rolę w organizowaniu nauczania o Holokauście. Obok tych dwóch organizacji, także Muzeum Dziedzictwa Żydowskiego i Holokaustu[6], finansowane przez Rosyjski Kongres Żydów[7], zainicjowało kilka interesujących projektów edukacyjnych.

Jednym z głównych celów Centrum było zorganizowanie nauczania historii Holokaustu w rosyjskich szkołach i na uniwersytetach. W 1999 r. Centrum współpracowało z pracownikami Rosyjskiej Akademii Edukacji, głównego ośrodka metodologii nauczania w kraju, w celu stworzenia programu nauczania i ustalenia wytycznych do nauczania historii Holokaustu. Centrum wydało przewodnik dla nauczycieli pn. *Historia Holokaustu na okupowanym terytorium Związku Radzieckiego*, napisany trzy lata wcześniej (1996 r.) przez Rosjankę Galinę Klokovą, który odegrał szczególnie ważną rolę w nauczaniu.

Z uwagi na fakt, że Rosja nie miała rządowego programu nauczania na temat Holokaustu, ważne było, aby opracować pomoce dydaktyczne i umożliwić nauczycielom kontakt z międzynarodowymi ekspertami w tej dziedzinie poprzez seminaria edukacyjne. Aby to osiągnąć, Centrum współpracowało z Fundacją Holokaust w latach 20072011 przy organizacji sześciu międzynarodowych konferencji pod hasłem „Lekcje Holokaustu i współczesnej Rosji"[8] oraz kilku regionalnych seminariów organizowanych przez *The Living History Forum*[9]. Szwedzcy nauczyciele i pracownicy Centrum oraz Fundacji Holokaust zostali zaproszeni do zabrania głosu podczas tych wydarzeń, a artykuły naukowe z tych konferencji zostały opublikowane i udostępnione nauczycielom. Szacuje się, że dzięki tym działaniom udało się dotrzeć do dziesiątek tysięcy nauczycieli. Międzynarodowe kursy doskonalenia nauczycieli organizowane przez Centrum i Fundację Holokaust stanowiły zbiorową przestrzeń badań nad metodami nauczania o Holokauście. Oferowane kursy powstały we współpracy z Moskiewskim Instytutem Otwartej Edukacji[10], agencją rządową nadzorującą wydawanie świadectw nauczycielom oraz ponowną certyfikację nauczycieli moskiewskich, która jest wymagana co pięć lat. Od 2010 r. kursy te działają pod auspicjami Federalnej Akademii Zaawansowanego Szkolenia i Szkolenia Zawodowego dla Edukatorów[11]. Instytut Yad Vashem[12] jest również partnerem w zakresie edukacji o Holokauście w Rosji. Od 2000 r. Instytut prowadzi kursy letnie dla 40-50 nauczycieli, z których 25 jest wysyłanych każdego roku na seminaria do Izraela. Do tej pory ponad 250 nauczycieli z Rosji przeszło szkolenie w Jerozolimie i zostało regionalnymi przedstawicielami Centrum Holokaustu w instytucjach rozwoju zawodowego i na uniwersytetach pedagogicznych. Te instytucje nie tylko szkolą nauczycieli w zakresie wiedzy o Holokauście, ale także umożliwiają im uczestnictwo w wymianach międzynarodowych w Europie i w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Ponad 100 nauczycieli uczestniczyło w tych programach i odwiedziło Dom Konferencji Wannsee[13], Mémorial de la Shoah[14] we Francji oraz różne muzea Holokaustu w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Wszystkie te wyjazdy były finansowane w całości przez Centrum Holokaustu i jego zagranicznych partnerów, bez wsparcia rządu rosyjskiego.

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[8] https://holocf.ru/международные-конференции/
[9] https://www.levandehistoria.se/
[10] https://corp-univer.ru/
[11] https://td-osz.ru/en/uspeh/fgaou-dpo-akademiya-povysheniya-kvalifikacii-akademiya-povysheniya-kvalifikacii/
[12] https://www.yadvashem.org/
[13] https://www.museumsportal-berlin.de/pl/muzea/haus-der-wannsee-konferenz/
[14] https://www.memorialdelashoah.org/

Punktem zwrotnym było włączenie tematu Holokaustu do projektu oficjalnego Rosyjskiego Standardu Edukacji Historycznej z 2003 r., który od tego czasu uczynił z Holokaustu obowiązkowy temat w podręcznikach w całym kraju. Dwudziestu autorów wprowadziło do redagowanych przez siebie podręczników rozdział o Holokauście. W 2010 r. prestiżowe wydawnictwo „Russkoe Slove" zebrało te rozdziały w jednej publikacji zatytułowanej *Temat Holokaustu w podręcznikach szkolnych*, która zawiera również zalecenia dla nauczycieli, jak wykorzystywać teksty na lekcjach. W 2011 r. Centrum Holokaustu udało się wprowadzić pytania tematycznie związane z Holokaustem do Jednolitego Egzaminu Państwowego, co jest równoznaczne z uznaniem wagi przedmiotu przez Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki Federacji Rosyjskiej. Dziś instytucje rządowe zajmujące się rozwojem zawodowym nauczycieli regularnie organizują wykłady i seminaria na temat Holokaustu dla nauczycieli historii i nauk społecznych w całym kraju. Moskiewski Instytut Otwartej Edukacji oferuje wykłady o Holokauście w ramach programu rozwoju zawodowego. W 2010 r. Centrum Holokaustu wraz z Federalną Akademią Zaawansowanego Szkolenia i Przekwalifikowania Zawodowego dla Edukatorów opracowało ujednolicony moduł edukacyjny na temat Holokaustu, który został rekomendowany przez Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki do wdrożenia w lokalnych jednostkach edukacyjnych.

W szkołach, w których nie uczy się o Holokauście (łącznie, w szkołach średnich tylko sześć lekcji poświęconych jest historii II wojny światowej), praca pozalekcyjna i zadania domowe uczniów nabrały fundamentalnego znaczenia. Wielu nauczycieli prowadzi zajęcia fakultatywne, w ramach których odbywają się wieczorne dyskusje ze świadkami i ocalałymi z Holokaustu, a także pokazy filmów, po których następuje dyskusja. W ostatnich latach, gdy uczniowie dowiadywali się o Holokauście, zaczynali aktywniej pielęgnować pamięć o tym wydarzeniu. Brali udział w takich działaniach, jak przeprowadzanie wywiadów ze świadkami historii czy konserwacja pomników Holokaustu. Od 12 lat Centrum Holokaustu i Fundacja Holokaust organizują międzynarodowy konkurs „Pamięć Holokaustu – Droga do Tolerancji"[15]. Liczba zgłoszeń nadsyłanych przez rosyjskich uczniów i nauczycieli rosła z każdym rokiem. W 2011 r. do konkursu zgłoszono 2000 prac z niemal każdego regionu Rosji. Wzrost zainteresowania był częściowo spowodowany publiczną kampanią informacyjną prowadzoną przez Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki w 2010 i 2011 r. Konkurs okazał się doskonałym sposobem na ocenę jakościowych i ilościowych parametrów nauczania o Holokauście w Rosji. Najciekawsze prace konkursowe stanowiły projekty oparte na lokalnych

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[15] https://holocf.ru/конкурс-2/

materiałach historycznych. Wśród tych zgłoszeń znalazły się artykuły, opowiadania, wiersze, rysunki, scenariusze i filmy dokumentalne powstałe na bazie materiałów z archiwów historii mówionej, dokumentów z archiwów osobistych i badań socjologicznych. Nagrody wręczane są zwycięzcom 27 stycznia, w Międzynarodowy Dzień Pamięci o Ofiarach Holokaustu, w Centrum Informacyjnym ONZ w Moskwie. Od 2004 r. laureaci prezentowali swoje prace również w siedzibie UNESCO w Paryżu[16]. Zwycięskie projekty zostały także opublikowane w ośmiu tomach specjalnych zatytułowanych *Nie możemy milczeć: dzieci w wieku szkolnym i studenci wobec Holokaustu*[17].

Od 2001 do 2005 r. rząd federalny prowadził ogólnokrajowy program promujący tolerancję pn. „Tolerancja, świadomość i zapobieganie ekstremizmowi w społeczeństwie rosyjskim". Chociaż w programie nie było wzmianki o Holokauście, temat ten był szeroko prezentowany na seminariach dla nauczycieli oraz poprzez szereg pomocy dydaktycznych, które zostały przygotowane na tę okazję. Jedną z pierwszych pomocy dydaktycznych opublikowanych w ramach tego programu był podręcznik Ilyi Altmana pt. *Historia Holokaustu i żydowskiego ruchu oporu na okupowanych terytoriach Związku Radzieckiego* (Altman, 2002; por. Arad, 1991).

W 2002 r. 25 000 egzemplarzy podręcznika pt. *Historia Holokaustu w Związku Radzieckim*[18], którego autorami są Ilya Altman, Alla Gerber i David Poltorak, zostało wydrukowanych za zgodą Ministerstwa Edukacji. W 2003 r. podręcznik ten został przetłumaczony na język niemiecki w Austrii. Centrum Holokaustu wydało scenariusze lekcji i pomoce dydaktyczne dla nauczycieli literatury rosyjskiej, opublikowało także listę zajęć pozalekcyjnych dotyczących różnych tematów Holokaustu, takich jak Międzynarodowy Dzień Pamięci o Holokauście (2009), Babi Jar (2006), Noc Kryształowa (2008) i Sprawiedliwi wśród Narodów Świata (2005, 2011)[19].

W ten sposób zebrano bardzo ciekawe doświadczenia w zakresie nauczania o Holokauście w kontekście historii II wojny światowej. Wiele z wymienionych programów edukacyjnych otrzymało dofinansowanie od organizacji międzynarodowych, takich jak Rada Europy, The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany[20], Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (obecnie International Holocaust

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[16] https://holocf.ru/презентация-студентов-в-штаб-квартир/
[17] https://holocf.ru/мы-не-можем-молчать/
[18] https://holocf.ru/история-холокоста-на-территории-ссср/
[19] https://holocf.ru/методические-материалы/
[20] https://www.claimscon.org/

Remembrance Alliance - IHRA)[21], a także od lokalnych sponsorów. Od 2008 r. programy edukacyjne Centrum Holokaustu są corocznie finansowane z dotacji Prezydenta Rosji w wysokości 70–80 tys. USD. Niemniej jednak, szkolenia nauczycieli i udział oficjalnych instytucji w projektach edukacyjnych o Holokauście pozostają ograniczone z uwagi na fakt, że Rosja nie jest członkiem IHRA i nie istnieje formalny rządowy programu nauczania o Holokauście w tym kraju. Współpraca międzynarodowa, głównie ze względu na wymianę doświadczeń w zakresie kultury pamięci związanej z wydarzeniami II wojny światowej, jest nadal ważnym narzędziem uświadamiania społeczności edukacyjnej znaczenia Holokaustu. Tworzenie przestrzeni dla współpracy rosyjskich nauczycieli z liderami instytucji edukacyjnych w innych krajach jest korzystne dla obu stron. Wymiana umożliwia poznanie sposobów zachowania pamięci o ofiarach Holokaustu w obu grupach. Pozwala także dowiedzieć się, jak Rosjanie starają się zachować pamięć o ofiarach i bohaterach Wielkiej Wojny Ojczyźnianej. Taka wymiana teorii i metodyki tworzy kontekst dla przyjrzenia się kwestii uniwersalności Holokaustu, która związana jest nierozerwalnie ze zjawiskiem wyjątkowości Zagłady. Jest to uwarunkowane traktowaniem Holokaustu jako tzw. paradygmatycznego ludobójstwa. Studia nad ludobójstwem rozwinęły się po II wojnie światowej, a dokładnie po serii wydarzeń składających się na Holokaust. W konsekwencji przywrócone zostały historii inne przypadki masowych okrucieństw i zbrodni, a badacze zaczęli zajmować się nimi intensywniej i ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem aspektów prawnych. Holokaust zaczęto analizować na tle innych przypadków o podobnych znamionach i przebiegu. W efekcie, również w centrum uwagi wielu nauczycieli, pojawiło się pytanie o sens i potrzebę nauczania o Holokauście w kontekście innych przypadków masowego cierpienia konkretnych grup etnicznych czy religijnych w toku dziejów. W opinii Yehudy Bauera, historyka i badacza Holokaustu, przeprowadzanie komparacji i poszukiwanie analogii mogą stać się okazją do zrozumienia historycznego znaczenia zagłady narodu żydowskiego. Z tego samego powodu, badanie innych przypadków ludobójstwa poprzez odniesienia do Holokaustu ma szansę przyczynić się do głębszego poznania ich istoty. Zdaniem Bauera Holokaust pozostanie w centrum uwagi wszelkich badań nad ludobójstwem z uwagi na swą paradygmatyczną naturę i będzie stanowił punkt wyjścia dla rozważań i prób zapobieżenia w przyszłości podobnym zbrodniom (zob. Bauer, 2006).

Szkolenie przyszłych nauczycieli pozostaje w Rosji sprawą najwyższej wagi. Z inicjatywy profesora Efima Pivovara, rektora Rosyjskiego Państwowego

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[21] https://holocaustremembrance.com/

Uniwersytetu Humanistycznego, wprowadzono nowy kurs uniwersytecki pt. „Historia Holokaustu" oraz zaproponowano zaproszenie nauczycieli z różnych regionów Rosji do udziału w kursie doskonalenia zawodowego na ten temat. W 2011 r. w wielu znaczących rosyjskich publikacjach pedagogicznych, w tym *Teaching of History in School*, ukazały się liczne artykuły na temat nauczania o Holokauście. Artykuły napisali nie tylko cenieni naukowcy, jak profesor Evgenii Vyazemskii, ale także młodzi nauczyciele z odległych zakątków Rosji, m.in. Elena Petrova, nauczycielka historii z miejscowości Polyarnye Zori w obwodzie murmańskim (zob. Altman, 2012). W ostatnich latach Centrum Holokaustu poświęciło szczególną uwagę „pedagogice muzealnej", kładąc nacisk na tworzenie eksponatów związanych z Holokaustem w regionalnych muzeach historycznych.

Współczesny kontekst nauczania o Holokauście w systemie rosyjskiej edukacji

Centrum Holokaustu, od czasu swojego powstania, opublikowało znaczącą liczbę materiałów dla nauczycieli, w tym własne podręczniki, zbiory dokumentacji i publikacje metodyczne. Centrum zawsze udostępniało wiele z tych materiałów w Internecie i czyni to nadal[22], ponadto udostępnia także informacje poświęcone dwóm bieżącym projektom. Jednym z nich jest projekt pn. „Powrót do godności", który jest współorganizowany z Rosyjskim Kongresem Żydów i ma na celu zapewnienie zorganizowania pochówków ofiar masowych egzekucji według tradycji żydowskich i prawa krajów, w których znajdują się masowe groby. Drugi projekt, „Liberators", ma na celu przywrócenie imion oficerów, lekarzy i pielęgniarek, którzy leczyli zwolnionych więźniów Auschwitz oraz imion żołnierzy Armii Czerwonej, którzy dokumentowali wyzwolenie obozu.

W odpowiedzi na pandemię Covid-19 ośrodek opublikował więcej materiałów w Internecie i wprowadził nowe metody upowszechniania wiedzy historycznej w sieci. Każdego dnia, od 3 kwietnia do 9 maja 2020 r. autorzy projektu „Victory" publikowali list lub wpis do pamiętnika, napisany tego samego dnia w 1945 r. Materiały te były ponownie publikowane przez rosyjskie gazety i agencje informacyjne, instytucje edukacyjne i lokalną administrację. Wśród autorów listów i pamiętników znaleźli się ludzie, którzy pochodzili z różnych części Związku Radzieckiego i pracowali w różnych zawodach – byli to oficerowie,

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[22] Szczegółowe informacje nt. wszystkich wymienionych w artykule projektów znajdują się na stronach: https://holocf.ru/проект-вернуть-достоинство/; https://holocf.ru/документы-неделя-памяти/; https://holocf.ru/сохрани-мои-письма-выпуск-шестой/; https://holocf.ru/центр-холокост-выкладывает-свои-из/

piloci, artylerzyści, lekarze, dziennikarze i artyści. Wśród materiałów znalazły się te opublikowane już w pięciu tomach kolekcji Centrum Holokaustu pn. „Save My Letters", uzupełnione o dokumenty, takie jak listy i pamiętniki z archiwów państwowych i muzeów w całej Rosji. Podczas wydarzenia zorganizowanego z okazji siedemdziesiątej piątej rocznicy Dnia Zwycięstwa – 9 maja 2020 r. – pracownicy Centrum stworzyli nagranie czytania listów napisanych przez żołnierzy Armii Czerwonej w dniu 9 maja 1945 r. Wideo zostało opublikowane na kanale YouTube „Culture of Dignity". Listy, obok pracowników Centrum Holokaustu, czytali także uczniowie klas dziewiątych, zaś nauczyciele i uczniowie z całej Rosji zostali poproszeni o nadesłanie podobnych nagrań do ośrodka. Działania Centrum Holokaustu podczas epidemii Covid-19 można częściowo przypisać sprawnie funkcjonującemu systemowi on-line ośrodka. Istotna jest również znacząca liczba nauczycieli i uczniów z całej Rosji, którzy angażując się w pracę z materiałami udostępnionymi na stronie internetowej i nadsyłając nagrania do projektu, przyczynili się do szerokiego rozpowszechnienia informacji na podejmowane tematy.

Współzałożyciel i współprzewodniczący Rosyjskiego Centrum Badań i Edukacji Holokaustu, Ilya Altman, ubolewa nad brakiem uwagi poświęconej takim tematom, jak życie pod okupacją hitlerowską, rola kolaborantów i opór w edukacji państwowej. Przyznaje, że Holokaust nie jest traktowany jako odrębny temat w edukacji historycznej: raczej, jeśli uczeń jest zainteresowany tematem, musi sam go przestudiować. Altman wyraża również rozczarowanie, że chociaż Rosja była zaangażowana w powołanie Międzynarodowego Dnia Pamięci o Holokauście, w dniu upamiętniającym wyzwolenie Auschwitz przez Armię Czerwoną (27 stycznia), ten dzień nadal nie jest uznawany w Rosji jako data upamiętniająca (Altman, 2009).

Irina Belareva, nauczycielka w liceum w Moskwie, mówi, że to nauczyciel musi zdecydować, czy Holokaust jest nauczany jako specyficzny przedmiot sam w sobie – czyli jako element konkretnego przedmiotu szkolnego. „Jeśli uczniowie w ramach programu nauczania poznają elementarne informacje nt. Holokaustu, konkretna dyskusja na ten temat nie jest wymagana. Oczywiście wszystko zależy od nauczyciela".

Elena Akimova, nauczycielka z liceum w Czelabińsku, zauważa, że Europa Wschodnia niesie podwójne brzemię epoki nazizmu i komunizmu, co sprawia, że otwarta dyskusja na temat przeszłych zbrodni, etyki i odpowiedzialności – zwłaszcza w przypadku dzieci – jest podwójnie trudna, chociaż uważa, że podwójnie konieczna. „W przeciwieństwie do Europy Zachodniej, Wschód

i Europa Środkowa mają do pokonania nie jedną, ale dwie trudne przeszłości. Jest to oczywiście wszystko to, co wydarzyło się podczas II wojny światowej oraz komunistyczna przeszłość. Teraz, w obu tych przypadkach, istnieje tendencja do sprowadzania nie tylko sprawców, ale głównie współpracowników, w tym kolaborantów, a nawet świadków, do roli męczenników czy bohaterów".

Studenci – czy to w Rosji, czy w Wielkiej Brytanii – mogą z większym zainteresowaniem podchodzić do badania przeszłości, jeśli zostanie nawiązany osobisty związek, zauważa Marina Degterenko, nauczycielka z liceum w Czelabińsku. Jej piętnastoletnia uczennica Tatyana stwierdziła przed podjęciem tematu na lekcji, że wie o Holokauście – odniosła to do przeżyć swojego dziadka w sowieckim łagrze. „Bardzo mnie to niepokoi, ponieważ mój dziadek, za Stalina, został wysłany do obozów [sowieckiego gułagu]" – powiedziała. „Kiedy miałam 10 lat, przeczytałam jego pamiętnik. Zostawił o tym wszystkim pamiętnik i wywarło to na mnie silny wpływ". Stwierdziła również, że „im szybciej Wschód upora się z prawdą o swojej przeszłości, tym lepiej. «Ludobójstwo» zostało wymyślone, aby opisać nazistowski Holokaust, ale to jest słowo, które niestety musiało być używane od tamtej pory, aby opisać nowsze wydarzenia w Kambodży i Rwandzie. Prawdopodobnie powtórzy się, dopóki dzieci nie nauczą się dzisiaj lekcji z Holokaustu. Ważne jest, aby każdemu przekazać, że Holokaust nie był czymś, co Niemcy zrobili Żydom. Ważne jest, aby powiedzieć, że jest to coś, co każdy może zrobić komukolwiek innemu. Gotowość ludzi do zapomnienia o zbrodniach przeszłości była lekcją, której nie stracił sam Hitler. Wysyłając swoje wojska do Polski w 1939 r., rozkazał im być bezlitosnym, mówiąc: Kto dziś pamięta eksterminację Ormian?"

Represyjne wymazywanie Holokaustu z pamięci zostało zapoczątkowane przez sam Kreml w projekcie raportu państwowego dotyczącego tragedii w Babim Jarze, napisanego w lutym 1944 r. Słowo „Żydzi" zostało w nim zmienione na „pokojowi obywatele radzieccy". W ZSRR wiele pisano i mówiono o Słowianach, którzy padli ofiarą nazistów, ale nie utworzono specjalnych pomników w miejscach eksterminacji Żydów. Nie można było wspomnieć o „żydowskim" Holokauście nawet na pomnikach poległych w wojnie, które wzniesiono na cmentarzach żydowskich. Proces Eichmanna, dzieło Elie Wiesela i telewizyjny mini serial „Holocaust" nie zostały opublikowane (a nawet były całkowicie nieznane) w ZSRR. Od lat 70. XX wieku podejmowane przez żydowskich dysydentów próby złożenia wieńców na grobach ofiar Holokaustu zostały udaremnione przez milicję i połączone z aresztowaniami. W ZSRR nie opublikowano naukowych komentarzy do dokumentów z Procesów Norymberskich, zbiorów dokumentów dotyczących

zbrodni SS oraz archiwaliów regionalnych dotyczących ofiar. We wczesnych latach 60. XX wieku opublikowany został *Dziennik Anny Frank* przez słynnego pisarza Ilję Erenburga, jednego z kompilatorów *Czarnej Księgi*[23]. W swojej przedmowie, Erenburg podał prawdziwe, choć ograniczone informacje o Holokauście i losie Anny Frank.

Przedstawiony wyżej, krótki przegląd sowieckiej wersji negacji Holokaustu (a raczej zaprzeczenia jego wyjątkowości), ukazuje problemy i trudności napotykane przez nauczycieli w państwach postsowieckich, zwłaszcza w Rosji, którzy chcą wprowadzać swoich uczniów w tematykę Holokaustu. Współczesna rosyjska historiografia akademicka z łatwością obaliła wiele mitów historycznych (tworząc jednocześnie wiele nowych). Niemniej jednak, prawie wcale nie poruszyła tematu Holokaustu. Oczywiście, zwolennicy tej historiografii, autorzy nowych podręczników szkolnych i uniwersyteckich, również nie podejmują tego tematu (dane o sześciu milionach Żydów zamordowanych w Europie są wyjątkiem, o czym wspomina się mimochodem, a nie w kontekście Holokaustu w ZSRR). Brak pomocy naukowych i kontaktów międzynarodowych znacznie tłumi inicjatywę nauczycieli i uczniów, zwłaszcza na prowincji. Kolejnym czynnikiem jest psychologiczne zmęczenie tematem wojny. Tragedia narodu radzieckiego i zbrodnie nazistowskie (bez wzmianki o Żydach) przez dziesięciolecia dominowały w filmach i powieściach. To prawdopodobnie tłumaczy brak zainteresowania rosyjskich kinomanów *Listą Schindlera* – film, pomimo intensywnego rozgłosu, był wyświetlany w na wpół pustych salach. Pojawił się również subiektywny czynnik: niektórzy przywódcy żydowscy uważają, że nauczanie o Holokauście w nieżydowskich szkołach może spowodować wzrost antysemityzmu. Tymczasem, stale rozwijające się systemy edukacji żydowskiej we Wspólnocie Niepodległych Państw (około czterdziestu szkół) obawiają się wszelkich inicjatyw wprowadzenia kursów fakultatywnych i przedmiotów niezatwierdzonych przez izraelskie Ministerstwo Edukacji.

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[23] Jeden z najwcześniejszych dokumentów na temat Zagłady Żydów w granicach ZSRR i w nazistowskich obozach na terenie okupowanej Polski. *Czarna księga* to zbiór relacji naocznych świadków, reportaży oraz oficjalnych zeznań, gromadzonych od 1943 roku przez Żydowski Komitet Antyfaszystowski działający w Związku Radzieckim. Tom zredagowali dwaj wybitni pisarze: Ilja Erenburg i Wasilij Grossman. Na rozkaz Stalina publikacja została wycofana z druku w 1947 r. i po raz pierwszy ukazała się w pełnej, nieocenzurowanej postaci prawie pół wieku później.

Analiza podręczników do historii ojczystej

Krytyczna analiza treści obowiązujących podręczników do historii ojczystej pozwala zaobserwować, że objętość tekstu poświęconego tematowi Holokaustu (w tym definicji, która może pojawić się oddzielnie) oscyluje między 0 a 20 wierszami. Wbrew instrukcjom zawartym w oficjalnych rozporządzeniach, do połowy 2010 roku wznowiono podręczniki, w których nie było wzmianki o zagładzie Żydów w czasie II wojny światowej. Analiza leksykometryczna fragmentów przedstawiających represje wobec ludności cywilnej na terenach okupowanych przez nazistów wskazuje, że słowo *Holokaust* pojawia się dopiero na 14. pozycji, co odzwierciedla trudność skojarzenia Zagłady z historią eksterminacji ludności cywilnej. Przeanalizowanie zbioru obecnie obowiązujących podręczników (stan na czerwiec 2021 r.) pozwoliło na ustalenie 14 rodzajów nieścisłości występujących w tekstach, dotyczących hitlerowskich represji na terytorium ZSRR:

1. Brak informacji o zagładzie Żydów i/lub polityce realizowanej przez nazistów na terenach okupowanych;
2. Liczba ofiar żydowskich w Europie i/lub w ZSRR jest nieobecna, nieprawdziwa i/lub jest uwzględniona w ogólnej liczbie ofiar cywilnych;
3. Założenie, że dokonując inwazji na ZSRR naziści planowali eksterminację Rosjan / Słowian / Sowietów, które spowodowało rezygnację z omówienia eksterminacji Żydów;
4. Żydzi wymieniani są wśród innych populacji będących celem nazistów (Cyganie, jeńcy wojenni, członkowie Partii, Sowieci itd.);
5. Przedstawienie represji wobec Żydów i ich eksterminacji nie pozwala na odróżnienie tych aktów od innych aktów przemocy popełnionych w czasie wojny;
6. Definicja Holokaustu jest podawana bez powiązania z opisem reżimu okupacyjnego;
7. Odniesienia do różnych elementów realizacji „Ostatecznego Rozwiązania" (obozy, miejsca zagłady, Einsatzgruppen itp.) pojawiają się w tekście z pominięciem kontekstu żydowskiego;
8. Brak elementów wyjaśniających, dlaczego Żydzi byli celem nazistów lub fałszywe wyjaśnienia (np. prześladowanie Żydów jest wyjaśniane w związku z reżimem politycznym w ZSRR);
9. Zagłada Żydów przedstawiona jest tylko w odniesieniu do okupacji terenów ZSRR, nie ma odniesienia do Zagłady w jej europejskim wymiarze;
10. Obecność idei, według której naziści rozstrzeliwali i wysyłali do obozów tylko tych, którzy odmówili im posłuszeństwa lub uznania ich władzy;

11. Brak rozróżnienia między obozami koncentracyjnymi a obozami zagłady; brak informacji o gettach;

12. Brak informacji o postawach miejscowej ludności (kolaboranci, współsprawcy, bierni świadkowie, ratujący);

13. Nie wspomina się o żydowskich aktach oporu;

14. Błędy merytoryczne w tekstach podpisów towarzyszących ilustracjom. Dla przykładu w różnych podręcznikach, to samo zdjęcie jest przedstawiane jako wykonane w niemieckim obozie. W rzeczywistości jest to obraz rosyjskich dzieci, więźniów obozu w Pietrozawodsku, mieście zajętym przez wojska fińskie.

Do powyższych nieprawidłowości można dodać zjawisko, określane jako „eksterioryzacja" Holokaustu: podręczniki do historii ojczystej poświęcają temu zagadnieniu mniej miejsca niż podręczniki do historii świata. Te ostatnie są zwykle stosowane w programie nauczania, obok historii Rosji, chociaż w praktyce często rezygnuje się z tego kursu, ponieważ nie pojawia się on w testach EGE. Podobnie, w podręcznikach historii narodowej rzadko wspomina się o Holokauście na współczesnym terytorium Rosji: eksterminacje ilustruje masakra w Babim Jarze (obecnie Ukraina), a nie masakry dokonywane na dzisiejszych terytoriach Federacji.

Muzea szkolne[24]

Muzea szkolne to „miejsca pamięci" bardzo powszechne w Rosji. Przyjrzenie się ich funkcjonowaniu pozwala zobaczyć, jak historia II wojny światowej trwa i jest przekazywana z pokolenia na pokolenie. W analizie wykorzystano otwarte dane, dotyczące 5179 muzeów zlokalizowanych w 42 regionach Federacji Rosyjskiej. Stanowi to około połowy istniejących muzeów, których liczbę szacuje się na 11 000. Według baz danych w 73% muzeów znajduje się co najmniej jedna wystawa poświęcona wojnie, co podkreśla centralne miejsce, jakie zajmuje ten temat w procesie edukacyjnym w Rosji. Muzea szkolne rozwinęły się z „wojskowych zakątków chwały", małych przestrzeni utworzonych w szkołach, aby oddać hołd

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[24] Katalogi muzeów szkolnych w postaci oddzielnych tabel dla każdego regionu zostały opublikowane na starej wersji strony internetowej Federalnego Centrum Turystyki Młodzieżowej [https://fcdtk.ru/navigation-page/cb2452ba2596cabeaf8253a13c12bb8a]. Nowa, znacznie bardziej nowoczesna wersja strony, zawiera unikalny katalog rosyjskich muzeów szkolnych [https://fcdtk.ru/museums]. Jednak liczba muzeów wymienionych w nowej bazie danych jest obecnie dość niewielka. Na potrzeby artykułu przeanalizowano dane pochodzące z obu baz.

byłym uczniom, którzy polegli na polach bitew. Pierwsze szkolne muzea powstały w latach 1950-1960. W latach siedemdziesiątych i osiemdziesiątych ich liczba na terytorium ZSRR znacznie wzrosła. Większość dzisiejszych muzeów (67%) powstała w czasach radzieckich. Jednak ich powstawanie było kontynuowane w latach 90., a ponownie nasiliło się w 2000 i 2010 r., w ramach promocji edukacji patriotycznej. Dziś obecność muzeum może nawet umożliwić szkołom awansowanie w rankingach regionalnych.

Z analizowanych baz danych wynika, że istnieje jedno muzeum szkolne, które jest w całości poświęcone Holokaustowi lub które obejmuje m.in. wystawę czy dział poświęcony Zagładzie. Jest to tym bardziej zaskakujące, że część danych pochodzi z regionów dotkniętych ludobójstwem Żydów. Przykładem może być Krasnodar, miasto okupowane przez Wehrmacht w okresie od sierpnia 1942 r. do lutego 1943 r. W tym okresie w obwodzie krasnodarskim zginęło 20,5 tys. Żydów, a w samym mieście 11 472 cywilów, w tym Żydów. Spośród 43 muzeów szkolnych w mieście, 36 jest częściowo lub w całości poświęconych Wielkiej Wojnie Ojczyźnianej, co odpowiada średniej krajowej. Jednak pomimo wojennej historii miasta, w żadnym muzeum nie ma działu ani wystawy poświęconej Holokaustowi w jego europejskim, sowieckim czy lokalnym wymiarze. W tych muzeach 80-90% historii wojny sprowadza się do historii wojska, bitew, generałów i partyzantów. Żydzi jako kategoria ofiar zbrodni nazistowskich popełnionych w regionie, nie znajduje odzwierciedlenia w przestrzeni publicznej czy w „miejscach pamięci" miasta. Pomniki wojenne w Krasnodarze cicho pomijają ten aspekt okupacji. Pomnik poświęcony ofiarom mówi o „13 000 mieszkańców Krasnodaru", nie określając kategorii ani nie wspominając o kryteriach, na podstawie których ci cywile zostali wybrani do eksterminacji. Region krasnodarski należy do tych, w których warunki upowszechniania pamięci o Zagładzie należą do najbardziej niekorzystnych w Rosji, co wymagałoby porównania z innym regionem również dotkniętym Zagładą.

Podsumowanie

Termin używany przez autorów rosyjskich, którzy próbują opisać miejsce Holokaustu w narodowej narracji o wojnie, można przetłumaczyć jako „powściągliwe milczenie" lub „niedomówienie" (*umolčanije, umalčivanije, zamalčivanije*). Stanowi to złożoną mieszankę „obojętności" i „zatartych idei", które towarzyszą temu aspektowi historii. W ujęciu Paula Connertona byłoby to „normatywne zapomnienie" (*prescriptive forgetting*) – zjawisko zapominania podobne w swej formie do „represyjnego wymazywania z pamięci" (*repressive*

erasure), tzn. również wynikające z nakazu państwowego, różniące się jednak tym, że zachodzi w interesie wszystkich stron sporu, a zatem ma możliwość uzyskania publicznej aprobaty (Connerton, 2008, s. 61). Tymczasem przemilczenie historii Holokaustu w rosyjskiej edukacji i w praktykach upamiętniających wynika głównie, choć nie wyłącznie, z bezkompromisowości narracji o II wojnie światowej w Rosji.

Można wskazać na sześć głównych przyczyn takiego stanu rzeczy:

1. Trudność w przyznaniu, że niektóre narody poniosły więcej strat w ludziach niż inne, ponieważ byłoby to sprzeczne z mitem o „świętej wojnie" prowadzonej przez nazistów przeciwko „Rosjanom", „narodowi radzieckiemu" i/lub „Słowianom". Jest to główna przyczyna „niechęci" do Holokaustu w Rosji.

2. Przywiązanie do „chwalebnego" i „zwycięskiego" wymiaru wojny, co wywołuje pewien niepokój w obliczu okupacji części terytorium ZSRR. Historia okupacji, w którą wpisana jest również historia Holokaustu na terenach ZSRR, skłania do rozważenia okoliczności wycofania Armia Czerwonej – tym samym może zachęcać do zakwestionowania przyczyn tego wycofania.

3. Długa i złożona tradycja antysemityzmu, w tym antysemityzmu państwowego, motywującego, by nie interesować się cierpieniami Żydów, a częściowo wzbudzającego podejrzenia względem inicjatyw, które mają na celu przybliżenie historii Holokaustu.

4. Trudność w mówieniu o Sowietach, którzy przyczynili się do ludobójstwa Żydów. Kwestionowałoby to jedność „narodu radzieckiego" w obliczu wroga.

5. Pamięć o innych tragicznych wydarzeniach XX w. Eksterminacja Żydów przez nazistów nie jest jedyną stroną radzieckiej przeszłości, w której duże populacje zostały zranione i odczłowieczone. Nawet jeśli pamięć o tych wydarzeniach napotyka również trudności w integracji świadomości narodowej, to większość Rosjan jest świadoma tej przeszłości.

6. Tendencja do postrzegania historii Rosji w sposób autonomiczny, co nie zachęca do otwartości na odczytywanie przeszłości dokonywane poza Rosją i prowadzi do traktowania pozarosyjskich interpretacji z dezaprobatą. Tak więc, w poradzieckiej Rosji, jak zauważa Ilya Altman, pomimo braku polityki państwowego antysemityzmu, władza i społeczeństwo nie są świadome rozmiarów Holokaustu, ani jako zjawiska historycznego, ani jako bezprecedensowej tragedii ludzkości (Altman, 2010).

Na stan edukacji o Holokauście w Rosji, jak również na Ukrainie i Białorusi, wpłynęła historia antysemityzmu regionu, a także pamięć o sowieckim reżimie (por. Konkka, 2021). Wydaje się, że wielu Europejczyków ze Wschodu postrzega Holokaust jako nierozerwalnie związany z ogromnymi stratami Słowian w czasie wojny i jako wydarzenie współistniejące z ekspansją Związku Radzieckiego w regionie po II wojnie światowej, a także związane z okrucieństwami popełnionymi przez państwo radzieckie po wojnie. Chociaż lokalne i zagraniczne organizacje pozarządowe podjęły inicjatywy w celu zwiększenia świadomości Holokaustu, prawdopodobne jest, że dla dalszych postępów potrzebne będą głębsze zobowiązania ze strony odpowiednich rządów krajowych.

Podczas gdy rosyjski system szkolnictwa średniego mnoży teksty i przemówienia na temat pamięci o II wojnie światowej i podkreśla wagę tej pamięci, Holokaust zajmuje w niej marginalne miejsce. Kiedy pojawia się informacja o eksterminacji Żydów przez nazistów, zawiera ona wiele błędów i luk. Działające na rzecz edukacji o Holokauście w Rosji Centrum (obecnie: Centrum Naukowo-Edukacyjne „Holokaust") liczy m.in. na zmianę pokoleniową wśród nauczycieli, a także autorów podręczników i programów nauczania. Liczne inicjatywy ośrodka mogą pomóc zmienić sytuację i trwale osadzić nauczanie historii Holokaustu w praktykach edukacyjnych, aczkolwiek liczba szkół, nauczycieli i uczniów zaangażowanych w działania prowadzone przez Centrum musi być wystarczająco duża, aby praca ta mogła zmienić sytuację w całym kraju.

Nie sposób zrozumieć obecnego stanu pamięci o Holokauście w Rosji bez uwzględnienia wagi dziedzictwa radzieckiego. W okresie istnienia Związku Radzieckiego źródła na temat ludobójstwa Żydów na terytorium sowieckim – Holokaustu na Wschodzie – były nieobecne. Musiało upłynąć trochę czasu, zanim tzw. rewolucja archiwalna po 1991 roku dała znaczący impuls do badań uwzględniających radzieckie źródła archiwalne i inne. W ostatnich dwóch dekadach staje się coraz bardziej jasne, jak kluczowe dla zrozumienia Holokaustu jest unicestwienie 2,5 mln – 2,6 mln sowieckich Żydów na terytorium sowieckim sprzed 1939 r. i dodatkowo 1,5 mln – 1,6 mln na terytorium sowieckim anektowanym po pakcie Ribbentrop-Mołotow. Holokaust na Wschodzie jest również kluczowy dla zrozumienia nazistowskich fantazji o rasowej kolonizacji i eksploatacji terytoriów w Europie Wschodniej i ZSRR, polityki okupacyjnej, a także bezprecedensowej wojny nazistowsko-sowieckiej. Jak zauważa Michael David-Fox, intensywne nowe badania nad „Holokaustem na Wschodzie" nie są jedyną zmianą, o której powinniśmy pamiętać, rozważając Holokaust jako część historii Związku Radzieckiego. Nowe programy badawcze zaczęły zajmować się

jeszcze szerszym problemem: cały okres II wojny światowej był przez dziesięciolecia w znacznym stopniu marginalizowany w zaawansowanych studiach nad historią radziecką (Fox, Holquist, Martin, 2014, s. 7).

W ZSRR oficjalna wizja Wielkiej Wojny Ojczyźnianej raczej nie sprzyjała upowszechnianiu pamięci o ludobójstwie Żydów. Ta wizja doprowadziła do zestawu praktyk nieoficjalnej polityki partyjnej, która miała na celu niewyodrębnianie Żydów spośród innych ofiar wojny. Źródła tych praktyk są wielorakie: oficjalna historia wojny, panujący antysemityzm, kampanie antyżydowskie prowadzone przez Stalina, drażliwa kwestia współsprawców, obiektywnie większa liczba ofiar innych niż Żydzi, lęk przed promowaniem przebudzenia świadomości narodowej wśród Żydów w ZSRR itp.

Czarna Księga, zbiór dokumentów zebranych przez komisję literacką Żydowskiego Komitetu Antyfaszystowskiego, miał na celu nagłośnienie rozmiarów i okrucieństwa realizacji „Ostatecznego Rozwiązania" na terytorium ZSRR. Książka ta, wydana pod koniec wojny za granicą, nigdy nie ujrzała światła dziennego w ZSRR. Dopiero pierestrojka i upadek ZSRR zniosły tabu otaczające historię i pamięć o zagładzie Żydów podczas II wojny światowej. Pomimo tego, historia Holokaustu nigdy nie była w stanie wygenerować zbyt dużego zainteresowania w rosyjskim społeczeństwie, ani trwale zintegrować narodowej historii z przeszłości. Nakład *Czarnej Księgi* wydanej ostatecznie w Rosji w 2015 roku jest raczej niski, a nowa ogólnokrajowa sieć wystaw historycznych „Rosja moja historia" [Rossija moja istorija] ignoruje antysemicki wymiar nazizmu. Niemniej jednak, w przeciwieństwie do Związku Radzieckiego, Federacja Rosyjska promuje i chroni, przynajmniej formalnie, pamięć o Zagładzie. Nawet jeśli ostateczne brzmienie ustawy kryminalizującej „wkroczenie w pamięć historyczną [...] II wojny światowej", przyjętej w kwietniu 2014 r. po długich debatach, nie zawiera bezpośrednich odniesień do Zagłady, to wprowadza zakaz publikowania prac o charakterze negacjonistycznym. Ogólnie rzecz biorąc, stowarzyszenia i naukowcy mogą obecnie swobodnie działać na rzecz lepszego upowszechnienia historii Holokaustu w Rosji.

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Why Philosophy? New *Paideia* in the Face of Megamedia Aggression

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Abstract

The main thesis of the presented article implies that a possible and, simultaneously, immensely important response to the question "Why philosophy?" demonstrates the necessity of a philosophical diagnosis regarding the current condition of communicative rationality. This diagnosis—obtained on the basis of the analyses and decisions of transcendental-pragmatic communication philosophy—ultimately obliges philosophy to construct the theoretical framework for a new *paideia* project. The primary features of this project stem from the recognition of the megamedia character of today's communication space and fundamental threats that are conditioned by the specificity of this space. The postulated paideia project must be based on the ethical principle of co-responsibility and its goal: the shaping of discursive rationality.

Keywords

communicative aggression, megamedia communication, paideia, discursive rationality, transcendental pragmatics, co-responsibility

Every historical constellation, almost every subsequent historical configuration of the social world, has invited us to ask anew and in a unique way "Why philosophy?" or (in a slightly more dramatic tone), "Why still philosophy?" From antiquity and the first *protreptikos* endorsing philosophy to the contemporary world full of philosophical disturbances, innumerable versions of the answer to these questions have been produced. The advantages of philosophy were meticulously highlighted in them, its goals and expected benefits were determined,

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and its unquestionable legitimacy was proven. It may appear that the list of these answers is now, unquestionably, complete, that all possibilities have already been exhausted. However, this is just semblance. There are still new perspectives that may emerge following the question "Why philosophy?" and the act of responding to them signifies participation in the creation of an "open work."

I seek to contribute to this "work" with an answer which owes its specificity and indisputable importance to two circumstances: It is constructed from the perspective of the transcendental-pragmatic project of *communication philosophy* and it essentially "engages" in the struggle with a particularly dangerous and common phenomenon, namely the *communicative aggression* observed today in the media space. And one of the most serious and momentous consequences of the impact of both these circumstances is the possibility of delineating a theoretical framework for a new *paideia* project.

Philosophy and a New *Paideia* Project

To put it briefly, the answer to the proposed question formed by the aforementioned occurrence makes *paideia* an inalienable duty of philosophy. Thus, it reveals that transcendental-pragmatic communication philosophy is a concept that, in addition to multiple other theoretical and practical values, also proves its intellectual status with regard to reflection on upbringing and education, and shaping both within their most general and most basic meaning.

First and foremost, this philosophy implies an unquestionable necessity to construct and expand a new *paideia* project. Furthermore, this philosophy provides this project with a fundamental sanction and legitimation. Finally, it determines the specificity of the tools that must be activated within this project. This does not imply that communication philosophy should be limited only to these threads, nor that it is the only philosophical perspective relevant to a possible (and required) *paideia* project. Nonetheless, these three tasks indicate that we are dealing with issues of the highest theoretical and practical importance. They also demonstrate that a close relationship between research and philosophical theories and *paideia* is not a relic of the past, but an invariably valid and demanded dependence. All this gives us reason to believe that today's response to the question "Why philosophy?" will be rich in important and valuable content.

First, however, a brief investigation is required. The history of the relationship between *paideia* and philosophy, which has already been studied in detail, undoubtedly shows the immanent nature of their relationship, and more precisely, reveals the inalienable dependence of the shape of *paideia* on the philosophical

perspective that underlies it, which has two significant implications. First, it means that a certain set of philosophical assumptions always determines how *paideia* is understood and what it should be; it decides whether it should be equated with the narrowly understood process of shaping human morality and ethical prowess; with upbringing and education leading to civil maturity; with the extrication of humans from the wild and setting them on a humane path; or finally with the formation of culture in general. Second, the specificity of these assumptions and the adopted (more or less consciously) philosophical position also determines what values, goals, and intentions the effort of shaping and forming is subordinated to, and in what way the labor of upbringing and educating is oriented. And these two points represent a minimum range of dependencies between *paideia* and philosophy, which can be reconstructed in relation to each historical form of their relationship.

Moreover, in what way does transcendental pragmatics embrace this role as an original theoretical project to which philosophy mostly owes the breakthrough in communication? How does it shape these relationships and to what degree does it offer a truly new and important perspective for today's world? And finally: what does the reply to the question "Why philosophy?" contain?

Communication Philosophy

The specificity of transcendental pragmatics in approaching these issues ultimately stems from the fact that it is a communication philosophy *par excellence*. And this term conceals a very significant theoretical distinction that accentuates, above all, that communication philosophy is a construct dissimilar to what is known as philosophy of communication.

The distinction between philosophy of communication and communication philosophy can, in fact, be built on the opposition between the distinguished subject of philosophy and its distinguished method.[2] The first of them, philosophy of communication, is a subdiscipline of philosophy that is distinguished by its specific subject (the "what" this philosophical reflection concerns, what is its subject). Thus, it is a discipline that applies classical philosophical tools to study a distinguished sphere, namely communication processes and phenomena. This type of philosophy is a subdiscipline that is situated alongside other subjectively recognized philosophical subdisciplines such as the philosophy of man,

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[2] This distinction is similar to the opposition "philosophy of language—linguistic philosophy" once proposed by John Searle (Searle 1969).

the philosophy of religion, the philosophy of art, the philosophy of law, and so on. At the same time, this philosophy both effectively competes with and fruitfully concurs in an interdisciplinary symbiosis with non-philosophical reflection on communication, including with psychology, sociology, and media studies (Sierocka, 2021).

The formula of philosophy that should be defined as communication philosophy is significantly different from philosophy of communication; it is simply characterized by a specific method, a particular way of approaching philosophical research in general ("what" this philosophy is, how it is "practiced"). And it is philosophy of which the main theoretical message obliges us to conceptualize all classical issues of an ontological, epistemological, or ethical nature (to mention only the classical trinity of philosophical subdisciplines) by means of their inalienable involvement in the sphere of communication and with the use of specific theoretical and communication tools, and thus, to put it briefly, in relation to the "communicative *a priori*" (Apel, 1973; Sierocka, 2003, 2021). This directive stems directly from the recognition, fundamental for this philosophy, that the communicative dimension is situated at the base of social existence, outlines the framework for the constitution of knowledge, and determines the content of normative systems, and consequently gains importance in all other spheres encompassed by philosophical reflection. Communication philosophy, as an original way of philosophical thinking, establishes new horizons of interpretation and proposes a new paradigm of practicing philosophy, unequivocally distinct from the "mentalist paradigm" that dominated in philosophy from modern times to the 20th century (Martens and Schnädelbach, 1985); however, it definitely exceeds the linguistic approach (Sierocka, 2021).

Transcendental pragmatics (TP) constitutes a particularly consistent and coherent implementation of this paradigm. Its structure was conceived by its creator, Karl Otto Apel, as a transformation of the Kantian project: on the one hand it inherits a predilection for transcendentalism, apriorism, and fundamentalism from Kantianism, while on the other hand it uses the most valuable traces of philosophy of the 20th century, creatively reconciling the seemingly incomprehensible threads of the philosophy of Peirce, Gadamer, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger. The prime principle of this structure, precisely as in communication philosophy, is the idea of communicative *a priori*.

A complete reconstruction of this concept is not feasible here. It is impractical to present the principal assumptions and decisions, to say nothing of the argumentation, that leads to them—in this regard, reference should be made

to already existing literature (Apel, 1973; Kuhlmann, 1985, Sierocka 2003 and 2021). Instead, due to the specificity of the questions formulated here, it shall be sufficient to refer only to the two problem areas that are critical for transcendental-pragmatic philosophy. The first is determined by the concept of discursive rationality and the latter by the concept of the ethics of co-responsibility, or more precisely by the principle of co-responsibility that organizes it. These are not inseparable areas, nor are they separated from other crucial ideas of this philosophy; however, the focus of this paper is not on the reconstruction of their interrelationships and references. It is important only to grasp, at least in general terms, how they enable the implementation of the three tasks suggested here, that is, to what degree they enable justifying the necessity of the new *paideia* project, for its legitimation, and for designating the tools essential for it. Simultaneously, it is also crucial to discern in what way, in the context of each of these tasks and due to each of the two problem areas indicated, the *paideia* project is enriched with new, significant, and valid content.

Discursive Rationality

The specificity of TP as communication philosophy determines its original approach to all traditional philosophical problems, including the issue of rationality. The question of rationality itself, however, does not contradict the philosophical tradition, even though it is a specific and multidimensional question. In the most general terms, it is not a question about what we think about the world, ourselves, and our functioning in the world, among others. Nor is it a question about our comprehensive view of the world (even though rationality is manifested ultimately in this content). It is a question about how and in what way we think about it; how and according to what patterns we organize reality and our relations with it as well as our social behavior; and according to what principles, in what way, and based on what we create the meaning and assign goals. It is also a question of what the evaluation mechanisms are, what the assessment matrices are and from where they come, and what methods we use to sanction, legitimize, or justify certain social behaviors and actions. Therefore, the question about rationality is not so much about what we know as in what way we shape this knowledge, what intellectual ways we use to make the world understandable. It is not about how we act or how we behave, but how our knowledge justifies and legitimizes these behaviors and how it makes them understandable. Thus, in most general terms, rationality is a coherent, complex, intellectual "mastering" of reality, determining our way of functioning in it.

In reflecting on rationality, TP *de facto* precisely refers to such questions that remain in line with the extensive philosophical tradition. Nonetheless, its responses to these questions break with this tradition, which has its source in the idea of communicative *a priori* fundamental for TP. On the grounds of this idea, it becomes crucial to recognize that the conditions of the constitution of rationality are determined by the fundamental structure of the communication relation, the specificity of which results in turn from the performative-propositional unity of communication acts. And it is precisely this dual nature of the structure of the linguistic communication act and its constitutive self-relevance that ultimately determine that it is essentially argumentative and that—which is of the utmost importance here and is shown by TP through the so-called "strict reflection"— the argumentative situation is uncircumventable (German: *unhintergehbar*). This means, if we look at these dependencies in terms of the normative dimension, that the postulate "argue rationally" acquires the rank of a categorical imperative and as such implies a specific complex of ethical principles. And human rationality is subordinated to this imperative.

Nonetheless, this situation might appear not to be entirely understandable, and its reconstruction a little unconvincing, unless it is considered that it is a specific type of argumentation and, more precisely, the argumentation procedure refers not to the propositional layer of the linguistic act of communication but to the obligations, norms, and claims brought in its performative layer. Each of these obligations, norms, and claims may be problematized, objected to, and questioned. All this is accomplished through the argumentation procedures which—in relation to the dual structure of linguistic acts of communication— also bring argumentation regarding the claims, norms, and obligations immanent in each act of communication in the performative layer. One cannot avoid being involved in this argumentation procedure. This situation is referred to as discursiveness, and this specific type of argumentation, that is, one that is directed at presuppositions brought about by the acts of communication, is referred to as discursive argumentation. According to TP, the fundamental circumstance that discursive argumentation is not one of many possible linguistic communication games, but that instead it is a game with special status, is a particularly important supplement to its characteristics. It is a transcendental game, one that determines the *a priori* conditions for the possibility of every other game, and consequently the conditions for the possibility of communication in general. And in this sense it is a constitutive game for human rationality, thus determining that human

rationality has an inalienable discursive character—it is discursive rationality.[3]

This implies that every circumstance that threatens discursiveness, and somewhat obstructs the possibility of argumentative problematization of presuppositions (norms, claims, and obligations) that are implicitly introduced in communication processes, and thus prevents the argumentative construction of the formal conditions for the possibility of communication acts—each such circumstance is also a threat to rationality. It contributes to its deformation, destroys its coherence, thwarts its intentions and guiding values, and by appearing in certain specific constellations, leads to its degradation. All this poses a very serious threat to the social stability of the world. We know perfectly well that history— including the most recent—has experienced several such dramatic crises, and we also know from multifold attempts to diagnose them the degree to which these disturbances of the social world have been coupled with crises of rationality. The indication that the level of discursiveness is responsible for the stability of rationality in the most profound dimension constitutes a vital elaboration of these diagnoses, one that is only possible due to communication philosophy. Its obvious consequence is the recognition that the rigor of discursiveness is—resulting from the formal characteristics of communication processes—a condition for establishing and maintaining relationships and social processes. And, adopting another (consciously pompous) tone, it is a condition for the existence of the human world; it is, as Apel phrased it, a guarantor of "the survival of the human species as a real communication community" (Apel, 1973).

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[3] In procedural terms, according to TP, there are five levels of rationality: (1) mathematical and logical rationality, (2) technical and scientific rationality, (3) strategic rationality, (4) consensual and communicative rationality, and (5) discursive rationality (Apel, 1986). In order to entirely and adequately diagnose the condition of contemporary rationality— and as part of this diagnosis, also to comprehensively assess the threats of communicative aggression—it is necessary to refer to each of these levels, with particular emphasis on the specific tension between discursive rationality and strategic rationality (and its specific instrumental attitude). The analyses of mental determinants of aggression, related to both media and traditional aggression, remain equally crucial for this type of diagnosis.
Nonetheless, these are tasks that go beyond the scope of the presented article, as it focuses solely on proving that the recognition by communication philosophy of the fundamental threat to the social world posed by aggression in the megamedia space (1) results from the fact that this philosophy perceives that discursiveness outlines the transcendental framework of human rationality and (2) obliges philosophy to legitimize the new project of *paideia* founded on the ethical principle of co-responsibility and "upholding" the rigor of discursiveness.

In this observation, it is explicitly "perceptible" that the rigor of discursiveness is also a *task*. That discursiveness as a "transcendental function of reason" (Apel, 1996) is not so much given to us as it is precisely assigned—given to us as a communication community. We must learn discursiveness and develop it in ourselves; we must be able to "nurture" it—requiring us to shape all dimensions of social functioning. It is a task of such "specific gravity" that only the comprehensive *paideia* project can deal with it. Only within such a project is there a chance to subordinate the entire complexity of the social world to the requirements of discursive rationality, while at the same time also developing individual competences required to internalize these requirements so that the rigor of discursiveness can define the horizon of both individual and community activities.

Communication philosophy—analyses of which reveal the specificity and the most important rank of discursive rationality— must thus bear the burden of determining the theoretical framework for the *paideia* project, which would serve the requirements resulting from discursiveness. This philosophy somewhat imposes the utmost duty on itself. This stems from the recognition that the counterfactual status of discursiveness imposes an absolute necessity to immerse in it, gradually take responsibility for it, and shape the skills, relevant competences, attitudes, and even needs that favor it. All these tasks are necessary elements that constitute a comprehensive *paideia* project—one whose main message will be the shaping of discursive rationality.

The Principle of Co-Responsibility

The fact that such a project is not only possible, recommended, and appropriate, but also indispensable, is determined by—apart from the rigor of discursiveness— two other substantial circumstances: the universal validity of the principle of co-responsibility and the exceptional threat that currently affects discursive rationality.

The principle of co-responsibility, as TP us permits to recognize (Apel, 2001; Sierocka, 2003), appears to be the norm underlying the ethical system, the universal validity of which stems directly from the fundamental characteristics of communicative rationality, that is, from its discursiveness. Thus, it is decisive that this ethics, with its overriding principle, is constituted by means of and within a real communication community. The duty of co-responsibility is already revealed at the level of mutualistic ties that bind the participants of the simplest act of communication cooperation and, simultaneously, it is significantly correlated

with the phenomenon of co-intentionality, which distinguishes interhuman communication from all other forms of communication (Tomasello, 1999). As such, this duty obliges all participants of the actually realized communication process to constantly strive to overcome the difference between the real communication community and the counterfactually anticipated ideal form of it. The terms "ideal communication community" or "unlimited communication community" are synonyms of a situation in which there is a consensual agreement on all claims, obligations, and the resulting norms brought in communication processes. This is a *definitive consensus* on all presuppositions of communication cooperation. This possible consensus—as a state of the ideal communication community—constitutes a regulative idea immanently present in every act of communication, an idea inscribed in the conditions of the possibility of every communication relation. Efforts to maintain these conditions—including ensuring the conditions for the implementation of the idea of the consensus—are dictated by the constant tension between the real and ideal communication community. As such, these efforts are obligatory for every participant of communication processes. Each of them is obliged to cooperate with others within this scope. Communication processes are essentially aimed at *cooperation*. They are indispensably cooperative, always a joint communication activity—and, simultaneously, cooperation shapes co-intentionally. Concurrently, cooperation does not amount to the fact that the content of the communication act must be addressed to a partner or a group of partners, that the message is passed between the sender and the receiver, or that an agreement as to the communicated content is achieved through a shared interpretative effort. Cooperation in communication is much more: It is sharing common consensually established communication intentions, their co-creation, the shared shaping of the conditions for the anticipated consensus, as well as the joint guidelines of its scope, the joint consensual building of the space for discursiveness, and, finally, maintaining the indispensable, subtle tension between the real and ideal communication community (Sierocka, 2021).

Everyone jointly bears responsibility for the effort to implement cooperation understood this way. It is a requirement resulting from participation in the communication community (the real one), and, concurrently, it is the requirement that maintains this community. There is no superior authority that would bear responsibility for (or onto which it could be shifted) ensuring the conditions for the possibility of communication cooperation—even though this does not imply that the entities participating in communication processes establish these conditions. These conditions are of *a priori* nature. As such, they determine

the *transcendental* framework of communication processes and remain invariably *counterfactual* in character—and, at the same time, they are distinguished by such a special property that, being the formal conditions, they impose certain (always relevant) contents. And it is their special status (parallel to that which, according to Kant, belong to the fundamental knowledge-creating structures) that makes the principle of co-responsibility imperative—as a principle without which it is impossible to shape and maintain the conditions indispensable for communication cooperation, including the conditions due to which it is possible to strive for the consensus. Without the principle of co-responsibility—which is already visible in the broadest perspective—we are missing a chance to maintain the stability of the communication community, and even the chance for its survival.

And we can only secure this chance—or at least hope to acquire it—by assuming conscious co-responsibility for maintaining *the rigor of discursiveness*. And not only in the scope of individual communication events, but equally within global communication, particularly that which is possible and realized in the media space nowadays. And in this space, the principle of co-responsibility gains an additional, new meaning.

Communicative Aggression in the Megamedia Space

This occurs because discursive rationality is exposed to the dangers of the unprecedented "force of destruction" (even though it also gains opportunities that it has never been given before) in the megamedia space. The list of threats related to the development of communication realized in the media space is widely known, and it appears to be undoubtedly sinister. Nonetheless, the importance of these threats is not always recognized. Yet, it is not always apparent how serious the emerging consequences will be. And in certain cases, these consequences seem to be immensely dramatic, which can be somewhat forecasted today. Communicative aggression is undoubtedly one of the most serious threats faced by communication in the media space (namely that which, due to its new, specific characteristics, is legitimately referred to as *megamedia communication* (Sierocka, 2021)). And it is a phenomenon that, as I have already announced, strongly encourages, and even forces, the undertaking of efforts to develop the new *paideia* project, based on the principle of co-responsibility and the overriding goal of shaping towards discursive rationality.

The analysis of relations and communication processes, undertaken through tools and solutions developed on the basis of transcendental pragmatics, undoubtedly reveals that although aggression observed in communication

mediated by today's media principally does not differ in its forms from so-called traditional communicative aggression (that is, the one we experience in communication outside the sphere of media communication), there is a fundamental difference in their consequences. Nonetheless, this difference is not dictated by any distinctive feature which can be attributed to aggression experienced today in the media space (Pyżalski, 2012). The only thing that can be indicated are the characteristics that somewhat intensify this aggression. In existing literature on the subject, the features most emphasized in this context are the anonymity of the perpetrator of aggression (most often the anonymity of an internet nickname) (Christopherson, 2007; Bernstein et al., 2011; Shepherd et al., 2015) and the related phenomenon of deindividuation (Postmes et al., 1998; Lee, 2007), as well as the noted disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004; Joinson, 1998). Anonymity is also credited with having a principal role in enhancing the manifestations of hate speech (Shepherd et al., 2015). Furthermore, the situation referred to as the "cockpit effect" is considered a phenomenon related to anonymity (Heirman et al., 2008). Finally, it is also observed that the effectiveness of acts of aggression is significantly influenced by the characteristics known as "unsinkability," that is, the impossibility to prevent the content reaching the media space, as well as the related phenomenon of universal and permanent availability of both the object (victim) of aggression and the act itself. Nonetheless, none of these features can be assigned a distinctive character—each of them somewhat contributes also to acts of traditional aggression (Pyżalski, 2012).

From where did the conviction about the special consequences that would be associated with aggression observed today in the media space stem? The crux of the matter is that the strength of this aggression and the scale of the mutilation suffered by discursive rationality together with the communication community are influenced not so much by its distinctive features as much as *the specific nature of today's digitized and networked media space* in which these acts of aggression take place. The specificity of this space, as well as communication within it—to which the term "megamedia" is conveniently and reasonably applied—can be easily grasped by comparing it with the characteristics of mass media communication. And this confrontation covers the following distinctions (the former part relates to mass media communication, and the latter to megamedia communication):

1. mass reception vs. tendencies for individualization and personalization
2. unidirectionality of the communication relation vs. reciprocity and multidimensionality
3. verticality of the communication relation vs. its horizontality (and diagonality)

4. "sender – receiver" relation vs. participation
5. passive reception vs. interactivity
6. (6) linear structure of the transfer vs. hypertextual structure
7. (7) conventionality and periodicity of transfer vs. randomness and spontaneity
8. (8) distinctiveness of individual media vs. media convergence, transmediality, and multimedia
9. (9) separation of production from marketing vs. unity of production and marketing
10. (10) institutional production and distribution vs. non-institutional commitment
11. (11) expert knowledge vs. collective knowledge
12. (12) fourth power vs. fifth power.

In addition, there are many other specific features and phenomena of the megamedia world, among which the most salient are:

1. unprecedented media ubiquity
2. unprecedented media availability
3. unprecedented equality in access to knowledge and creation
4. unprecedented multiplication and diversity of communication events in the mediasphere (Sierocka, 2021).

This list requires many addendums and explanations to be fully understood (their initial presentation was included in Sierocka 2018 and 2021); however, even such a concise presentation allows for noting a special constellation created by the characteristics of megamedia communication. Simultaneously, it is essential to remember the manner in which Alvin Toffler (1980) taught us to think about the change and emergence of new realities (new epochs). What is new comes like a wave, a wave that washes away and takes—and does not simply push away and eliminate—what is past and old. The complex of consequences resulting from such an approach also entirely applies to the opposition suggested here: "mass media communication—megamedia communication." Nonetheless, these issues require separate analyses, with the focus of the present article here solely on the question of what realities are "generated" by this wave of megamedia communication and what it exposes us to when we are faced with the phenomenon of communicative aggression.

Among the whole range of consequences that arise from the transformations of today's media sphere, two factors are of the utmost importance in the face of acts of communicative aggression. Primarily, the very status of

communication is changing due to the megamedia space—or strictly due to its characteristics distinguished here. The argument is that it is only in this space that media communication becomes real communication cooperation. And only megamediality makes possible relations, processes, and actions in the media space that determine authentic—and thus precisely encompassing all its constitutive aspects—communication[4] (Sierocka, 2021). And what is equally significant: it becomes evident that such processes could not take place on the ground of mass media communication. Paradoxically, classic, analog mass media—analog books, press, radio, television—did not allow for real communication relations. They gave no opportunity for authentic communication cooperation. Relations and communication events were in fact deformed within the mass media arena—and at best were only a substitute for real communication processes. As we know, this did not prevent mass media from gaining tremendous reach and an equally enormous impact at an incredibly fast pace. It also did not prevent their "imperfect" and "apparent" communication from strengthening the role and participation of the media in consolidating (or even constructing) such serious and dramatic phenomena as the omnipotent commercialization of all aspects of culture and social reality, as well as—even more dramatic in its consequences—the triumph of the genocidal ideologies of the 20th century. This aspect, that is, the ominous force that is hidden in these "imperfections" of mass media communication, also requires separate analyses. Here, it is only essential to point to a fundamental change that occurs within today's media space, namely the change that ultimately stems from the fact that for the first time this space becomes a stage of real communication and, consequently, a stage for the constitution of relations, events, social processes, and institutions—precisely as in the case of non-media-mediated communication processes. Such shifts constitute changes with consequences that may not be predicted yet—even though they are clearly visible in the context of aggression.

This entirely new situation overlaps with another important circumstance, which has a fundamental impact on the force of destruction of communicative aggression. Moreover, it is a circumstance that is already commonly observed and, simultaneously, almost universally accepted. When discussing it, it is useful

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[4] Understanding of communication is based on the definition proposed in (Sierocka 2016 and 2021), according to which "*communication is co-intentionally shaped and figuratively mediated cooperation in regulating behaviors, shaping and maintaining social bonds, expression transfer, exchanging information, evoking sensations and emotions, and co-shaping norms, knowledge and social institutions.*"

to reference the phrase "real virtuality" introduced by Paul Levinson (Levinson 2009). This is a term that can be entirely applied to the megamedia space as a dimension to which the functioning of a real communication community is transferring today—or has already moved to a significant degree. Today, it would be difficult to find aspects of its functioning that have not been incorporated in the networked and digitalized world to some degree. The analysis of these processes is another important, and already intensively implemented, research objective, and is again a task that is too extensive for the presented article, therefore a reference to the literature on the subject (Castells, 2001) must suffice.

On the other hand, in the context of communicative aggression, it is essential to note that the two circumstances listed here significantly complement one another, and that processes, events, and communication relations are shaped in a new, previously unknown manner in this "symbiosis."

Due to the fact that communication processes *par excellence* take place in the media space (already as a megamedia space) and, simultaneously, due to the *total* character of megamedia communication (that is, its presence in all spheres and dimensions of the contemporary world) and its *global* scope (that is, the availability of communication events without time and space constraints), a kind of globalization and totalization of all structural aspects of the act of communication occurs, namely—to be concise—all those aspects that ultimately determine the rigor of discursiveness. And all of them—as in the case of "traditional" (that is, realized outside the media sphere) communication processes—are exposed to the destructive influence of communicative aggression. Nonetheless, the primary fact is that it is precisely within the megamedia space that this influence notably gains strength, and the acts of aggression themselves (as specific communication acts) are also subject to totalization and globalization.

The Consensus as the Essence of Communication Cooperation

It appears that, in light of how TP conceptualizes communication processes, the acts of aggression destroying claims and obligations that condition the very possibility of communication should be considered the greatest threat. The effects of this type of aggression are severe and often dramatic—particularly in view of their increasing scale. Nonetheless, these presuppositions—that is, all validity claims and the norms resulting from them, such as obligations to partnership, equal scope of freedom, subjective treatment, autonomy in evaluating, dignity, and intellectual coherence—as counterfactuals, may invariably be subject to attempts at restitution. Within the real communication community, efforts can

be made to rebuild them. Ultimately, and this is of the utmost importance—this rebuilding always takes place under one fundamental condition: It can only be effectuated when the members of this community share the pursuit of the consensus (and therefore act with the *conviction that obtaining consensus as to the formal conditions for the possibility of relations and communication processes is possible*), and consequently, they assume co-responsibility for the implementation of the idea of the consensus.

Sustaining this condition is a guarantor of maintaining the rigor of discursiveness. Thus, it is a guarantor of the cohesion of the communication community. Nonetheless, sustaining it becomes impossible in the face of the totalized and globalized acts of communicative aggression. Their deepest consequence is the irreversible destruction of the idea of the consensus. In the megamedia space, communication falls into a dramatic trap: It is here that the fundamental communication processes are realized (or will be realized) and real communication relations are initiated (and will be initiated). However, simultaneously, the force of communicative aggression destroys the very foundations of communication as co-intentionally shaped cooperation conditioned by aiming at the consensus. In this space, totalized aggression shatters and obstructs the pursuit of the consensus; it destroys indispensable trust in it, namely trust in the possibility of realizing communication processes. And the totalized character of megamedia communication gradually excludes the possibility of any asylum that would allow for the reconstruction of this pursuit of protecting the idea of the consensus. Thus, the chance to restore the violated presuppositions is lost, and so is the chance to implement the "natural" course of communication processes, which requires spreading them along the "real-ideal communication community" line. Only in this mode can the community manage to stay within rationality. Meanwhile, obstructing the idea of the consensus, which determines communication cooperation, disrupts these processes and makes the "real-ideal communication community" game—a constitutive game for discursive rationality—unfeasible.

Today it is required to talk (and write) about the catastrophic consequences of this situation in an equally pompous and dramatic tone as when discussing the problem of natural environment devastation. The devastation of communicative rationality as the binder of our sociosphere heralds a scale of threats similar to that which is already clearly visible within our biosphere. This forces a decisive reaction. On the one hand it requires a reliable diagnosis of the situation, while on the other hand it unconditionally obliges us to undertake real, practical

action. This diagnosis—a task assumed by TP communication philosophy—is a concept which, with its analyses and decisions, provides reasons, sanctions, and legitimation for new *paideia*, and at the same time, constitutes a source of the most essential theoretical tools for it. And the implementation of the crucial actions is entrusted by it to the *paideia* project itself, a project without which it is impossible to prevent the destruction of our rationality—as that special sphere that is constituted within the communication community, and which establishes this community. Engaging in participation in this community, instilling knowledge about its fundamental conditions and, at the same time, shaping the ability to utilize this knowledge, shaping the attitude of co-responsibility and shaping towards discursive rationality—these are the most important objectives, the implementation of which must be assumed by *paideia* in the face of the condition of today's communication space. And both of these tasks—the diagnosis of the condition of our rationality and the construction of the theoretical framework for the project of new *paideia*—are today one of the most valuable (albeit certainly not the only one) responses to the question: "Why philosophy?"

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Poetic Narratives: Midcareer Women Recognizing Their Worth, Overcoming Impostership and Navigating to Wellness

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Abstract

This qualitative research study describes midcareer women, 40–55 years old, who are educators and leaders in their organizations. The twelve participants shared data through journaling, focus groups, and interviews. We asked them to define wellness and success in their lives. We also sought to understand how they recognized issues of impostership, patriarchy, backlash, and oppression in their personal and professional experiences. As midcareer women, they shared strategies to navigate or address these issues, so that they could achieve a sense of wellness and success in their lives. We used a post-structural feminist theory to recognize the value and worth of their work within a system of power and social relations that are continuously renegotiated. We shared the data from our study through a collective narrative poem developed from the participant transcripts.

The narrative poem Not an Imposter in the Mirror collected quotes and statements from the interview transcripts and organized them into the themes of impostor phenomenon, cultural backlash, and patriarchy, and then strategies

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to navigate and find hope. They continue the challenge to cope within, to work outside, and to make their voices heard.

Biographical research and poetry provided ways to honor the women's experiences. Women's work has value and while impostor phenomenon is real, they can overcome it by sharing their feelings and supporting others through mentoring and modeling leadership.

Keywords

Impostorship, poetic narrative, feminist economic theory, backlash, patriarchy, women

> *"Risk – risk anything. Care no more for the opinion of others, for those voices. Do the thing hardest on earth for you to do. Act for yourself. Face the truth"* (Mansfield, 1922, p. 333).

Introduction

Marilyn Waring (1988) noted in her tome, *If Women Counted: A New Feminist Economics,* that many of the things that are valued in daily life, such as clean water, air, national parks, beaches, forests, or a pollution-free environment, counted for nothing in the economic systems of public or private expenditures or gross domestic capital. She also recognized that with the invisible value of the environment was the "invisibility of women and women's work" (p. 2). She explained that the economic interests determined by men who run First World governments, multinational banks, and multilateral agencies "are only interested in seeing the *cash generating* capacity of debtor countries, not their *productive* capacity" (italics in original, p. 3).

This perspective places no value on issues of peace, preservation of the environment, and the invisible unpaid labor undertaken by women and children. These aspects of life are taken for granted and do not hold value in the traditional system of economics driven by governments and gross domestic product (GDP). The division of paid (worthy) labor and unpaid (worthless) labor is ingrained in the systems of economics that determine what counts as a contribution in the world. From this standard, women's contribution of care and service hold little value (Warring, 1988). Yet, this is changing.

For women in both paid and unpaid work, many experience feelings of imposter ship, backlash, patriarchy, and oppression. These feelings and experiences are real and common (Calhoun, 2020). As women seek to balance their professional, personal, and educational responsibilities, the anxiety and self-doubt as to women's expectations are heightened (Kashen, 2020). Even as women gain more visible and powerful positions, they often feel as though they are not

worthy of being in these positions or see themselves as frauds waiting to be found out (Clance & Imes, 1978; Bravata et al., 2020).

Literature Review

This study explored how midcareer women related to impostor phenomenon, patriarchy, backlash, and oppression as they sought to find value, hope, and meaning in their professional and personal lives. The concepts of midcareer women, impostor phenomenon, patriarchy, backlash, and feminism are explored in this brief literature review.

Midcareer Women

The time of midlife for women can be full of transitions and challenges to find a new role and purpose. Women in midlife have life achievements that are meaningful and a wealth of knowledge and expertise. They often feel free to gain "their own voice and a newfound sense of freedom to express their feelings and share their knowledge. . . Further, each of the participants felt that they had knowledge that was worth of sharing with others" (Degges-White, 2001, p. 8). They are often in the strongest part of their career, mature enough to be the expert in their profession, giving back by mentoring and networking with others, and not ready to retire yet. This stage of life was termed 'Generativity' by Erikson (1950). It is defined as "the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (p. 267), the drive to create something that outlives themselves.

The psychologist Erikson (1950) researched the life stages of women, and he found a relationship between social project commitment and the personality development themes of identity, intimacy, and generativity in women's middle years. Women who prioritized both a career and family had heightened both identity themes and generativity themes (Newton & Stewart, 2010).

Midcareer women also have a high level of emotional intelligence and can make meaning of their experiences through multiple lenses (Reynolds, 2010). We also recognized that some women aged 40–55 years old may not feel as though their experiences are valued or are meaningful enough to share with others. Many women have suffered within the confines of social expectations or have been punished for moving beyond or outside of the roles generally expected of women (Calhoun, 2020).

Impostor Phenomenon

Impostor phenomenon was originally defined by Clance and Imes in 1978 as a high-achieving individual that feels like a fraud and thus attributes success to

external factors and are unable to internalize success (Clance & Imes, 1978). This phenomenon has been discussed, related, and researched by many who work in psychology, education, and leadership and has become a popular topic for current research studies and lay literature, especially that focused on women or marginalized groups. More than sixty studies have been conducted and reported within peer-reviewed articles from 1969 to 2018, with half published since 2012 (Bravata et al., 2020). While impostor syndrome is not a recognized psychiatric disorder or clinical diagnosis, it is often framed as something to address in the popular self-help culture or lay literature. Examples of impostor phenomenon or imposter syndrome can be found across the professions, in many roles, and with multiple populations (Bravata et al., 2020).

Owen (2020) presented a detailed explanation for developing one's own capacity for leadership and understanding one's leadership identity. In that line of thinking, she cited literature on the concept of leadership efficacy, "the belief that one can be successful in leadership" (p. 53). Women often score less than men on efficacy for leadership, while having higher scores for leadership capacity. Barriers to self-efficacy in leadership include "perfectionism, the need to please, and the belief that one will be revealed as less than capable or as a fraud (impostor syndrome)" (p. 53).

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is defined as "a system where men dominate because power and authority are in the hands of adult men" (Shaw & Lee, 2007, p. 4). Because the systems and structures of the Western world in general and the US in particular are established to privilege white men, women and people of color are relegated to roles of service or seek ways to gain access to power (Newton & Stewart, 2010). The patriarchal system shapes how men and women think about the world and their place in it, as well as the relationships with each other and with social institutions and employment. In most cases, women's roles and positions are still far behind men in pay equity and status and are biased against the perceived skills of women (Regine, 2010; Owen, 2020).

Owen (2020) reminded us that just because some women are empowered does not mean patriarchy is dead, it just means some are lucky. Often women are undervalued or taken for granted as they contribute to society, work, and even families. They also are most likely to lose employment during downward economic cycles, especially Black and LatinX women, such as with the pandemic (Kashen, 2020).

Patriarchy abounds and has an influence of all aspects of life. Most workplaces are set up to serve men and fit their schedules, with the assumption that there is a caregiver at home who will undertake the daily tasks of living, so the men

can concentrate on their work. Any threat to the patriarchy is quickly rebuked through backlash and at times, violence (Regine, 2010).

As women make progress in the workforce and positions of power, they are often discouraged from applying for or taking roles developed for white able-bodied men. The use of impostership or demand for perfection are tools to force them out. Yet, patriarchy also holds its reign through more direct approaches as well. For example, in 2008, the Center for Work-Life Policy found that 52% of women aged 35–40 left their jobs in sciences and technology due to a "macho culture where women are perceived as simply not being as good in math and science as men" (Regine, 2010, p. 62). The culture led to sexual harassment, lack of mentors, dismissive attitudes, and "predatory and demeaning and discriminatory stuff" (p. 62).

In order to keep women in their place, patriarchal assumptions of who can be a leader and what a leader looks like persist. By imposing unattainable expectations on women who seek to enter spaces traditionally held by men, women may self-censor or feel like an impostor and outsider (Gibson-Beverly & Schwartz, 2008). The patriarchal pressure embraces that feeling of weakness and lack of courage to keep outsiders, marginalized people, and others who seek change out of positions of power.

Backlash

The patriarchal society protects itself in a variety of ways. When women or marginalized groups make too much progress, or even just perceived progress towards attaining equal rights or gaining status, the government, media, and other groups of social control in society mobilize to stop the motion. Susan Faludi documents how this occurred against the Equal Rights Amendment and the feminist movement's gains in the 1970s in her book *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991). Backlash can occur across society as well as for individuals who seek to make changes in the workplace or a social setting. This occurs through shaming, silencing, firing, harassment, and violence (Regine, 2010).

Third Wave Feminism

Feminism seeks to shift the power in the world from patriarchy that primarily benefits white males and works to "end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit any special group of women, any particular race and class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform all of our lives" (hooks, 2000, p. viii). The third wave of feminism (approximately 1980s–2010s) and feminist economics served as a call to action for women who recognize that our

world has been structured in order for women to serve men's exploits of the natural and social world (Warring, 1988). It also developed understandings that women experience a layered identity with multiple intersecting oppressions (Crenshaw, 1989). The internet made the women's movement more global, and they sought to expand alliances with all women from diverse racial and cultural identities.

Warring (1988), who was located in Australia, proclaimed a call to action for women who recognize that our world has been structured in order for women to serve men's exploits of the natural and social world. She presented a feminist economic framework and petitioned the government for a rethinking of the core values to recognize women's work and also the natural environment.

Approximately the same time in the US, bell hooks (1984) proposed a feminist economics "re-thinking the nature of work" (p. 102). She felt that in order for women to recognize that, "it would be a significant and meaningful gesture of power and resistance for women to learn to value the work they do, whether paid or unpaid" (p. 103). Yet, many women who see themselves as feminists have not recognized the intersectional issues of race and class within the feminist economic argument (hooks, 1984).

Gloria Steinem (1994) also addressed the fact that women across the world and in the US live "low on capital, low on technology, and labor intensive – not to mention the world's biggest source of free or cheap labor, plus its means of reproduction" (p. 201). She recognized the power that women could gather from seeing class in a way that can value and support each other's work:

> Therefore it's in the interest of women at both ends of the spectrum to consider class as women experience it, not as women have been taught it— to see the ways it disguised and preserves a deeper system of sexual caste, and to explore how we might pool strengths and support one another for mutual benefit. (p. 188)

Purpose of the Study

This research project sought to understand how midcareer women, aged 40–55, defined wellness and success in their lives. We also sought to understand how they recognized issues of impostership, patriarchy, backlash, and oppression in their lives, and how these factors were related to their personal and professional experiences. We had them describe, as midcareer women, how they learned to navigate or address these issues, so that they could achieve a sense of wellness and success in their lives. As the women shared their stories, they related their

perceptions of the value of their work and how that shaped the perceptions of themselves. Learning from their experiences can provide hope and show how to navigate their own situations.

Conceptual Framework

A poststructuralist feminist approach guided this qualitative research study. Hayes and Flannery (2000) provided an overview of the various types of feminist theories that relate to aspects of women's experience and learning opportunities. Psychological feminist theories, such as those in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al., 1986) position women into the existing social order when men are dominant. While it "challenges women's invisibility and marginalization of women's experience in knowledge building process" (Hayes & Flannery, 2000, p. 11), it does not address the social structures that keep men in power. Structural feminist theories focus on reproduction of power relationships and explain how patriarchy and capitalism affect women's status and experience in workplaces, classrooms, and families. Yet these theories do not acknowledge the personal power or individual free will and can devalue women's intellectual abilities.

The study uses a poststructuralist feminist theory that combines aspects of personal power along with structural issues to recognize that "each of us is at once oppressed and privileged and how this experience continually changes according to the structures in which we find ourselves" (Hayes & Flannery, 2000, p. 13). We used poststructuralist feminism to conceptualize gender as one aspect of identity within a system of social relations that are continuously renegotiated daily and also more broadly in society. Through this inquiry, we sought to "make social forces that influence women's lives more visible" (Hayes & Flannery, 2000, p. 15).

In this study and framework, we recognized that systems of power intersect when addressing gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and others (Crenshaw, 1989; 2010). Each woman's culture and background shapes how she attends to individual resistance and agency (Zwier & Grant, 2014). This looks different in accordance with each participant's unique experience of oppression.

Method

Research Design Overview

For this study, we used biographical narratives for women to explore the way midcareer women made sense of and navigated through feelings of impostership and the patriarchal barriers to their own success. Biographical research is an

approach to research that honors women's experience while is also part of a larger ecosystem of communities that can sustain or destroy hope. Biographical research provides the opportunity for "building meaningful dialogue and experience of togetherness, across difference" (ESREA 2021, n. p.). Through listening to and telling stories, we as researchers can "celebrate the complexity, messiness, ecological challenge, but also rich potential of living learning lives. . . Biographical research offers insights, and even signposts, to understand and transcend the darkness of the human condition" (ESREA 2021, n. p.). From their own experiences and narratives, we can better understand and support other women and marginalized people as they also seek new opportunities and find themselves in leadership positions to make change in the world.

This study brought together post structural feminist approaches, biographical research, and poetic narrative to produce a collective poem that encapsulated key ideas from the participants.

Poetic Narrative Approach

One of the co-authors of this paper constructed the narrative poem to make sense of the stories shared and developed the collective voice for the participants. She followed the methods presented by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Hanauer (2010), and Faulkner (2009).

Hanauer (2010) expressed that poetry writing involves an intentional action toward personal discovery. This type of process triggers learning and understanding of the personal experience and allows for revisiting and interpretation. Faulkner (2009) shared that narratives of self-reflection can be messy because multiple voices contribute. Poetry allows a space for no one interpretation to stand out more than another. Faulkner (2009) continued by stating,

> The researcher can use phrases from interviewees anywhere in the transcript and juxtapose them as long as they were the interviewee's words and enough words were presented to mirror the participant's rhythm and way of speaking. By reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, and at the end themes that described different aspects of the interviewee's life are used, poetry can be created and shared. (p. 31)

Additionally, Faulkner (2009) acknowledged that research poetry is designed to experience connection with participants through an emotional response. The underlying idea is that readers and listeners, although not experiencing the same phenomenon, can share the experience through an emotional connection with the descriptions and depictions displayed in poetry. Hanauer (2010) continued the conversation by stating,

> Poetry writing is a process in which participants attempt to make sense of their own experiences and express them in a way that other readers may have an insight into their own subjective interpretation of personally meaningful events. Powerful emotions and real-world events form an impetus for poetry writing and, through the different revisions of the poem, its meaning and the meaning of the events addressed slowly emerge. As such, a poem is qualitative data which presents personal events and the specific ways in which the writer understands and feels their significance. It is this aspect of poetry writing that makes it a valuable tool for qualitative research. The poem is not an immediate response, but rather a deliberative personally meaningful interpretation of portrayed events. (p. 31)

A good poem, according to Faulkner (2009), is like the development of love and understanding. It starts in your gut; you fall in love with it, then you start to care how it's made and what outcomes the readers take away. The poem created should connect to the issue and should make the listener or reader feel emotions such as anger, joy, and hope. Hanauer (2010) shared that the writing process of poetry is a form of inquiry in which meanings of personal experiences are discovered during the process. Academic writing is point driven while the process of writing poetry is reflective and suggests a process of self-discovery through the writing itself.

When creating research poetry, an interpretation of the interviews occurs in order to tell a powerful version of experiences communicated. Faulkner (2009) shared that the writer uses punctuation as desired for outcome, uses recurring lines to create continuity, and allows freedom in design for feelings to emerge. As the interviewees' words were read and reread for themes, there was a desire to seek out the "essence conveyed, hues, and textures" (Faulkner, 2009, p. 134).

A narrative poem, according to Faulkner (2009), allows for storytelling from collective interviews and represents actual experiences that create distance between self and others but that blurs thoughts, while allowing everyone to feel episodes, epiphanies, misfortunes, or pleasures. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) described a link between the researcher who hears and recounts the story with the participant who tells the story, making it possible to advocate for social change and shift social and cultural narratives.

While reflecting on the themes of discourse, dialogue, and diversity related to the impostor phenomenon, the content of the shared stores exposed many common themes. So as not to state and restate the views in multiple ways, and after reviewing transcripts, themed data, and emotions, strategies of overcoming and working through the impostor phenomenon started to resonate. To add

depth to the poems, it was decided that there would be no "he said" or "she said" but words, phrases, and questions would be pulled directly from the transcripts to expose their journey and stories. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) expressed that weaving multiple accounts together produces a rich textured account of stories told and emotion shared.

Research Sample

The midcareer women in the study were invited to participate through a purposive sampling process. Women connected to the university or local community in the Midwestern US who met specific criteria of being aged between 40 and 55, having at least one child, having a professional position of leadership or teaching, and having at least a graduate degree were invited to participate. Of those fifteen invited, twelve women participated in the full scope of the study. More detail is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: *Information about the Participants.*

Pseudonym	Age	Children	Ethnicity	Professional Role
Kim	47	Daughter	White	Lecturer
Anna	48	Daughter and son	Mexican American	Tech Consultant & Adjunct Faculty
Dagny	40	3 sons	White	Mom, Dissertation Faculty
Esther	44	Daughter and son	White	Wellness Coordinator
Beth	55	Daughter and son	White	University Instructor
Hope	50	2 sons	White	Educational Executive
Diana	49	Daughter and son	White	Marketing Professional
Surely	45	Daughter	African American	CEO of Community Organization
Joy	48	Daughter and son	African American	Higher Ed. Administrator
Lola	48	Daughter	White	Professor

| Harriet | 49 | 2 daughters and son | White | Administer and Writer |
| Susan | 48 | Daughter and son | White | Associate Professor |

Intersectionality was present in the stories as the women's experiences could not be separated from their racial and ethnic backgrounds, nor from their professional roles. All of the women were well educated and there were many who had completed terminal degrees. They came from nonprofit service organizations, a public university, and a community college within one mid-sized community. The women held multiple roles. Professionally they were leaders, instructors, and administrators. During the course of the study four women changed or added roles. They were also parents, community leaders, and some were continuing their graduate education.

Each participant selected a pseudonym for confidentiality which was used on nametags and for all data collection. The Human Subject Board and IRB process approved the study, and all participants signed consent forms.

Data Collection

The first set of data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. For this qualitative research study, we used multiple sources of evidence in order to create a complex understanding of the women's experiences.

This study was conducted in three parts: a preliminary reflection stage, a focus group stage, and a follow-up interview stage. The study was made more trustworthy by the decision to examine and triangulate multiple sources of data related to the topic (Yin, 2011). First, participants were asked to reflect on the following words through journaling over eight weeks: wellness, success, impostor phenomenon, patriarchy, backlash, and oppression (November and December 2019). To protect participants' privacy, journals were not collected. In January 2020, three focus groups were conducted with participants sharing thoughts from their journals and other ideas related to impostor phenomenon in their personal and professional lives. Then in February 2020, follow-up interviews were conducted with one or two participants and the researcher or another 'participant interviewer' to go more deeply into the discussion and talk about strategies for overcoming and navigating through their feelings and experiences. More than 1300 minutes of interview data was collected and transcribed.

Data Analysis

Data was transcribed using online service providers that use artificial intelligence and people to transcribe audio recordings to text. These interview transcripts were cleaned up and then reviewed by the co-researchers. As this research used a collaborative approach, the participants had access to the data and five of them contributed to the initial coding of the transcripts. A priori codes were set based on the key words of the study. Then open coding was also used to let other themes emerge from the data. As this is a small qualitative study, it is not intended to be generalizable, but we seek to provide a glimpse into the lives and stories of the selected participants. The original data was coded into the a priori keywords of the study first. Then a second round of open coding was undertaken using a constant comparative method (Saldana, 2016). The data was sorted and categorized and sorted again as themes emerged. Both the open codes and the a priori codes and themes were reviewed and organized into an excel spreadsheet.

In order to develop the poetic narrative from the quotes, the researchers highlighted each theme and planned to group the poem stanzas by each of the themes that arose from the data. The stanzas came from direct quotes of the participants and collective thoughts within the key themes of impostership, oppression, backlash, patriarchy, reflection, wellness, advice, and strategies.

Poetry makes the invisible world visible, and can clarify as well as magnify experiences. Experiences shared can be interpreted via poetry (Faulkner, 2009). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) described the link between researcher and participant that makes it possible to advocate for social change and shift social and cultural narratives. Poetic narrative provides opportunities for the expressions of participants' impostor phenomenon, issues of privilege, patriarchy, and oppression to be woven into an expression of shared experiences. The use of poetic form provided anonymity for the individual participants, but still shared the emotion and context of their experiences. When writing the poem and combining the ideas, we identified the key emotions that began to resonate into a collective story for the participants.

Findings

Through this study, impostor phenomenon can be understood to be a coping mechanism for living as a woman in spaces that were created for and constructed by men. The participants from our study stated that the feeling of impostership "creeps up" on them. Each woman within the study talked about different descriptions, understandings, and positions within impostor phenomenon. After reviewing the transcripts from the focus groups and interviews, we found shared

themes. As we continued to review and categorize the codes, powerful statements related to backlash, oppression, and patriarchy emerged.

As we worked through how best to express what we were learning, it was determined that their powerful words needed to tell a powerful story, and poetry emerged. Faulkner (2015) described how poetry is a secret story that breaks down language and refines the things we say. It creates a singular, limitless, and powerful bond that speaks to senses, memories, and places. Hanauer (2010) expressed that poetry writing involves an intentional action toward personal discovery. Construction of the poem from the transcribed data provided the researchers an opportunity to bring shared themes into the poem, so that a collective voice is heard. The poem, written by one of the co-authors, is shared here as a representation of the collected findings. The co-author who brought this poem to life followed the methods presented by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Hanauer (2010), and Faulkner (2009), as described above.

Not an Imposter in the Mirror

A look in the mirror and what is seen?
A reflection of strength, courage, and love; a reflection of me.
Truth or lie, which way do I lean?
Oppression defeats me, backlash punishes me, patriarchy diminishes me.
Am I an impostor?
How do I navigate to the wellness I need?

What's under the surface, the genuine me.
Nobody sees it. I feel like an impostor now.
Motivation to rise to the top, so bogged down.
Immediate gratification, new direction and writing it down.

What are you doing here, you don't belong.
Just paddling like hell, so self-doubt and tears don't fall.
Are these internal struggles or reflections of truth?
What more can I do to be different and strong?
Self-imposed expectations aren't holding me back.
It's the lack of validation and harsh words or acts.

Do I belong here? Yes, of course I do.
The conflicting messages, you're so much, too much.
What to do with you?
At last, invited to the table, but no time to focus on problems.
Too busy defending and trying to change optics, so frustrating.
The connections, relationships, projecting impostor.

Clawing up the ladder, but still no respect.
A double standard to support, ask, and react.

> A look in the mirror and what is seen?
> A reflection of strength, courage, and love; a reflection of me.
> Truth or lie, which way do I lean?
> Oppression defeats me, backlash punishes me, patriarchy diminishes me.
> Am I an impostor?
> How do I navigate to the wellness I need?

Fear of backlash, not speaking opinions.
My voice shuts down, no vote, work, or communication.
Are we living in "the art of war?"
Their weapon is our openness and genuine condition.
Shutting down our authenticity and strengths.
Sparks intimidation and lessens our leadership.

> Paying for statements taken out of context weakens loyalty, faith, and trust.
> Being honest and open, sharing one's self.
> Just used to tear, hurt, and hold you down.
> Intimidation stops progress.

Nothing collaborative, encouraging, nurturing, or uplifting.
Feelings and emotions hidden, no room in the workplace.
Undermined, marked, passed over for promotion.
Affects all aspects of one's life, the backlash oppresses.

> A look in the mirror and what is seen?
> A reflection of strength, courage, and love; a reflection of me.
> Truth or lie, which way do I lean?
> Oppression defeats me, backlash punishes me, patriarchy diminishes me.
> Am I an impostor?
> How do I navigate to the wellness I need?

Defining our experience an impostor is clear,
Sometimes it's here and sometimes it's there.
Fear of retribution, harassment, and dominating behaviors.
Take it as construction, turn the other check, don't take it personally.
Invited yet excluded, navigation is confusing.

> Being aggressive creates barriers, men are to succeed!
> Not true. Hear the female voices, they are smart and capable.

Treatment of equals still slow to evolve, changes are needed.
Supporting the woman to get work exposed.
Impostor reduces and maybe goes away.
We are taught to submit, build relationships, and grow.
The cycle makes it difficult and the impostor arises.

A look in the mirror and what is seen?
A reflection of strength, courage, and love; a reflection of me.
Truth or lie, which way do I lean?
Oppression defeats me, backlash punishes me, patriarchy diminishes me.
Am I an impostor?
How do I navigate to the wellness I need?

How to proceed and how to move past impostor?
Learn to understand self, have a breakdown and cry.
Past affects the present and directs future navigation.
Reading, gardening, and holding the family together.
Being authentic, setting boundaries, and reflection.

We don't need people's approval, march to the drum you're beating.
Have courage and support each other, give each other grace.
Lead from servanthood, from calmness and strength.
Our faith is our basis, our songs are our release.
Journal, seek coaching, keep pushing toward the next goal.
All strategies lead to wellness and action.

A look in the mirror and what is seen?
A reflection of strength, courage, and love; a reflection of me.
Truth or lie, which way do I lean?
Oppression defeats me, backlash punishes me, patriarchy diminishes me.
Am I an impostor?
How do I navigate to the wellness I need?

Reading, walking, physical, and mental health.
Find your safe place and share in this community.
Set boundaries for balance and continue to give back.
Meditation, self-care, and a good wellness plan.

Be strong, brave, and kind.
Your instincts are great.
Impostor will happen, work through the steps.
You can and you will be successful.
A look in the mirror and what is seen?
A reflection of strength, courage, and love; a reflection of me.

Truth or lie, which way do I lean?
Oppression defeats me, backlash punishes me, patriarchy diminishes me.
I am NOT an impostor!
I can navigate the wellness I need.

Interpretation of the Poem

Through the women's collective stories and told through poetic narrative, we recognized the women as "active agents in resisting oppressive forces and shaping their own lives and learning" (Hayes & Flannery, 2000, p. 15). The narrative poem has on a powerful tone that leads the reader through the various components of the study before arriving at the wellness that is sought. The overarching meaning of the poem gives the reader an idea of the feelings and consequences that occur when impostership is felt. Ultimately it shared words of hope to be able to work through the experience. The poem described the participants' navigation of impostor phenomenon in their professional and personal lives, showing how they endured and providing hope for others.

The poem collected quotes and statements from the interview transcripts and organized them into the themes of impostor phenomenon, cultural backlash, and patriarchy, and then strategies to navigate and find hope. Impostor phenomenon is real to these women and while they have strategies to cope, it returns in new settings or uncomfortable positions. They continue the challenge to cope within, to work outside, and to make their voices heard.

The women participants in midcareer have accomplishments, but, at times, they still struggle to find their place and to change the culture of our world. Although many of these women were in positions of leadership, they were consistently undermined, paid less, and not heard on many topics of importance. Even if they were at the table, they still had to attend to the optics rather than focusing on the topics or problems to be solved. This used a lot of energy and diminished their feeling of effectiveness.

From the participants' own experiences and the collective narratives, we can better understand and support other women and marginalized people as they navigate systems of patriarchy, backlash, and their own feelings of impostership to seek new opportunities as leaders making change in the world. Through this study and in the development of these findings, the women found a community where they can connect and share their voice. They learned how to grow and move past the backlash and oppression. They learned what it takes to maintain their health and wellness; and through this study, they learned that they are not alone.

In the conclusions, we examined some of the key themes from this research and connected them to the lived experiences of the women. By articulating the interviews through poetry, the stories become more powerful.

Conclusions

When women reach midcareer, they have had many work experiences to reflect on and learn from. Through their own biographical story and in combination with others, a tapestry of knowledge is woven. Waring's work about the value of women's work continues to be relevant even as the world has changed considerably since 1988.

In 1988, the women who were interviewed were just coming into adulthood facing a future full of possibilities. This group of women were part of the third wave of feminism who integrated, redefined, and questioned old notions and social expectations of women hood, gender, class, and race. They were shaped new ideas about work, identity, and self-definition. They had more opportunities and were able to pursue a wide variety of education and professional roles. Yet, women still say that

> They are afraid to say that they can't do it and afraid to say that they don't know how. No matter if it is a concept or a tangible object that is part of our universe, they [men] will colonize it with impunity. (Waring, 1988, p. 325).

Through this study, the women examined professional and personal experiences with work within systems of patriarchy. They reflected on their lives and shared how the experiences intersect with each part of their identity (Shaw & Lee, 2007). Even in midcareer, they still encountered patriarchy, backlash, and oppression for being women who sought to achieve their goals. The participants took risks, acted on their own behalf, and faced the truth of their own situations while sustaining hope for the future.

Their stories and passion for their work in the face of impostor phenomenon, patriarchy, and oppression demonstrate that they value their own work and the work of others. Using the poetic narratives to tell their stories provides a powerful tool to share with others. By seeing other people's stories and navigation strategies around and through feelings of impostership and insecurity, women can recognize their own stories and learn to push forward.

As we reflect on the statements that participants made within the interviews and that are represented within the poem, it is clear that oppression and patriarchy are still present in their lives. These women in midcareer and with accomplishments

to their names still struggle to find their place and to change the culture of our world. Women are still up against powerful forces as they work toward change and inclusion. From our research, the midcareer women shared that impostor phenomenon is still present and is real.

Recommendations

In 2018, the GDP still excluded the work of many women, especially those who did work in the home and volunteer work in the community. While there has been a push toward feminist and ecological economics, the world accounting systems still look at what is "productive" for consumption and ignore the work of the majority of women in their midst. "They were intentionally excluded. . . In all censuses and other data gathering instruments patriarchal construction continued" (Waring, 2018, p. 5).

There is hope that things are changing. For example, women are now the majority of college graduates and post-graduate students (Rhode, 2017) and they have gained faculty status and administrative roles. In the book *We Are The Leaders We've Been Waiting For* (2020), Julie Owen shared definitions of feminism that embraced theories of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. She noted that notions of leadership are changing, with more attention being paid to authentic leadership, servant leadership, and relational, shared, and adaptive leadership, rather than focusing just on business and management models (Owen, 2020).

In order for women to stop feeling the pressure of impostor phenomenon, they need to recognize their own value and have others recognize their value as worthy contributors to society. Our research revealed that impostor phenomenon is present for these midcareer women when they enter workspaces and planning tables that have been built for and dominated by men. The discomfort that is palpable is a manipulative emotional tool to stop their participation or silence their voice. Even when at the planning table, one participant shared that she was worried about the optics of being present, rather than focusing on the issues being discussed. It serves to distract and devalue the women's contribution if their presence is questioned and they feel like an imposter.

Sanford et al. (2015) shared that women of high achievement attribute their confidence to other strong women in leadership. While there is no solid solution to overcoming impostership, there is a recognized power within women to overcome patriarchy, backlash, and oppression. There is evidence and hope the women will claim their worth and work together to grow and lead the world. In

order to continue this push toward a feminist economic system where women and men have equal opportunities and access to power, educators and leaders can lead the way.

When women reach midcareer, they seek generativity and work to leave a legacy for their lives. Sanford et al. (2015) described characteristics of women in power who do not experience impostership. The women demonstrate confidence, set goals, seek out opportunities to serve in leadership positions, and have experience in their roles. They found that women could best resist impostor phenomenon by talking about their feelings with mentors, other women, and their romantic partners. 'Within these relationships, our participants found (a) the courage to try new things and (b) confirmation or comfort' (p. 40).

In order to model overcoming impostership and leading other women to recognize their own value, they can support others as they grow and gain positions of strength. They can continue to hold each other accountable, continue mentoring and networking to make stronger connections, and continue working and sharing journals about their experiences in order to recognize and overcome feelings of impostership and break free of the backlash and patriarchy. Women can navigate to the wellness they need.

If women are to be counted, they have to overcome and navigate through feelings of impostership and act as leaders to change the systems of power (Owen, 2020).

Waring's words from 1988 still are relevant today, so we end with her call to action that is so important to continue working toward even in 2021.

> We women are visible and valuable to each other, and we must, now in our billions, proclaim that visibility and that worth. Our anger must be creatively directed for change. We must remember that true freedom is a world without fear. And if there is still confusion about who will achieve that, then we must each of us walk to a clear pool of water. Look *at* the water. It has value. Now look *into* the water. The woman we see there counts for something. She can help to change the world. (Waring, 1988, p. 326).

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Going back to School. An Interpretative Analysis of a Dialogical Interview with Adult Women during the Pandemic

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Guest edited by Alan Bainbridge, Laura Formenti, Ewa Kurantowicz

Abstract

This paper offers an extensive guide for researchers who wish to pay greater attention to the reflexivity in their own research. The author provides an example of self-observation and critical self-reflection of her own involvement in the process of doing research and being part of the moment of co-shaping (new) knowledge. The work focuses on the educational experiences of women placed in the context of their lifelong experience, women's learning through shared experience, and the role of cultural context in these processes. A non-standard structure was used, in which analysis of the author's own experiences is interwoven with analysis of the biographies of the women studied, and the researcher's individual analysis is compared with the group analysis among other women. The aim is to present an interpretive perspective of feminist ethnography on these experiences and emphasizes the role of informal learning through experiencing relationships in everyday life, including through art.

Keywords
feminism, auto/biography, autoethnography, conversational method, interpretative analysis

Introduction

In this paper I wish to pay close attention both to the element of reflexivity in my research and to the transformative potential of conversations between women.

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This work provides an example of auto/biographical research (Merrill & West, 2009) and insight with the interpretative perspective of feminist autoethnography. I combine elements between the (return to) learning and feminism, and I interrogate the role of aesthetics representation in fostering reflexivity through the story of my experience. The story, narrated in the first person, is organized in three interconnected parts. In the first part, I describe my personal experience during the COVID-19 pandemic in Milan (Italy) with photography and aesthetical expression, and I create a connection between feminism in Italy and adult education through a narration of my visit to an exhibition dedicated to feminism and photography. In the second part, I reflect on my research experience with three adult women that have returned to education, who I interviewed a few days after visiting the exhibition. The interactive exchange, which took place in a school for adult students (Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli Adulti, hereafter CPIA) in the metropolitan city of Milan, was also attended by two of their teachers and by a young professional photographer invited by me, also women, who participated in the discussion. The result was a long and active exchange about the participants' personal choice to go back to school and on the implications of this experience for their social roles as women, wives, mothers, and workers (Merrill, 2003). We also discussed migration, because two of the interviewees have a migratory background. The co-created materials were so rich that initially I found it difficult to decide how to best analyze it. Eventually I decided, in accordance with a suggestion that I received in March 2021 following a presentation I delivered at the online conference of the Life History and Biography Network of ESREA, to gather together a small group of different women to both undertake a creative, interpretative analysis of this plurivocal interaction and to share ideas connected with women's lives; the third part of the paper describes this meeting and its results. This group comprised six women: Two university students undertaking a Master's Science of Education course and four of my acquaintances – a theatre actor and teacher, a psychotherapist, a psychiatrist, and a lawyer. All of these women were recruited by chance: Each voluntarily responded to a WhatsApp announcement that I shared in different groups of acquaintances during the Covid-19 pandemic. The advantage of using this random group is that it utilizes informal contributions from women that are interested in reflecting on women's condition and who bring different experiences and perspectives to the research. Collaborating online, these six women and I worked together to create a learning process in which the stories that emerged from the participants in the original interviews could resonate with our experiences as women to create experiences of togetherness. In fact, in an

individualistic and accelerated society like the one in which we live in Milan, there is often very little space and time for people to consider the complexities of their own life in a critical and open way. Therefore undertaking biographical research as an activist "is often to do with creating sufficient hope in individuals and communities by building meaningful dialogue and creating good enough experiences of togetherness, across difference" (Bainbridge, Formenti and West, 2021, p.1), because in listening to the stories of others, we are also reflecting upon our own histories, social and cultural backgrounds, as well as our values and subjectivities.

My Imagined Social Capital

I visited the exhibition *Gestures of revolt. Art, photography, and feminism in Milan 1975/1980*[2] on an early October morning in 2020 with Gaia Del Negro, a dear friend and researcher colleague, with whom I have undertaken duoethnographic research for many years (Sawyer & Norris, 2013) on the aesthetic languages used in museums and in contemporary photography more generally to enhance self-awareness, dialogue, and critical narratives (Formenti, Luraschi, & Del Negro, 2019). The exhibition was organized by a group of feminist artists and activists (some of who are also adult educators) that have variously been active at different times in Milan, to explore the condition of women in the last 30 years in this part of northern Italy. It was the first time that I had seen her after the long months of the first wave of the pandemic and the summer where we lost touch, so I was very excited to spend time together and was looking forward to again start reflecting together with a feminist perspective. I think for this reason I arrived at the appointment well in advance and I had time to walk around the historic center of the city. Milan that morning was deserted: I saw only a solitary man walking in an empty Piazza del Duomo (Figure 1).

During the early months of the pandemic, the square became one of the most powerful symbols of lockdown in Italy. Despite this, the deserted square was not an image familiar to me, in other words something I had become accustomed to, because I had seen it only on digital media, having not having been able to reach the center from the suburban neighborhood of Milan where I live due to the limitations placed on travel. It was like looking at something unthinkable, while at the same time it was a moment of epiphany where I felt the beauty and the magnificence of

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[2] *Gesti di rivolta. Arte, fotografia e femminismo a Milano 1975/1980*, http://www.nuova-galleriamorone.com/portfolio-item/gesti-di-rivolta/?lang=en.

Figure 1: Piazza del Duomo, Milan, October 2020.

Piazza del Duomo, and I also perceived my desire to imagine new ways of telling life and the world about the interdependence of humans and the environment. To fix this poetic moment, I took a picture with my smartphone (Figure 1).

I am not a photographer, but in recent years photographs have become important to my way of doing research. I use photography to give body to embodied narratives (Formenti et al. 2014) and to reflect on my experience as a woman, feminist adult educator, and researcher. For example, along with Gaia and Laura Formenti I searched for the place of the body, artistic imagination, and ecology in society and education (Formenti, Luraschi, & Del Negro, 2020). I consider feminist, autoethnographic methods (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) an important source of experience and knowledge, because researchers with this perspective "critique and question their positionality in relation to critical issues and constructs and reconceptualize their own narrative constructions in the face of the other person" (Sawyer, 2021, p. 96). During the pandemic crisis, I started to use photography during my solitary walks in the periphery of Milan, where I live, to snap evocative objects (Bollas, 2009) expressive of my innermost condition[3]

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[3] One of my pictures with an autobiographic text intitled *Small thing of unquantifiable value* is part of the *Visualising the Feminist Imaginary exhibition,* an initiative of the Gender Justice, Creative Pedagogies and Arts-Based Research Group, Faculty of Education

or to realize interdependent self-portraits where my figure is entangled with the environment (Figure 2) to develop my ability and power to imagine the world for myself, because as a woman I am aware that I am subject to the problematic imagining of others (de Beauvoir, 1949).

Figure 2: Self-portrait during the pandemic crisis.

Therefore, my Imagined Social Capital (Quinn, 2010) is represented by Italian feminism in the seventies (Lonzi, 1970) in which photographic art was extremely powerful (Casero, 2021). In fact, in these years the feminist discourse focuses on the possibility of creating an art made by women with the aim of deconstructing stereotypes and letting women stand out as free beings. Feminist art and the feminist imaginary are, of course, not the mainstream, so in Italy, for example, institutional museums rarely dedicated space for women's photography. For this reason, the Municipality of Milan invited museums, galleries, and cultural associations of the city to organize events to celebrate *I talenti delle donne*[4] (Women's talents). Part of the program was made up by the exhibition *Gestures of revolt* that took place in a small and private gallery called *Nuova Galleria Morone* located ten minutes' walk from *Piazza del Duomo*.

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at the University of Victoria, Canada. Here picture and text: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ONBdrviSSyErgJR94BZMIM00cvDX3Qob/edit#slide=id.p12.

 [4] *I talenti delle donne*, https://italentidelledonne.comune.milano.it/

At the beginning of the visit, Gaia and I were attracted to a wall full of photos and videos. I focused my attention on a photo of *Piazza del Duomo* with a completely different scenario from the deserted one seen by me only a few minutes before. In fact, this picture depicted a group of smiling girls demonstrating in the middle of the square with their hands raised in a triangle to form a vagina. In the seventies in Italy, as well as all Western countries, the "gesture of the vagina" was a gesture of revolt which indicated a threshold, a limit between the inside and the outside, not only the internal and the external of the female sexual organ, but especially the threshold to cross in order to affirm the desire for a cultural and social change and gender justice (Bussoni & Perna, 2014). Looking at this picture, it seemed that the girls were calling me: I realized that I very much needed to be physically close to my friends and to laugh with them, so I moved my gaze away from the photo to place it on Gaia, my friend, who was immersed in watching a video. I took a picture (Figure 3) and, after a long pause, I walked over to her.

Figure 3: Gaia in front of photos and video at *Gestures of revolt*, October 2020.

After taking the picture, I became aware of being at the same time an observer and observed, always part of a system, in a network with others, with their story and mine, in a world to which different meanings are attributed (Bateson, 1972) and where a plurality of versions of the stories are present in the discourses that we live by (Høyen & Wright 2020, p. 2). In the same moment, Gaia was watching a video about an extraordinary social and educational experiment

in the seventies when, based on a victory scored by the metalworkers' unions with regard to fixed employment contracts, workers were granted entitled to receive up 150 paid hours of education every three years. The aim was to give the members of the working-class the opportunity to obtain the standard middle-school qualification (Causarano, 2016). The video entitled *Feminism and 150 hours*[5] describes the decision of the Milanese feminist movement to extend the initiative to housewives and the educational path that teachers and activists (often the two roles coexisted in the same woman) realized for and with housewives. The narrator of the video is Lea Melandri, one of Italy's best-known feminist thinkers and activists (Melandri, 2019), who in those years had worked as an adult educator in a suburban neighborhood of Milan. She recounts her autobiographical path to becoming an activist teacher who had given centrality to the themes of the body in her work as a clear result of her being the daughter of a peasant family who had personally had the singular privilege of being able to study. Listening to her I was struck by her sincerity as she explained the difficulties she had encountered in her path of emancipation that had dualism as an initial condition. Thus, there were the dualisms, for example, of body-thought and nature-culture, so I felt her experience as being very close to mine, as I am, too, a first-generation student from a working-class family with a deep research interest related to the themes of the body (Luraschi, 2020). She also describes the pleasure of becoming an adult educator who had worked with a particular creative method to engage women in "writing from experience" (Melandri 2017, p. 10, my translation), in life learning and emancipation courses for 150 hours. Her story created connections with my current experience of auto/biographical research with students who are attending courses at a school for adult students (CPIA) in the metropolitan area of the city of Milan. In conclusion, when conversing with Gaia during the visit to the exhibition *Gestures of revolt* I reflected on how much learning can represent for me and many other women: An experience of self-recognition and human flourishing (Honneth, 1995, p.131).

Women Who Have Returned to Education

There is a connection between the feminist tradition of adult education underlined by the exhibition I visited and my research experience with various groups of women, some of whom had a migratory background, that took place some weeks

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[5] The video is available in Italian, link: https://memomi.it/il-femminismo-a-milano-puntata-7-femminismo-e-150-ore.

after the exhibition visit. In fact, in that period I was invited by the Lombardy Center of Research, Experimentation and Development to conduct auto/biographical interviews describing the relational experiences of non-traditional adult students who have returned to learning to obtain a middle school or high school diploma and who attended CPIA courses in Lombardy during the pandemic crisis. The aim was to collect significant stories and publish them in a journal dedicated to teachers' lifelong learning to increase teachers' awareness of the potential of relational networks between students, teachers, and territories. Thus, I created a participatory study with 11 adult learners and nine teachers during the pandemic in Milan, more precisely between the summer and autumn of 2020. Biographical materials were generated using the auto/biographical method, a process of research that recognizes an "inter-relationship between the construction of our own lives through autobiography and the construction of others' lives through biography" (Merrill & West, 2009, p. 8). I engaged in this research with a young professional photographer, also called Gaia – Gaia Bonanomi[6] – to dialogue informally with her on the evocative power of images to give voice to the body. She is a young fashion photographer who began to question her work during the lockdown and decided to carry out more personal research on social issues. She offered to observe the interviews and from time to time, with the participants' agreement, to take photos of them at the end of the interviews.

Gaia amazed me with her ability to focus on a single detail right from the first interview in which she participated. In fact, she had managed to involve a young refugee with a passion for athletics to recreate a training session in a room. Looking at that photo (Figure 4) during the analysis of the interview, I was fascinated to realize that all the strength and determination of the young migrant to continue his studies, despite the work commitments necessary to sustain himself, were condensed in that image.

This experience encouraged me to follow my intuition of intertwining words and images in my quest to give substance to narratives (Banks, 2007). The results, which were published in a journal dedicated to teachers and adult education, explore the social capital in learning for students going back to school, most of whom have a migratory background (Luraschi, 2021). Research on non-traditional students (see Finnegan et al. 2014) indicates that for the students both Social Capital and Imagined Social Capital are important. The latter is based on symbolic networks made up of people who are most likely not personally known to the subject but to whom significant power is attributed to inspire the resilience

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[6] Gaia Bonanomi, https://gaiabonanomi.com/.

Figure 4: Student photographed at the end of the interview, June 2020,
Gaia Bonanomi PH

necessary to continue the learning process (Quinn, 2010, p.68). However, the pandemic has reduced social relations and has modified our imaginary. What effect does it have on adults who study?

First, during the search for participants via the snowball sampling method, finding women that were willing to be interviewed individually was much more complex than finding male subjects. According to feminist theory, this difficulty refers to the traditional dichotomy between the public/private space that sees women less represented in the public and political sphere. As a result, women are generally less self-confident when it comes to making their voices heard than men, because in the past Western culture disapproved of the idea that women could speak in public (Beard, 2017) and, even today, male discourse is still the

standard – loud, authoritative, and "valued" (Holmes, 1992, p. 135). In addition, the pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on women globally. The particularly heavy impact of the pandemic on women is clearly related to their care of the family, especially if they are mothers with school-age children because of the prolonged school closures. In fact, in its 2021 *Report on gender equality in the EU*, the European Commission declares that "The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities between women and men in almost all areas of life, both in Europe and beyond, rolling back on the hard-won achievements of past years." (EU, 2021, p.3). For this reason, I thought that since the women participating in my research were certainly already overloaded with work and finding it difficult to reconcile study with job and family commitments, my research should not be yet another burden of commitment, but rather an opportunity to meet other women to engage in dialogue and reflect on their own experience. Therefore, I set up a small group interview in the hope of achieving a deeper and richer understanding of the collective construction of the stories we are immersed in, and interview was organized in such a way that it would also be educational for the participants. In fact, education creates a way of thinking and habitual points of view that we use to understand reality (Formenti & West, 2018).

The participants were three students (Figure 5), a teacher and the school's director, all of whom were women. From the resulting conversation, in which the photographer took part in the role of participating observer (Richardson, 2000), multiple perspectives emerged (Luraschi, 2020) of what having a sustainable life can mean – in families, schools, communities, society – in this fragmented world characterized by deepest gender inequalities.

As an adult educator and activist researcher, I tried to use auto/biographical narrative methods in a search to create what Bainbridge and West (2021) call, in the spirit of Donald Winnicott (1971), a good enough transitional and even transformational space where significant and difficult life experiences can be engaged with dialogically and relationally (see West, 2016). Following Bainbridge and West, I seek to nurture deeper forms of self/other relationships, reciprocal understanding, and shared commitment to social justice. I believe that as an activist researcher I have the possibility "to encourage empathic, reflexive listening, respectfulness, openness, dialogue, trust, playfulness, equality and learning about self and the other" (Bainbridge and West 2021, p.124).

From this perspective, the interview generates a space for critical reflection on the self as well as intersubjective knowing of self in relationships, if we accept, as Evans suggests, that "the biographical research interview is interactive, co-

Figure 5: The three adult learner protagonists of the interview, October 2020,
Gaia Bonanomi PH

constructed, flooded with inter-discursivity, and that it constructs and constitutes local action and meaning-making in the rich ecologies of learning and living" (Evans, 2021, p.42). As such, our time together became more than an interview, because the students not only told the story of their return to education, but they also shared emotions and struggles that relate to their social roles and status.

Discriminations and Solidarity

The conversation was intense: Deeply rooted social prejudice, significant examples of gender inequality, and above all the image of three brave women emerged from the stories. The photographer described the atmosphere during the interview in the following way:

> We sit in the room and in the gray of the afternoon to my eyes the colors of their clothes stand out. Cecilia, Olga, and Teresa[7] sit composed, formal, full of curiosity about the interview. Hands in pockets and three shy faces hidden behind the anti-covid masks. As soon as they begin to tell each other about themselves, their arms began to unfold, and they recognize each other as travelling companions.

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[7] Invented names.

> How magical the confrontation is! To listen and be heard, understood, shared, and supported. That afternoon, sincere and powerful tears descended, filled with difficulty, but bright and full of life. (Gaia's email, January 2021, my translation.)

Once again, drawing from her professional experience in fashion photography, her artistic gaze can see details and illuminates the scene by capturing the colors of the clothes and the posture of the three women, and by grasping their depth through their stories.

On the other hand, my point of view as a researcher was oriented by my previous professional experiences in the field of pedagogical research with social workers and migrants to focus my attention and my analysis on the experience of two of them, Cecilia and Olga, who both have a migratory background. Their individual stories describe a complex scenario that, from my perspective, invites reflection on the contemporary Italian context in relation to the presence of foreigners in Italy. This is a multifaceted and changing image, indispensable from a historical point of view to understand Italy today (Colucci, 2018). In fact, Italians are struggling to consider immigration a structural phenomenon in their opinion and continue to consider it a social emergency.

At the beginning of our conversation, Cecilia introduces herself, describing her family roles and her transitions: She is a housewife who left Brazil when she was 27 years old. Today she is 41 years old, and she has been living in Europe for almost 14 years. Cecilia also tells us that she is a lawyer, but her degree is not recognized in Italy. In Brazil, she had worked for FIAT, the best-known Italian car manufacturer, and it was in this workplace that she met her husband, an Italian man. After the wedding they decided together to move to the United Kingdom (UK) where the husband had received a very advantageous job offer. Here Cecilia tells us that she felt the desire to resume studying to have the opportunity to practice as a lawyer in England, but she was unable to do so due to the very high costs of university fees. Consequently, she gladly accepted the proposal of her husband who, after a few years of work in UK, proposed to move to Italy, because she tells us that her husband was homesick for Italy, and she hoped that having worked in Brazil for an Italian company she would not have struggled to find a job.

Once she arrived in Italy, however, Cecilia realized the difficulty of finding a job, not only because her law degree was not recognized, but also because as a mother of two small children it was impossible to reconcile work ensuring they were cared for. In Italy, from her point of view, services to support parenting is

meagre and poorly organized compared to those available in the UK, so she had to become a full-time housewife and mother. Over the years, the education of the children led Cecilia to get to know and meet a group of women with whom she could exchange clothes, objects, and advice on the care of children. Over time, when the informal group of women decided to structure itself to become a cultural promotion association, Cecilia realized that some Italian mothers made her uncomfortable, saying that she spoke Italian badly and she could not be part of the board of an association that she cares about very much.

According to the way Cecilia develops her narrative, it was this episode that reignited the idea she had had in the UK of returning to studying, but with a different goal. In fact, her desire, which emerges during the conversation, is no longer to work as a lawyer but to become a social worker to support foreign mothers who are living in Italy. Cecilia's experience shows the identity struggle process characterized as a transformation (Formenti & West, 2018) and, at the same time, the tension embedded in the Italian context in relationship to people with migratory background (Formenti & Luraschi, 2020). In fact, it is important to underline that Cecilia is formally an Italian citizen, as a wife and mother of Italian citizens, but she is not recognized as such and therefore does not appear to feel Italian. Discrimination phenomena such as those experienced by Cecilia are widespread and cross all social classes and cultural contexts. For example, in the days in which I am writing this article, the news that the captain of the Italian women's volleyball team at the next Olympic Games will be Miriam Fatime Sylla, a young Italian with Ivorian origins, caused a sensation. In this regard, I was interested in a comment of the captain of the men's volleyball team, Ivan Zaytsev, a young man with Russian origins who stated in an important national newspaper:

> The new captain of the women's team is Miriam Sylla, born in Palermo of African parents. I was born in Spoleto of Russian parents. Maybe we are leading the national teams because we are constantly forced to prove that we are Italian. Obviously, this prejudice towards those who have no roots here is not normal but having to convince others has made us greater warriors and more patriotic. (*Corriere della Sera*, June 2021[8], my translation.)

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[8] Article written by Eleonora Cozzari, available in Italian: https://www.corriere.it/sport/calcio/europei/21_giugno_17/ivan-zaytsev-politica-egonu-speranze-dell-italia-tokyo-siamo-piu-maturi-b9000c26-ced5-11eb-b2ed-71257ec75099.shtml.

It is therefore evident how complex it is to live in a context in which a person is forced to continually prove to be Italian, while at the same time it is risky to uncritically indulge to this external request because they can end up adhering to the idea that since you do not have Italian origins you have to demonstrate that you "deserve to be" an Italian citizen. Returning to Cecilia's experience, this could mean an uncritical acceptance of prejudice, sometimes even unconsciously, influenced perhaps by her accent, often wrongly superimposed on linguistic competences (Calamai et al., 2020) and indirectly on work-related and social-related competencies. At the same time, Cecilia's story describes, in line with migration studies in Italy that, more generally, media and political representations of immigration in Italy (*Vita*, October 2020[9]) do not allow migrants to emerge as individuals with their own ideas, aspirations and capacity for action within the social context.

The drive to return to learning to overcome cultural, social, and linguistic barriers can also be found in the story of Olga, another of the interviewees. Olga was born 34 years ago in Russia and has a university degree in Engineering. Like Cecilia, she arrived in Italy to follow her husband, also a Russian engineer, after she had lived with him in Chile where they met. It was love at first sight: She was on vacation and fell in love with this Russian who was employed there. During the interview Olga told us that it was very difficult for her to live in Chile because she did not speak Spanish and, once in Italy, she decided to attend public school immediately to learn Italian. Olga explains how her Italian teacher has represented a point of reference for her because she tells us with a genuine enthusiasm that the teacher has transmitted the passion for Italian and she invited her to read many books to improve her language skills. During the conversation Olga changes her tone of voice when she talks about her: From a bright and cheerful tone to a calmer tone. Therefore, she says that she has changed her professional perspectives due to her stay in Italy and the birth of a son: She currently makes cakes and sweets for anniversaries on request and wishes to continue her training by attending a course in fashion design.

At the same time, a few months ago she started to informally help a group of women, Russian native speakers without papers, because she explains that they do not have the documents and cannot go to school to study normally as she does.

These two stories suggest, I argue, the wide socio-cultural capital of the women who are going back to school and showed their propensity to create

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[9] Article written in Italian and available: http://www.vita.it/it/article/2020/10/08/la-voce-dei-migranti-non-e-rappresentata-sui-media/156917/.

supportive relationships with other women with migratory backgrounds. Their experience convinced me that adult learners need to be together to speak openly, just as the group of women showcased in the Milan museum exhibition did in the 1970s, to create a space of their own, thinking together, with body and mind, and imagining a future based on the recognition of the ecology of life and celebration of difference.

I presented these reflections at an online conference of the network LHBN, and afterwards I received feedback from Michelle Glowacki-Dudka, a researcher expert on group development in online adult education classrooms, suggesting I carry out an interpretative and collaborative analysis of the interview to create a space of reflection online during the pandemic. The colleague suggested that I engage myself to find, in an informal manner, a small group of women to creatively re-read the material with me. This was to take place online as it was not possible to meet in person at that moment due to the lockdown in response to the pandemic.

Living on the Edge

I am searching for another language, more embodied and creative, to create a new shared understanding of women returning to education and to learn about them in relation to the many complex circumstances that shape their lives and their struggles for beauty and freedom. For this reason, I invited six women: Two university students, a theatre actor and teacher, a psychotherapist, a psychiatrist, and a lawyer who came together by chance to work creatively with me online. Each had responded to an invitation from me disseminated via WhatsApp and not all of them knew each other, but they were all interested in reflecting on the condition of women. Each of them reads a selection of the transcription of the interactive exchange with Cecilia and Olga that I had anonymized before our meeting, and together we began to speak freely on the most significant passages starting from their own personal experience. Firstly, Luciana, as a lawyer, described the feeling of frustration and fatigue experienced by some women due to the impossibility of reconciling work and family, and Lara as a psychotherapist with a migratory background – she is from Brazil like Cecilia – felt it important to reiterate that it is possible to have foreign degrees recognized in Italy and that schools for adults should support students more in this recognition process. During the conversation we focused on Lara's notion, according to which:

"When you are a foreigner, you are always on the sidelines" (my translation).

Figure 6: Beatrice's artwork, Milan, May 2021

Beatrice is an actor with experience of teaching in social and community theatre, so her gaze is oriented to search for the potential in people:

"I feel a lot of power in these women who study and wish a different future" (my translation).

Beatrice's focus on resources instead of women's problems effectively refocused the whole dialogue, so much so that the whole group were united in the belief that the stories of these women should be listened to more often because they arouse

reflections on adulthood by stirring emotions and touching on important issues for our society. We spent two hours together discussing the invisibility of people going through transition phases like those returning to adult education. Marina, the university student, claims that while studying pedagogical sciences she has had few opportunities to reflect on what it means for an adult to resume their studies:

> "This experience has opened up a world that I did not know and that intrigues me" (my translation).

Arriving at the end of the online meeting, I had the feeling that some participants felt the desire to continue the reflection, so I proposed to work creatively on the transcription (with the authorization of Cecilia and Olga) to create a poetic text. Here, Beatrice suggested choosing an interview story and working only on that, so Lara expressed her desire to work on Cecilia's story and her proposal found everyone's complete agreement. We said goodbye with the promise to exchange poetic texts via WhatsApp. After a few days I received from Beatrice a photograph of a piece of artwork made by hiding part of the interview with some cuttings of colored sheets and highlighting some words (Figure 6). The highlighted words from Cecilia's interview were used by her to create a short poetic text which ends like this:

> "I will do this from a distance
>
> I would like to cling to the sky
>
> Starting everything from scratch" (my translation).

Conclusion

Schools for adults and universities today tend to speak the language of indicators, metrics, rankings, competition, and productivity, so an auto/biographical approach could try to tell the experience of the margin. As researcher, I try to be critically reflexive through maintaining an attitude of openness (Gardner, 2014), but this desire to be open is often undermined by the pressure to be efficient and by the Western cultural tendency to think in binaries and dichotomies (Bateson, 1972). Therefore, in this research work I have tried to cross what Hunt and West (2012, p.150) call the border country of adult learning, a challenging territory in which learners must live with the loss of identities on the road to new learning

and new possibilities. During the pandemic I felt alone, and meeting these women allowed me to reconnect with the research work I love because it allows me to meet life stories and learn from them.

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Autobiographical Memories as Islands of Certainty in an Ocean of Complexity: A Cooperative Enquiry on the Effects of the COVID-19 Emergency on Some Disability Services in Northern Italy

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Abstract

In a historical moment characterised by uncertainty and concern about the future, autobiographical memories can be a source of inspiration for orientation and learning to change. In social work, this possibility becomes a necessity that cannot be postponed, especially where the usual patterns of action prove inadequate to deal with the problems generated by the crisis. Within the framework of a systemic epistemology and complexity, this article describes a cooperative inquiry involving some coordinators of disability services in Lombardy, northern Italy. The re-enactment of autobiographical memories was used as a basis to explore themes related to the professional practices of these coordinators. The memories, recalled and re-signified within the training device, facilitated the opening to a complex thought, in which certainty and uncertainty and different ways of knowledge are connected.

Keywords

social work, uncertainty, cooperative inquiry, transformative learning, autobiographical memories

Introduction

I am a PhD student and a social worker. This research is part of a workplace doctorate I have undertaken — a particular form of doctorate that involves an

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agreement between a company and a university based on needs arising from the field in which the company operates. In my case, the company I work for is a social cooperative operating in Lombardy, a region in northern Italy, and the need is to rethink and transform the educational and social practices of the system of services for adults with disabilities which I am part of.

My return to the university came 15 years after graduating in Psychology and after 13 years of undertaking social work, and I had to learn how to combine the knowledge from my training with the experiential knowledge of my work practice. During the past 13 years I have had the opportunity to work in different services promoting the social inclusion of people with disabilities, first as an educator and then as a coordinator. For some years now, my role in the cooperative has been to manage the coordinators of the disability sector with regard to aspects related to social planning and organisation of services.

In Italy the COVID-19 pandemic arrived only a few months after I started my PhD. Right from the start, it created an upheaval in the regular organisation of services, leading to a need to suspend the usual activities and create new ways of providing services to people with disabilities and their families. The emergency, which continued over the following months without pause, also challenged some usual working patterns, such as the linear planning of activities based on predefined objectives year on year.

My own research pathway was also affected by the crisis generated by the pandemic. Before the crisis, by the end of the first year of my PhD I had attended most of the methodological lectures and pedagogical seminars, and I had managed to identify a research topic, carry out a scoping review, and create the first plan for my upcoming research project. However, the subsequent closure of the service sites, their reorganisation, and the continuation of the emergency over the following months were all factors that forced me to abandon the linear planning of the research pathway in order to explore new possibilities.

The prolonged health emergency exacerbated a deep sense of uncertainty about the origin of the virus, its uneven spread, its mutations, and, beyond that, about individual and collective futures. As Morin (2020) states in "Changeons de voie. Les leçon du coronavirus", the pandemic pushed people to recognise the uncertainty that accompanies the great adventure of humanity, every personal story and every normal life. Uncertainty is the pattern that has connected (Bateson, 1972) my experience as a researcher with the experience of the coordinators of these services. What path will this research take? What path will the services take in the next months? What is the possible project to undertake in both cases?

A project (from the Latin *pro*, forward, and *jacere*, to throw) involves the organisation of actions over time in order to achieve objectives in the future. It involves a linear, direct, predetermined procedure. But what kind of project is possible in an uncertain scenario? Morin (1999) mentions the ability to cope with uncertainty as one of the seven areas of knowledge required for future education. In particular, he compares life to an ocean of uncertainties that can be navigated through islands of certainty. Crossing is an oblique, undirected proceeding within a dense space, a complex that binds the landscape and those who cross it. It is an adventure of thought (Morin, 2017) that requires courage and a method to deal with uncertainty and to foster the unfolding of complex thinking (*ibid.*).

Complex thinking is a systemic emergence that renounces pre-constituted knowledge and habitual explanatory schemes in favour of an ecological (Bateson, 1972) and aesthetic consciousness (Morin, 1977; Bateson, 1979). Complexity is an invitation to act out one's autopoietic capacities (Maturana & Varela, 1980), decomposing and recomposing one's narratives (Formenti, 2017), in a recursive procedure, at once linear and circular, which is best symbolised through the form of a spiral (Formenti, 2009). In this learning to unlearn (Bateson, 1972; Baumann, 2000) and learning to relearn there is the possibility of learning to transform (Mezirow, 1991) in a recursive dance of stability and instability.

Within this dance, autobiographical memories can play a significant part. They provide a sense of continuity of self over time and contribute to the creation of an "autobiographical self" (Damasio, 1999; 2003). From a lifelong-learning perspective, what characterises adulthood is the ability to look back and redefine one's life journey, learning reflectively from it. Within a training setting, the re-enactment of an autobiographical episode can promote the flowering of complex thinking (Formenti, 2017). The autobiographical episode, in fact, chosen on the basis of a theme or a research question, allows the knowledge process to be based on something concrete, on a radical memory (Heron, 1996). It calls into question corporeal thought, stimulates the enactive experience of the body (Varela, 1984), and allows thought to be set in motion. The re-enactment and narration of an autobiographical episode offers the possibility of constructing a theory of lived experience, of connecting the inside and the outside, the past and the present, making implicit theories visible.

In the following paragraphs, I will narrate the research-training process which involved myself and the coordinators of the disability services of my cooperative. The account has attempted to articulate the feeling of uncertainty and disorientation caused by the pandemic emergency, and to draw on the embodied, situated, and

aesthetic knowledge of autobiographical memories. The aim of this path was to create an intermediate space for reflexivity and action in which to redefine the theme of planning and the function of coordination within a context of uncertainty. After explaining and describing the methodological aspects, I will share with readers the reflections that emerged, and finally I shall try to draw some conclusions about the role of autobiographical memories in promoting complex thinking.

Methodology

From the outset, I had to recognise my compromised position as a researcher (from the Latin *compromissus*, obliged together), bound up with my professional history, the fact of being part of the culture under investigation, and of being someone who is also interacting with the crisis generated by the pandemic. The first methodological step was therefore to contextualise the research path, recognising that I was part of the game, with a perspective that was necessarily "observer dependent" (Von Foester, 1982) and passionate (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991). This made it necessary to take methodological care to declare, make explicit, and document not only the different stages of the research process but also any hypotheses, images, and passages of thought, through an attitude of epistemological modesty (Brown, 2012).

I used an ethnographic and autoethnographic approach that could help me integrate my voice with that of the coordinators (Jessor, Colby, & Shweder, 1996; Chang, 2008). The recollection of autobiographical memories helped me to situate myself within the story, and connect with the experience narrated by the coordinators and the scientific literature related to my research topic. Looking inwardly (my identity, thoughts, feelings, memories) and outwardly (my relationships, the context, and culture I belong to) allowed me to place my autoethnographic voice in context (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2015).

Consistent with the recognition and acceptance of my engaged, situated, and entangled position, the involvement of the coordinators also involved not only the practical dimension of research-training but also the interpretative one, connoting itself as research with people (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 2001). Central to this is the development of a "critical subjectivity" that does not deny personal, lived knowledge in favour of a hypothetical objectivity, but cultivates a high quality and valid individual perspective in collaboration with others who do the same (*ibid.*, p. 15).

Being guided by a systemic and complexity epistemology (Formenti & West, 2018), I have internalised a situated and contextualised conception of learning

(Formenti, 2018) that involves a constant adaptation and co-evolution in/with the context. The context is the result of a coordinated construction of knowledge by means of interaction: the focus is no longer only on the individual mind but on the whole learning situation that is created from participation in community/culture (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Cooperative inquiry is an action-research methodology that goes beyond data collection and analysis. Its distinctive feature is to consider the wide range of human sensitivities and capabilities as an instrument of inquiry.

Specifically, for this research, I proposed to employ the research-training method (Formenti, 2017) to the coordinators. It is based on a systemic epistemology that trusts the process and opens up possibilities. It proposes narrative, compositional, cooperative practices and aims at complex, layered, situated, relational, transformative learning and the development of a satisfactory theory, starting from the participants' lived experience, narrated, analysed, and re-signified together. The method is inspired by Heron's (1992) model of knowledge pathways. In the variant proposed by Formenti (2009), it proposes a phased process involving different forms of knowledge: authentic experience (embodied bodily-sensory knowledge), aesthetic representation (the metaphorical symbolic plane), intelligent understanding (the collective mind), and deliberate action.

Participants, Data Collection, Analysis, and Interpretation

Firstly, I proposed and described the research-training methodology inspired by the knowledge spiral model (Formenti, 2009) to the nine coordinators of disability services in the social cooperative where I work. Some of them asked me how much commitment this process would require from them. In particular, they were concerned about the work overload that this situation of prolonged uncertainty was already demanding of them. Their questions were also my concerns. I am a colleague of theirs and, at the same time, I started my PhD in order to bring research skills to my work context that would be useful in enhancing our local knowledge and connecting it with scientific knowledge. In one of my autoethnographic writings I find these doubts:

> After years I returned to the University but I am the one who is profoundly different: I have a long work experience, I am a mother of two children. (...) At the beginning I wondered how all this novelty could relate to my professional world. There are times, even today, that I worry about taking time away from my work to study and carry out research. It is not easy to find the right balance. It is a tangled feeling, where personal aspirations are involved, the desire to be useful to my colleagues, the fear of not having

> enough time to pursue my studies, the sense of guilt for the time I take away from my family.

The concerns of some coordinators became an opportunity to explore the cooperative inquiry methodology with them. This made it possible to create a climate of trust in which to recognise, express, and welcome the emotional states linked to the process and in which to establish authentic collaboration and participatory decision-making (Heron & Reason, 2001). The coordinators all agreed to take part in the process by reading and signing the informed consent form.

The value of cooperative inquiry lies in the possibility of inhabiting the often insurmountable boundary between practice and research. In it, practitioners jointly assume the responsibility of becoming co-researchers, examining their own experience and action carefully, in collaboration with others who share similar interests and issues. Connecting the memory of the beginning of the doctoral journey with the doubts expressed by the coordinators helped all of them find their own positioning within the research.

The question identified by the group and which guided this research-training pathway was: How is it possible to learn to transform the implicit theories that guide one's professional practice, in a situation characterised by high uncertainty?

The course took place between October 2020 and March 2021 and included monthly meetings held remotely through the use of a digital communication platform. In the days leading up to each meeting, an exchange of e-mails or phone calls was made to collect questions or issues to reflect on together. My role in each meeting was that of a facilitator of the process, within a "generative, risky, open, uncertain relationship between co-responsible subjects, authentically engaged in the search for a not entirely predictable knowledge" (Formenti, 2017, p. 225).

Biographical memories have been used as proposals to ground the cognitive process on something concrete, on an authentic experience, activating a "radical memory" (Heron, 1996). The aim of this re-enactment was to set thought in motion, transform the gaze, seek new words to describe the coordinators' experience of uncertainty, and bring to light certain preconceptions that guide habitual action. Each meeting aimed at deconstructing and reconstructing the theories that usually guide one's professional actions, starting from the coordinators' lived experience, recounted, analysed, and re-signified together (Formenti, 2017). The meetings ended with the identification of a deliberate action that would try to bring some changes or reflections into the professional action, to be shared and contextualised within one's work teams.

The use of a digital communication platform made it possible to record the meetings, which I listened to, transcribed, and sent by e-mail to the coordinators between meetings. This operation provided a useful element of triangulation that allowed us to go over the process we had lived several times and to bring out new reflections, questions, and insights. The latter often acted as a stimulus for subsequent meetings.

The transcripts of the meetings and my own participant observations, field notes, and autoethnographic writings formed the material for analysis and interpretation. In accordance with Maxwell (2005), the process of analysis and interpretation began early on and continued throughout the research. In particular, I followed a scissor-like process for interpretation: on the one hand, I fed on the connections with certain theoretical and methodological constructs and, on the other hand, I relied on the close interaction and co-construction of meaning with the coordinators who, together with me, were involved in the research.

Discussion

During the first meetings, the topic of service design, activities, and individual pathways during these months of the crisis was the most critical one for the coordinators. Before the arrival of the pandemic emergency, the services used to design individual educational plans for one year, with objectives that were verified at the end of the year. The individual education plans were followed by the programming of service activities, which were also carried out continuously throughout the year. The pandemic emergency initially led to the closure of the service centres and then forced the services to reshape their interventions to reduce the risk of contagion and to meet the different needs of people with disabilities and their families. This situation of displacement and uncertainty generated in the coordinators some initial reflections and questions:

> How can we embark on an educational and social project when we don't know what will happen next week? How long can projects made in this way last?

> How do we plan if families don't want to send their child to the service because they are afraid?

In June 2020, after the first national lockdown, services had reopened but everything still looked very unstable. Some families had chosen not to have their children attend the centres, and people were scared about the likely arrival of

a second wave of the pandemic. After the summer, it was no longer clear whether we were coming out of the emergency or whether this would become the new normal we had to adapt to. In some parts of my autoethnographic writings, I find this feeling of uncertainty as in the following excerpt, which is linked to the memory of a recurring dream from the past:

> During the lockdown we closed the doors and windows. Then they were timidly reopened, but it is as if the pressure of all that was left out is so strong that it leaves us, once again, unprepared. This feeling reminds me of a recurring dream where I am at home and suddenly the lake in my town[2] is flooding. The water rushes in through the windows and everything is flooded. I then realise that the only thing I can do to survive is to open the windows, to let myself be carried away by the force of the water, without trying to resist. Now that I think about it, water was also the metaphor most often used by the coordinators during the first exploratory research: the tsunami, the storm, the stormy sea.[3] Seven months have passed since those interviews, and I smile bitterly at the thought that we were convinced that that mishap would change our lives, perhaps even for the better.

A sense of disillusionment and concern accompanied the period following the first wave of the pandemic. Uncertainty was to be present for a long time to come in the everyday life of the services. The questions and doubts of the coordinators challenged the perspectives of meaning that had guided their planning until then. They can be seen as "disorienting dilemmas" (Mezirow, 1991), which interrupt action and require critical reflection on the premise and meanings implicit in their professional practice.

Linear planning and structuring by fixed objectives are elements that give a definite direction to action, within a time conceived as entirely predictable and organisable. However, the situation of uncertainty has shifted the focus from the action to the context within which that action takes place. The need to give direction can become a challenge when there is a large amount of information and multiple possible future scenarios (Formenti, 2016).

The need to explore alternative ways to linear design was behind the coordinators' choice to reflect and act on their usual way of designing. The first

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[2] I live in Lecco, a town on Lake Como.
[3] Between March and May 2020, during the first national lockdown, I conducted a first exploratory research, in which I interviewed some of these coordinators. In the dialogic interviews, I asked the interviewees to tell me what was happening in their work, also through the use of metaphors.

way to access knowledge based on something concrete can be the re-enactment of an authentic experience (Formenti, 2017). Recounting a lived experience in words can allow relevant differences to be identified (Bateson, 1979), offering a theory of experience that fosters connections between the inside and the outside, making visible the preconceptions that guide it.

For this reason, one of the proposals I made to the coordinators was to recall an episode from their personal lives in which they found themselves designing in an uncertain situation. Without being asked to do so, they all recalled an episode that had occurred during the pandemic: planning a lunch with friends, a trip, a routine activity such as shopping. Here are some excerpts as an example:

> I had to go to lunch with friends, that was our plan. First I created a WhatsApp group, then we decided how, when, where, why. Imagine the difficulties: children, one macrobiotic, one vegan, one omnivore. We found the place, we decided on the time, I made a reservation, and out came a new ordinance forcing restaurants and bars to close. So I contacted all my friends again and in the end we all decided to meet on Zoom.

> I want to tell you about the trip I planned this year. My family and I love travelling. I always take care of the organisation, I proceed by steps, well in advance, giving myself a goal. Last year, after deciding on the destination together, we started to study the route. We chose Brittany. First of all, we signed up on "Home-link", a virtual platform for home exchange. Then we sent requests to people who lived in that area to organise the home exchange and waited for the answers. Meanwhile, I bought a travel guide and studied the itinerary. We were in mid-November 2019. In February 2020, COVID-19 arrived. The thing that amazed me is that I usually pursue my goals anyway, no matter what happens. Instead, we put the travel arrangements on hold and never thought about it again. We thought to ourselves: "We'll do it another time." Then we came out of the first pandemic wave. At that point travelling abroad was allowed. We weren't thinking about it anymore but our home-linkers contacted us because they wanted to come to Italy. The situation allowed it and so we reactivated the whole process and planned what we wanted to go and see. I realised that organisation is important but so is being flexible.

In September I organised a surprise holiday for my husband. I wanted to surprise him for our wedding anniversary. The terrible period of COVID-19 (he is a nurse), had not allowed us to have our holidays together. First I chose the destination, bearing in mind that we had different wishes: I wanted to visit

a city of art, he wanted to be in nature. I chose to go to Mantua and then cycle to Sabbioneta, a nearby town, so that he would be happy too. Then I had to think of a place for my children to stay and chose the date. After solving this problem too, I organised the itinerary, chose a place to sleep, made a call, made a reservation. I took two guidebooks: I like to take a more narrative one that tells what's special about the city and a more traditional one. Finally, I looked for some nice restaurants, I made a note of the names but without booking. The fact is that everything we had planned to do didn't happen because we did something else entirely. We followed the flow with these wonderful bicycles that were our travelling companions and we constantly changed our plans.

After recalling and writing down these experiences, the coordinators were invited to choose an image-symbol of the episode narrated, from those proposed by Fabbri and Munari (2010). These are images that stimulate abductive thinking (Bateson, 1972), that try to generate small awareness and that investigate the crucial operations carried out by people from a cognitive point of view, to formulate theories and define action strategies (Fabbri & Munari, 2005). Metaphors belong to the area of "presentational knowledge" (Heron, 1992; Yorks & Kasl, 2006), intuitive and imaginative, capable of bridging experiential and propositional knowledge.

The coordinators chose different images to represent the type of planning connected with their autobiographical episodes. In some cases it was a grid, in other cases a boat in the ocean or an open encyclopaedia: images that could then be traced back to different operational epistemologies. During the meetings, the comparison between the participants favoured the emergence and recognition of the cognitive operations at the basis of some habitual action schemes.

Thinking together, in groups, is generative because it sets in motion an ecology of ideas (Formenti, 2017). According to Mezirow (2012), thinking like an adult means becoming aware of one's own theories of meaning, seeing them, naming them, and also being able to challenge them. Consciously, I chose to keep a risky positioning (*ibid.*), sharing with the coordinators also my emotions in listening to these stories:

> I enjoyed listening to your stories. The simple act of shopping sounded like an adventure. At a certain point I was wondering: "Will our heroes succeed in their plans?"

The process, generated in the phase of intelligent understanding, evokes new memories in the co-ordinators that set new reflections in motion. Some of them say:

> It reminds me of adventure books. When I was a child, I liked stories that made me hold my breath. I was curious to find out how the adventure would end. Now it scares us, we want to have the road paved but in reality we miss out a lot. Now the desire for adventure has returned to me.

In my opinion what is missing in our plans is where we are going. We can tell ourselves that some actions will be stopped or not done because of the emergency. However, if we only do what can be done, we risk losing a lot.

What is missing in our projects is the desire of the people. The heart is missing.

In the coordinators' quotations, the aspects of time, orientation, and meaning associated with planning return. However, unlike the disorienting dilemmas of the beginning, they reveal new possible trajectories that challenge the idea of a linear and predetermined design.

Following this questioning of the implicit theories guiding their idea of planning, the coordinators wanted to go into depth on other aspects linked to this theme, including the challenge of bringing together different points of view and connecting people's biographies with the organisational life of the services. Below is a narrative excerpt by a coordinator, produced from the proposal to tell "That time I had to change my mind":

> The boiler broke down, panic! Cold in the house, no time to get going, no desire. No trusted plumber. No relatives to advise me. I decide to talk to a plumber whom I had contacted some time ago about air conditioning units that I wanted to put in the community but had not installed. I contacted him and told him that my first objective was to spend little money. He explained to me what he intended to do, what brand he could install and the possible costs. I trusted him! My ex-husband arrived, I had asked him for a document I needed, and he raised the doubt that the plumber might be cheating me, telling me to check the prices. Eventually, doubt crept up on me. The boiler installation didn't go very well, there were a few problems but then they were resolved. I was left with a feeling of mistrust and once the invoice arrived, I checked the prices on the internet, forgetting about the additional costs that the plumber had told me about. I decided to tell the plumber about my doubts, he answered them again and I realised that my distrust and fear of being cheated (probably influenced by my husband) had made me see things in a blurred way.

In this case, after the re-enactment of the autobiographical episode, the coordinators were invited to re-enact a professional episode in which they had to reconsider something. I then proposed that they rewrite these episodes in reverse, imagining different reactions, emotions, and outcomes. These exercises, then

re-signified in the group, allowed the coordinators to become aware not only of the multiplicity of possible points of view on what is happening, but also of the possibility of being able to experiment with more flexible positions on the issues.

Also for these topics, the use of autobiographical memories made the coordinators aware of how certainty, conceived as "the state of being definite or of having no doubts at all about something" (from www.collindictionary.com) was not very close to their personal and professional life experiences.

In attributing a liquid quality to modernity, Baumann (2000) argues that in this state of perpetual change, uncertainty is in fact the only certainty. Here, I propose the possibility of seeing certainty and uncertainty as two sides of the same coin. In systemics, two polarities that are not opposed but connected to each other are called "cybernetic complementarities" (Keeney, 1983). Certainty, in its etymological meaning, refers to the idea of separateness and distinction (from the Latin *cèrtus*; *cèrnere* = to separate, to distinguish). If, on the one hand, disjointing allows one to grasp differences, on the other hand, connecting these differences is what can foster the emergence of new organisations and comprehensions (from the Latin *com-prehendere*, to learn together).

The autobiographical memories, recalled and narrated within the training space, enriched the coordinators' view on some aspects of their professional practice with new meanings. Orienting one's own professional action towards a horizon of meaning (while being aware of a path that cannot be defined a priori), giving a heart to the projects (starting from the desire of people with disabilities) and equipping oneself with disorienting moves (to try and change positioning and points of view) are some of the deliberate actions that the coordinators chose to bring into their professional practice.

Conclusion

According to Morin (1999), the only way to navigate complexity lies in the possibility of finding islands of certainty to orient oneself while navigating. If, on the one hand, complexity can be recognised by the negative traits of uncertainty and insufficiency of logic, on the other hand, situational and contextual approaches to adult learning (Formenti, 2018) can constitute the positive trait of complexity, capable of linking the one and the multiple, the singular and the universal, order and disorder.

According to this perspective, even if modernity can be described as a liquid age of great uncertainties (Bauman, 1999), everyone's existence rests on biographies that, day by day, confront and co-evolve with the complexity of becoming. Autobiographical memories, while drawing on the radical memory

of embodied knowledge (Heron, 1992), can at the same time be continually recalled, re-read, and re-signified in the light of present time. Like Morin's islands of certainty, they allow reflection to be rooted in an authentic experience that is brought to light through narration. Moreover, they allow us to regain possession of forgotten words and sensations that can become tools to cross with courage (from the Latin *cor habeo*, to have heart) the ocean of complexity, rediscovering its positive side that allows us to celebrate connections.

Even if the uncertainty generated by the pandemic has brought out the limits of an educational and social design based exclusively on linear logic, it has also allowed the exploration of new possibilities and meanings that are calling into question the implicit theories that had hitherto accompanied the professional practices of these coordinators.

The research-training was proposed as a pedagogical device in which the micro (individual), meso (group), and macro (referring to the culture underlying the organisation of these services) aspects could be connected. This may constitute a good lever for the promotion of transformative learning (Shapiro, Wasserman, Gallegos, 2012) that will be interesting to monitor over time, starting from the developments that this field research will take. It provided good leverage for promoting transformative learning (Shapiro, Wasserman, & Gallegos, 2012). From the coordinators' point of view, exploring some aspects related to their work, drawing on and connecting their biographical memories, allowed them to transform the experience of the crisis into an opportunity for critical reflexivity and change. For example, the professional practice of designing, alongside the autobiographical experience of designing, broadened the perspectives of meaning and generated changes in the way services are designed. In addition, from an organisational point of view, this path has created a basis for initiating a process of organisational redesign of these services, currently underway, and which is involving social workers, coordinators, institutional referents, and volunteers. From a personal point of view, the research-training path has allowed me to become aware of the generative potential of the crisis in terms of its uncertainty and evolutionary possibilities.

Even if there is an increasingly widespread awareness of having entered an era of great uncertainty (Morin, 2020), the implementation of shared processes of questioning and construction of meanings from autobiographical memories may be a valid attempt to grow "oases of fraternity" (Morin, 2019), at the same time rearguards and vanguards of humanity, from which to draw the resources and tools necessary to resume, with confidence, navigation of the ocean of complexity.

Acknowledgements

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Aknowledges

The Companionship of Books

Peter Leyland[1] 🆔

Guest edited by Alan Bainbridge, Laura Formenti, Ewa Kurantowicz

Abstract

In their book *Fulfilling the Potential of Your Doctoral Experience* (2018), Denicolo et al. speak of how experienced researchers talk about "the importance to discovery and innovation of serendipity" (p. 95), and although not an experienced researcher I will put myself forward as an example of how one thing can lead to another in one's research journey. It began when I was conducting research for my 2020 WEA course, "The Poetry of Climate Change," and my wife bought me a Christmas present, *The Ecopoetry Anthology* (2013). In the introduction by the poet Robert Hass I read that the word "ecology" was derived from the Greek word "oikos," meaning "household." This was altered by the German biologist Ernst Heikl to become oikology.

And then came the pandemic. "The Poetry of Climate Change" and all my other face-to-face courses were cancelled. Suddenly oikos or household was our refuge where we were locked down, unable to move out except for buying food and taking exercise. I had the space and time to look around and even try something different.

By sheer coincidence I had been teaching "The Short Story" to another class and had made contact through Twitter with a writer of short stories about the civil war in Syria, an issue that had engaged me deeply. The writer wrote for a group known as Authors Electric and I read some of their posts and submitted an abbreviated version of my 2020 ESREA paper for the conference "Activism in a Troubled World", about how reading poetry and novels can help us through when things get tough. This was accepted. I submitted two further pieces to Authors Electric and was invited to write a monthly blog for them.

In The Handbook of Autoethnography (2013), the end product is described as taking different forms such as research reports, poetry, performative scripts, songs, films, and the performing arts. All these I have seen and heard during my

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experience of ESREA. When I began presenting ideas about "bibliotherapy" at an ESREA conference in 2017, my paper was very autobiographical, an attempt to prove from my experience of reading fiction and poetry that this activity was good for us. Following on from this and reading much of the literature I now encountered, such as Etherington (2004), Merrill and West (2009) and Hoult (2012), and others that I found myself like Picket and Wilkinson (2018), I produced four further papers on my developing ideas of "bibliotherapy." Two of them were published as articles in research journals. It is this progression which produced the paper "The Companionship of Books."

   Analysis must follow description and there is further work to do, but meanwhile the story continues. In my recent Authors Electric blog I moved from describing other people's literary endeavours to writing my own. In a story entitled "Oh Lucky Man," I wrote about an experience from my childhood seen through the eyes of an invented character. This is my oikology.

Keywords

serendipity, "oikology," household, autoethnography, autobiography, bibliotherapy

Introduction

I will begin with a quotation from George Eliot, as this is where my research into the importance of books in our lives begins. She says in *The Natural History of German Life* (1856, pp. 5987.1.) that, "Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow men beyond the bounds of our personal lot." It is a quotation which literary critic James Wood uses in part for the title of his book, *The Nearest Thing to Life* (2015) in which he looks at why literature is important to us.

    In my study, "The Companionship of Books," I want to investigate George Eliot's claim that books, particularly literature, are important to us, and ask whether it can improve our physical and mental health in any way. On a personal level, and this is drawn from my own experience of writing and walking in the countryside just as Wordsworth and Coleridge did, reading poetry has helped me immensely. I will show evidence of this with autobiographical references. I will also add articles, books, and comments from students on courses I have run on the subject of "bibliotherapy."

    For the study I will be using autobiographical methods which I have met with at ESREA conferences, reading texts such as *Using Biographical Methods in Sociological Research* (Merrill and West, 2009) and *Adult Learning and la Recherche Feminine* (Hoult, 2012). In a recent work, *Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, Bainbridge et al (2021, p. 2) state that "Biographical research offers

insights, and even signposts, to understand and transcend the often ignored or defended darker side of the human condition." I think that literature is uniquely placed to be able to investigate this statement.

My acquaintance with the methods used by ESREA, which has been developing for the past six years, is neatly summarised in the final chapter of *Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* (2021). The authors say that their main objective is to chronicle the recent evolution of narrative and autobiographical methods in research on adult education and lifelong learning, and across the chapters in the book it is clear that most adult learning seems to happen while engaging with the Other. This Other, as I understand it, can mean another idea or paradigm, something that challenges our existence or balance. This can include personal struggles documented in the book, and how those authors try to recompose divergent aspects of their lives and learning, and greater understanding of the Other.

In the conclusion to the book, Bainbridge et al go on to indicate that the telling of one's life story can illuminate something greater and how narrative enquiry can enable us to cross boundaries of time and reconnect with the past or discuss possible futures. They mention the almost irreconcilable conflict between The Holocaust and the struggle of the Palestinian people, which is referred to in the introduction. This reminded me of a book, *The Apeirogon* (2020, McCann). The book, named for a shape with an infinite number of sides, is a fictionalised account of the real story of how two fathers from the Israeli–Palestinian divide come together over the deaths of their daughters and resolve to change things. The book is an example of how literature can work to change our ideas.

Bainbridge et al (2021) then explain how the ESREA network has sought to create a space which is different from historically dominant university cultures. It is more inclusive, a space where many can thrive. They give examples of their own struggles, drawing attention to ethical issues, vulnerability, and the search for safely and security in narrative engagement with a variety of what may be deeply personal issues. This is something I have been able to relate to closely. The six papers I have now delivered for ESREA have touched, for example, upon the early death of my father and my own issues with the depressions that followed.

Their research methodology is complex and various examples are given about how this might affect findings and exclude certain people who are not listened to because of class, gender or other marginalising attributes. In the end they ask, "What is a good life?" Narrative methods can look into this, they say, and "generate deep insight into individual and collective experience" (2021, p.225)

I found this methodology helpful for my proposed study, "The Companionship of Books." I came into this research field thinking that my experience of reading literature from a young age was likely to have some effect on my ability to deal with the various ups and downs of death, illness, divorce, and other life-changing events that have occurred. Beginning with the self, I extended it to my students, did a copious amount of reading, and talked and gave papers about my ideas as they evolved. I wanted to investigate this developing paradigm of how reading books can help us to live a better life. The title is inspired by a comment made by the philosopher Montaigne who lost a close friend to The Plague in in the 16th century, and discovered that the only comfort he could find was in books.

Lifelong Learning and Research

I have always believed through my own experience that learning has a social purpose and should be lifelong. This idea is not a new one and can be traced back to the founding of groups like the WEA in 1903; a group for whom I now teach, and whose principles I have enthusiastically absorbed. Laurence Goldman, in an essay in the book *A Ministry of Enthusiasm* (Ed. Roberts, 2003), refers to the WEA students taught literature by R. H. Tawney in 1929. One says, "Then R.H.T. reads to us Walt Whitman's "When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed"; this moves a student to give his favourite passage from another source: "'Pioneers! O Pioneers!' . . . And for some of us as we sat listening a new door opens" (p. 49).

This door should be an opening to lifelong learning in the UK, and that it hasn't proved as such is the fault of successive governments. In a recent article Mel Lenehan, principal of Fircroft adult education college, reminds us of the importance of education to a functioning democracy and refers to a 1919 report on adult education produced by the Ministry of Reconstruction (Lenehan, 2019). In the report, the same R.H. Tawney is said to argue that adult education is "a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong" (p. 2).

A door has been opened for me personally by my WEA teaching and, since 2017, by attending ESREA conferences. Through ESREA I have met a range of open-minded and accessible academics, either in person or online. I have read work by Elizabeth Hoult, Linden West, and Kim Etherington, amongst others. Hoult's work, *Adult Learning and la Recherche Feminine* (2012), which I read enthusiastically, had a profound effect on me. In her study of what constitutes resilient adult learners and their learning, Hoult includes detailed studies of literary texts and her own autobiographical writing. Her

book resonated with me and has given me the freedom to think and write in a research style that is more conducive to my own way of thinking than the traditional masculine research style that she mentions in her book. Another work that has influenced my thinking is a series of essays in *The Handbook of Autoethnography* (Ed. Holman Jones et al, 2013), which looks at the importance of storytelling and personal narrative in social research. In the essay "A History of Autoethnographic Enquiry," Douglas and Carless (2013) suggest that we can learn about the general through exploration of the personal. They say that the personal often challenges theories, categories, and interpretations, and that auto-ethnographers use a number of genres to explore their experience such as poetry, memoir, and diaries. This idea is something I have previously met with in the work of Etherington (2004), who says that telling one's own story helps a person create a sense of self and meaning. I also read Clough(2002), who takes a radical view of research methodology and assembles stories from the data he collects in order to make his point.

Hoult's idea, which I see as having a connection with my own study, is that a feminine research style can replace the more accepted or masculine academic style, and this is an idea which, as a new researcher, I found challenging but also freeing. Her book is about how adults acquire learning resilience, and she combines the autobiographical with evidence from her students and her family to show how learning can be transformative. In the final chapter of her book, she reminds us of her metaphoric use of ecdysis, a snake shedding its skin, to characterise her own transformation from an academic to a poetic or feminine researcher. She says that she is not arguing for the end of impersonal empirical study but for a style of research that deliberately marries the scholarly with the poetic. She refers to Helene Cixous, who says in her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976), referencing Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) and Molly Bloom's "yes I said yes I will Yes" at the end of Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), that feminine writing is more affirmative and that *through imaginative writing the system can be overthrown* (1976, pp. 885–6).

The radical approach of Cixous work is followed in Hoult's book by her advocacy of the juxtaposition of empirical data, literary analysis, and creative writing in her research. Aspects of the researcher's autobiography, she says, can be included, and experiences outside academic texts are taken seriously and allowed into the research work. To underline this idea Hoult uses a metaphor of rocks crystalising to represent feminine research. Just like the way metamorphic rocks are formed, so research texts will be transformed as different readers view them.

Reading and writing, she says, is itself a form of enquiry in which we can find new ways of knowing, which draws on the ancient wisdom of stories, the communities of which we are a part, and our own vulnerabilities (2012, pp. 190–1).

I, too, like to use metaphor. In *Using Biographical Methods in Social Research* (2009, p. 96) Merrill and West ask, "Are there are particular metaphors that attract you in considering aspects of your life history?" I have used metaphors in the presentation of the ESREA papers I have delivered, and I like the idea of a mosaic to describe my work. The paper which I presented in Norway in 2019, for instance, I called "Norwegian Wood, the Language of Poetry and Song." "Norwegian Wood" for me was a metaphorical concept which embraced revolutionary ideas. It was also a mosaic of ideas, referencing the country in which I was delivering my paper; its connection to Ibsen, Fosse, and other ground-breaking artistic figures; its link with The Beatles song, "Norwegian Wood," which had inspired a Murakami novel, *Norwegian Wood* (2000). The novel is set amidst the revolutionary fervour of 1960s Japan. In the paper I connected this to other revolutionary episodes, showing how we might use poetic language to challenge the travesties of justice that have occurred in our communities both past and present. I referred to Shelley's disquieting commentary on the Peterloo Massacre in his poem *The Masque of Anarchy* (1832) and American poet laureate Tracy Smith's poems on how black lives matter. The paper was published in *The International Journal for Talent Development and Creativity* (2019).

Bibliotherapy

One of the main problems with my research ambition to discover whether literature could help us to deal with life's mental and physical difficulties was the gathering of evidence to prove something that was as yet ill defined, more a feeling. I was asking whether reading books could help us with hardship, distress, and even happiness during our lives and whether there was such a thing as what is now called "bibliotherapy". Apparently, this term was originally coined in an *Atlantic Monthly* article published in August 1916 by Samuel McCord Carruthers. It is also used by writers like Paula Byrne of relitfoundation.org (2016), a website dealing with the subject. We learn that during World War 1, reading Jane Austen was used to help soldiers recover from their experiences, an example of bibliotherapy in action.

Relating to this, in a paper presented by Edmund King and Shafquat Towheed (Open University), Isaac Rosenberg is shown recovering from his wounds in Bury St. Edmond's Military Hospital. "I am still in the hospital . . . Just now I don't know

where I can keep books. I have with me Donne's poems and Brown's 'Religio De Medici' and must carry both in my pocket. I have drawn some of the chaps in the hospital and can see heaps of subject matter all over." This is a particularly good example of my title, "The Companionship of Books," and also links well to the art therapy mentioned in *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing* (2017), which I discuss below.

While I have found the term "bibliotherapy" useful, it can also be restrictive. What were the texts that could help us? Were they purely literary like Austen or Donne or could non-literary texts be included? I think the autoethnographic approach that I used, where I include evidence from myself, my students, and fellow academics, does indicate that other texts could be used. For example, at the 2021 ESREA conference in Wroclaw from which this article arises, one of the delegates gave a paper about the working life of his two grandfathers, the story of working-class men in search of a better life. As this has a bearing on my research, I will quote from it at length. One of the delegate's grandfathers had given him a gift of Ladybird books:

> I would lie on my bed and read of birds that travelled from Africa and the Arctic and that had beautiful songs that could fill the woods. I studied the pictures and committed them to memory – only opening the books to expose the side with the image before checking the name and description on the left. But the real joy, the joy that lasts a lifetime, takes place when the book comes to life. This happens when I see a chaffinch, or hear a blackbird singing in the same place at the same time every day – just like the book said.

This was clearly an important experience and the generic term "bibliotherapy" is now used for how reading books can lead to feelings like happiness, sadness, or even be a way of explaining things to the self. I recently published a piece for Authors Electric called "Dealing with the Dog" in which I attempt to define what "bibliotherapy" means. It describes my own attempts as an adolescent to use the reading of literature in a therapeutic fashion:

> My earliest recollection of this healing process was when as a boy I watched footage of the Aberfan pit disaster and couldn't make any sense of it except by looking at a poem by Dylan Thomas called "Once it was the colour of saying," and the lines "With a capsized field where a school sat still/And a black and white field where girls grew playing;" which although it had nothing to do with the disaster told me something about the power of poetry to heal my troubled thoughts.

I concluded the article after a number of further examples. I mentioned the poet Les Murray and argued that "bibliotherapy" had helped me then and continues to assist me now as an adult. "Get sick enough and you'll use any remedy you've got," he says in *Killing the Black Dog* (1997, p. 49).

Further Evidence

The Student Group

Following these initial thoughts on "bibliotherapy," I would like to add that at the 2021Wroclaw conference referred to above, one of the other delegates had voiced the opinion that this conference was "a space that allowed and celebrated confusion". It was "a space full of questions rather than answers," he continued. "This is what academia should be, a place to think difficult thoughts together and to ask difficult questions."

This was a kind of breakthrough moment, a feeling that one could open up to new research possibilities. In their book *Fulfilling the Potential of Your Doctoral Experience* (2018), the authors say, in a chapter entitled "Potential Resources and Opportunities," that "Researchers who discuss their research with a wide variety of people are more likely to find a connection or a collaborator that will help shape their research into something unforeseen" (Denicolo et al., 2018, p. 95). Considering how these connections had worked for me, I thought I would use the story of a student poetry group that I had taught continuously for five years in my research. This would be followed by a number of articles and books that I had discovered during the "research journey," another metaphor referred to in Merrill and West (2009, p. 96).

I had inherited the poetry group from another WEA Tutor in 2014 and found that numbers were falling. There were 14 students, most of whom were retired or not working for other reasons. I decided to teach them a number of poetry courses where the emphasis would be on reading aloud, something that I had found through experience that adults enjoyed doing with literary texts. The basic idea was that students would read and discuss selections of poems together in small groups and then read one or two of the best that they had chosen to the main group for further discussion.

At the same time the WEA had introduced an extra element in the SLRs (Student Learning Records), namely asking whether the course had any effect on their health and wellbeing. The emphasis on wellbeing was also highlighted in a supplementary form called *Tell Us About It*. Both forms were completed after the course had finished, and in the room where it had taken place. For the purposes

of my study, I discussed this with both my line manager and with the students and was given their agreement to refer to these records. This set of comments is taken from students' responses to my course, *An Introduction to Modern Poetry*.

On the *Tell Us About It* forms, over half the class said that it had improved the health and wellbeing of both themselves and the class. This is a selection of comments from the SLRs:

> Reading aloud and group discussion of poets' work and biographies aided understanding to a very great degree.

> Excellent – exciting, informative – quite a lot of interaction which the class gains from . . . love reading aloud.

> It has given me more confidence, especially joining in the group readings. It has been great for my wellbeing in general . . .

> [I] thoroughly enjoyed the class. I am not very good at joining in discussion in large groups but that's just the way I am and what I prefer. I still appreciate being part of such an inspiring course.

> It is good to share comments in the small groups organised by [the tutor] and I'm enthused to look into poets and their work more at home.

Looking at these comments, it is clear that this group benefited greatly from the interaction they experienced. Expressions like "Reading aloud . . . aided understanding of poets work," "love reading aloud," and "great for my wellbeing in general" echoed the aims I had. The statements, "I am not very good at joining in discussion in large groups" and "it is good to share comments in the small groups" indicated that the way I had organised the reading aloud was appropriate.

After two further poetry classes with this group, I was keen to explore the idea that our emotional health could benefit from reading and discussing novels and poetry, and that this could directly affect our wellbeing. Mark Edmondson in *Why Read?* (2004) says that we can construct ourselves from novels, poems, plays (p. 86) and that, like Proust, writers can get the reader to feel what they feel (p. 107). I decided to set up a project to test the idea that readers could benefit in health terms from reading literature. I asked the poetry group to help me plan the course. After a number of discussions in which I shared with them the ideas that I have been presenting at ESREA conferences, particularly why reading imaginative work is so important, we came up with the following rationale:

> Reading poetry/novels can lift us out of our everyday experience, and offer us pleasure, mental stimulation, a sense of wellbeing and company. How do words and imagery affect us, enhance our sense of connection and hearten us, encourage us to express ourselves and empathise with others?

It would be called *Reading Can Enhance Our Lives* and funded through the WEA's collaboration with the *Leicester Ageing Together* project. It would run over five weeks at our normal poetry venue and would be free for participants. I would produce a reflective recording each week about who was involved, what happened, my thoughts and feelings about this, comments from those who had benefited, implications for the next step, and what I would do for this.

I kept a reflective journal of the project as requested by my supervisor. I tried a very informal teaching and response approach which I had developed with the original group and which newcomers collaborated with. We discussed a variety of books on different subjects, all chosen by the group. When I asked them in a final course discussion to say why reading *literature* mattered to them, I wrote down their responses. This is a selection:

> It was an opportunity to step inside another mind.

> It brought you out of yourself into a different world.

> You were able to see things from a different perspective.

> It improved your focus on other things.

> It gave you things you hadn't thought about before.

> It can make someone who belonged nowhere belong somewhere.

I found the last of these comments particularly important, making me think of an immigrant arriving on our shores. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) is such a story. It is the tale of Syrian refugees travelling to the UK, and it relates to the war there, which I will refer to further in the next section.

Articles and Books

The next evidence is a number of articles and books by writers. I will give a brief summary of a selected few and show how each is connected to my theme: The first is from an interview with Tasmanian author Richard Flanagan. He is discussing his latest novel, *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams*, with Cherylin Parsons, director

of the San Francisco Bay Area Book Festival. She found it to be, "one of the most profound moving novels I have ever read, a true masterpiece" (2021, p. 2)

Flanagan tells her that it was not the book he intended to write when he went to Maatsuyker Island. He abandoned his initial idea as it seemed too boring. He quotes Auden in 1939, when the world was on the brink of World War 2, who said that poetry makes nothing happen but "It survives". Flanagan says that he was trying to find a language about the grief that many people were currently feeling due to the pandemic and the hope that we will survive this. In writing the book, he says, he realised that it was a beautiful world and that, although it is rational to feel despair, hope is the essence of what it is to be human. "Novels are one form that can help restore a necessary sense of wonder and, with it, humility and gratitude." (Flanagan, R. in Parsons, C., 2021, p. 7)

In the same interview, Flanagan also emphasises the importance of storytelling, something that I have found a useful tool for the kind of research I am undertaking. Storytelling was emphasised from the start of my acquaintance with ESREA delegates such as Linden West et al. The autobiographical, storytelling approach taken by researchers like Kim Etherington, Peter Clough, and Elizabeth Hoult is fundamental to my own research.

In my second example, the author Kerry Hudson reminds us of the importance of libraries. In an article remembering a librarian in *The Guardian* she describes finding sanctuary at nine years old "asking not just for a book but for a way out, a path forward, for hope and an introduction to the bright future I might have if I only held on, if I didn't give up". The librarian's understanding that books could be like a medicine or therapy that helped to make difficult home life more bearable and her sharing of this, Hudson continues, are things for which she will be forever grateful. Hudson is now successful as a writer, particularly with *Lowborn* (2020), her autobiographical account of growing up and escaping poverty.

There is the story of another library in a very different world in Delphine Minoui's book, *The Book Collectors of Daraya* (2018). Minoui is writing about the brutal civil war in Syria. Her book describes how Ahmad Muaddamani, a young Syrian fighter living in Daraya during the bombing by Assad's forces, is shown a pile of books in the ruins of the damaged town. Encouraged by friends, he picks up a book about self-awareness from the rubble and begins reading. He then finds others on Arabic and international literature, philosophy, theology, and science and begins to collect them together. He is joined by volunteers and soon they have 15,000 books which they catalogue and store alphabetically in the basement of an abandoned building.

"These young Syrians cohabited with death night and day," Minoui says in her *Guardian* article about the book, "Syria's Rebel Librarians" (2021). "Most of them had already lost everything – their homes, their friends, their parents. Amid the chaos, they clung to books as if to life, hoping for a better tomorrow, for a better political system."

In the article, Minoui continues with more examples of how this young man and his friend, Abu el-Ezz, who had been severely wounded by a barrel bomb, began to believe in the good that books could do them. Abu el-Ezz chose books analysing political Islam, books of Arabic poetry, and books of psychology. "Books set us free", he says. "They don't mutilate; they restore. Reading helps me think positively, chase away negative ideas." He talks about the most popular book in the library, *The Alchemist*, by Paul Coelho, a book about the journey of self-discovery. "Books," says Minoui, "were helping transport these young Syrians somewhere else."

Personal Stories

Although I have chosen literary examples here, a library contains all sorts of books, not just fiction. As I showed in the example from the delegate at The 2020 Wroclaw Conference, "The Companionship of Books" is not just about reading literature but can be extended to other reading forms. During the "Reading Can Enhance Our Lives" course that I refer to, when asked what book they would give to a friend, students' suggestions ranged from a book about maps in relation to politics, a tale about a shepherd's life, a novel by Josephine Tey about Richard III, a letter from Oscar Wilde to Lord Alfred Douglas, and a book exploring the divinity of Christ. This was much more diverse than I had expected and confirmed my developing idea that this "book effect," for want of a better expression, can be found in all sorts of places.

The personal narrative, however, is another place to find evidence. An article that combines "bibliotherapy" and personal story appears in Jay Griffiths's "Poetry can heal, and I needed it desperately" (*The Guardian*, 2016). She begins with historical references to "bibliotherapy." In Dante's time, she says, books were sold in apothecary's shops: "literature as medicine." In the 19th century, she adds, people in asylums were encouraged to write poetry, and that William Cowper (1731–1800) wrote that during his depression writing poetry was his "best remedy." Griffiths, an award-winning British author, writes that during her illness, a severe episode of manic depression, she could only write poetry and that: "in the loneliness of depression it is the kindest companion when one is keening to be comprehended."

She talks about how during her convalescence she walked alone on the Camino across Spain, and about how her friends composed an anthology of poems for her that would cherish and console. She bought Neil Astley's anthologies, one of which, *Staying Alive* (2002), is subtitled "real poems for unreal times," so she could read one a day. This is another good example of "bibliotherapy" in action. Griffiths has written a book, *Tristimania* (2016), relating to her depression and mentions how writers like Les Murray, already mentioned here, use the metaphor of "the black dog" to explain the condition.

Ann Cleeves, creator of the detective Vera Stanhope, says in a Guardian article that stories have always been healing so she is funding bibliotherapists. She describes how during a severe psychotic episode suffered by her husband, Tim, she escaped into the reading and writing of fiction. She also mentions how she had previously set up reading and writing groups in prisons and for men in pubs in the Yorkshire Dales, how libraries supported her as a writer and how important they were. She had worked for Kirklees library some years ago and had noticed how three part-time "therapists" attached to GP practices worked with patients with mild to moderate depression. The therapists prescribed books to give advice or information and later when Tim died unexpectedly, books that were suggested for her as an escape were thrillers, comedies, and gentle romances.

Studies in Therapy and the Arts

A detailed investigation of the concept of "bibliotherapy" is Kelda Green's *When Literature Comes to Our Aid* (2018). Green's thesis "investigates ways in which literature creates therapeutic spaces in which to do personal thinking." I read this in depth and annotated it before its publication in book form and found it referred to Montaigne, Wordsworth, and George Eliot, all important to my own study. Green also looks at Seneca and the link between stoicism and modern-day psychological therapies. I have not studied Seneca myself but see this as a fruitful area for further investigation. Seneca's ideas I noticed were being used in a bibliotherapy course by Bijal for which Green is an acknowledged consultant. Out of interest I completed Bijal's course and learned that the first use of "bibliotherapy" can be traced back to the Ancient Greeks who "built libraries holding both entertainment and educational books," and Aristotle, "(whose) literature was considered medicine for the soul." Bijal too mentions its effect on soldiers during World War 1. After this introduction the course asks what kind of issues could be treated with "bibliotherapy"? Among the answers were that shared reading groups could deal with depression caused by grief and loss, something

that I wished to explore further. A key area of Bijal's course was using the novel to explore aspects of our lives that we cannot easily do in reality. I have read *The Novel Cure* (2013) by Berthoud and Elderkin, which endeavours to do this just this. To navigate being widowed, the authors suggest one might read *The Same Sea* by Amos Oz, which is the tale of Albert Danon whose wife has died of cancer: "In times of grief and loneliness," the authors say, "we must take life moment by moment and this is how Oz proceeds . . ." (2013, pp. 431–3).

I have also encountered a detailed report, "Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing" (2017). This is not specifically about reading literature for health, but consuming the arts in general. The report was fronted by Grayson Perry, a notable artist; Professor Marmot, who had published *The Marmot Review* (2010), and who later wrote in *The Health Gap* (2015) that "education is not a bad proxy for empowerment" for those at the bottom of the health gradient; and Lord Layard who in *Can We Be Happier* (2020) talks about "the science of happiness" and stressed the importance of teachers' contributions to the happiness of children.

The report on "Creative Health" linked together a number of initiatives that had been taking place throughout the United Kingdom, linking people's health to a creative involvement with the arts. It consisted of ideas such as *Art on Prescription* to help people suffering mental health problems in Cambridgeshire; *Dance to Health* for older people in Cheshire, London, and Oxfordshire; *Poems on the Underground* created by Judith Chernaik to offer people a moment of quiet reflection; *Music Therapy*, an example being a collaboration between The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Hull Integrated Stroke Service; and *The Reader's Shared Reading Scheme* in the North West, which showed an enhanced life purpose amongst participants as they shared the classics of world literature.

Another report that links mental wellbeing to reading and writing and which references both this report and the work of Jane Davies on Merseyside is "Reading and Writing for Wellbeing" (Ramsey-Wade et al., 2020). This study provides a qualitative exploration of community-based reading and writing for wellbeing groups. It concludes that these bibliotherapy and therapeutic creative writing groups "support wellbeing in older adults by providing a unique space in which participants feel acknowledged, accepted, challenged and inspired." It is a further link between "bibliotherapy" and psychotherapy (p. 722).

Conclusion

In conclusion, George Eliot's claim at the beginning of this article is well supported by my research. I have found a number of links between our mental health and

reading: in ancient times it came to be understood that books had a beneficial effect on us, and I have traced this in the "Bibliotherapy" section and followed it with references to wartime and the use of libraries in our present troubled times, both in a war-torn country and in the life of a conflicted child, who eventually grew into a considerable writer. I have shown evidence that the technique has been successful in the present day with reference to a number of students I have taught. I have also gathered and made reference to a number of books and articles I have read on the subject, which reinforce my argument that reading can help us in times of crisis and even in times of happiness.

In my argument I see a very important element being that of "autoethnography," that is a research method where the writer uses self-reflection to explore personal experience and connect this to wider, cultural, political and social meanings. Storytelling is important to my study as I think I have shown and so I will finish with a story of myself. I was walking in Scotland on a path surrounding a castle and suddenly lost my footing, plunging for 50 metres down a grassy slope within no sight of anyone. Luckily, I was not severely injured, although I did black out for a short while, but as I fell, I thought of Wordsworth's lines when he was dicing with death ascending rocky heights in the Lake District:

> The sky was not a sky of earth/and with what motion moved the clouds, . . .

Wordsworth wrote this in *The Prelude or, Growth of a Poet's Mind* as he clung grimly to a precipice and I felt that as I fell. It was not fatal nor even a case for A&E but, still in shock, on the plane home I read right through Hannah Storm's, *The Thin Line Between Everything and Nothing*. This recounted in a style known as "flash" or "creative non-fiction," her experiences as a front-line war reporter. In connecting with her danger, I was able to neutralise the danger I had felt during my fall.

Further exploration of "bibliotherapy" is needed. I would like to explore Seneca and other works to find support for my argument. I would also like to look at psychology: Why did Wordsworth's lines come into my head as I fell down that slope and why did reading Hannah Storm's book on the plane home provide such comfort? These are questions that to my mind still need to be answered.

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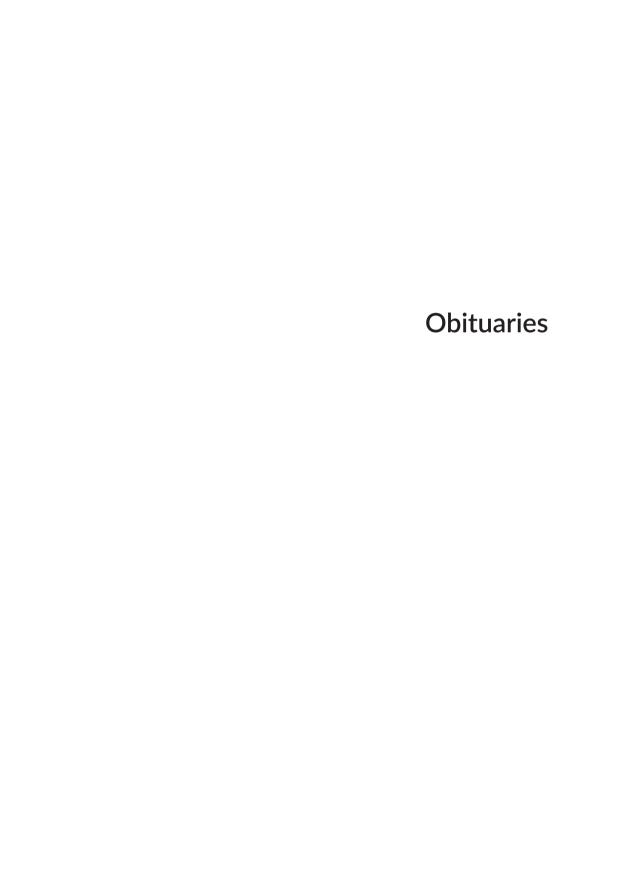Shelley, P. B. (1832). *Poetical Works,* edited by Hutchinson, T. Oxford University Press.

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Obituaries

Stanley Aronowitz – ten, który uczył nas, że nauczanie musi być polityczne[1]

Maria Czerepaniak-Walczak[2] (iD)

Te słowa Henry'ego A. Girouxa najpełniej oddają wkład Stanley'a Aronowitza (19332021) do pedagogiki i, szerzej, do nauk społecznych. Polityczne bowiem było nie tylko jego nauczanie, bezpośrednie relacje pełne pasji, ale też teksty poświęcone edukacji wyzwalającej z doświadczanej opresji. Był wiodącym lewicowym intelektualistą i zaangażowanym uczestnikiem życia publicznego.

Jego aktywność społeczna, edukacyjna i naukowa była ściśle związana z osobistym doświadczeniem, była integralnym elementem jego biografii, mocno zakorzeniona w codzienności środowisk, w których funkcjonował i odzwierciedlała jego postawę wobec nierówności, niesprawiedliwości w dostępie do edukacji i do godnych warunków życia. Sam siebie określał jako „intelektualistę klasy robotniczej", nazywany był profesorem w „niebieskim kołnierzyku". Jego zaangażowanie intelektualne i społeczne było dowodem na integrację deklaracji i działania, edukacji politycznej, polityki kulturalnej oraz bezpośredniej akcji. Odzwierciedlało wysiłki wzbudzania i podtrzymywania świadomości i etosu klasy robotniczej.

Urodził się 6 stycznia 1933 roku w Nowym Jorku w rodzinie robotniczej. Zmarł 16 sierpnia 2021 roku. Jego edukacyjna i społeczno-polityczna kariera była ściśle związana z pracą zarobkową w przemyśle oraz aktywnością w związkach zawodowych. Podkreślał, że związki zawodowe są siłą zmieniającą społeczeństwo.

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[1] Tak Henry Giroux zatytułował informację o śmierci Stanley'a Aronowitza. „Truthout" 18.08.2021 r., https://truthout.org/articles/stanley-aronowitz-who-taught-us--teaching-must-be-political-has-passed/ [dostęp 30.10.2021].

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W swoich rozprawach łączył osobiste doświadczenia z pracy w hucie oraz kontaktów ze związkami zawodowymi z oryginalną wiedzą naukową. Jako akademik zmienił paradygmat badań nad pracą. Przewidział zmniejszanie się klasy średniej oraz masowe zastępowanie pracy fizycznej i umysłowej przez technologię.

W swoich pracach i w dyskusjach ubolewał nad upadkiem fenomenu publicznego intelektualisty. Przyczyn tego upadku upatrywał w braku zorganizowanej lewicy oraz marginalizowaniu przez nauki społeczne kwestii władzy. Przywiązywał wielką wagę do edukacji i wskazywał konsekwencje jej ograniczeń. Podkreślał rangę edukacji nieformalnej. Jako argument na rzecz jej znaczenia przywoływał własne doświadczenia z pracy w przemyśle pod koniec lat 50. XX wieku, gdy wraz z kolegami tworzyli grupy czytających aktualną literaturę, książki historyczne, zwłaszcza o historii pracy i o ekonomii. Niektóre z tych grup przekształciły się w formalne kluby, które w efekcie rozumienia przez robotników ich własnej sytuacji kwestionowały przywództwo lokalnych związków. Inne służyły głównie samokształceniu, nie miały konkretnych celów politycznych, ale zorientowane były na czerpanie przyjemności z uczenia się.

W książce *Against Schooling. For an Education That Matters* (2008) Aronowitz napisał:

> Jakie są niezbędne zmiany, które przekształciłyby szkoły z fabryk referencji i instytucji kontrolnych w miejsce edukacji przygotowującej młodych ludzi do postrzegania siebie jako aktywnych uczestników świata? Jak wynika z mojej analizy, podstawowym warunkiem jest zniesienie standaryzowanych testów oraz podporzadkowania nauczycieli (s.48).

Niepokoiło go, że czytanie jako forma przyjemności i pisanie jako forma autoekspresji są coraz częściej zarezerwowane dla kręgu „przypadkowych intelektualistów". Tak nazwał tych, którzy, czy to w formalnym kształceniu czy też w ramach pedagogiki publicznej, nie zachęcają do ciekawości świata, do bycia osobą, która niezależnie od tego jaki wykonuje zawód angażuje się w politykę, jest na bieżąco z wydarzeniami i nowymi ideami. To prowadzi do obniżenia oczekiwań wobec edukacji i nadziei na przyszłość, na kształtowanie lepszego świata, „nie mówiąc już o radykalnym marzeniu o stworzeniu świata bez wyzysku i ucisku – świata bez biedy, ignorancji i chorób" (s. xiii).

Podkreślał przy tym jak ważną rolę w zmianie edukacji odgrywa nauczyciel, ale tylko taki, który nie myli autorytetu wiedzy z własnym autorytetem zawodowym i ograniczaniem wolności uczniów. „Zgadzam się z Arendt, że edukacja »nie

może zrezygnować ani z autorytetu, ani z tradycji«. Ale na autorytet należy raczej zasłużyć niż zakładać, a przekaz tradycji musi być krytyczny, nie pełen czci" (s. 49). Tylko to może zapewnić pozyskiwanie i rozwijanie kapitału kulturowego, który chroni przed marginalizacją społeczną i polityczną oraz umożliwia doświadczanie przyjemności, jakie daje spotkanie z prawdziwymi dziełami sztuki.

Poglądy Stanley'a Aronowitza na edukację wciąż są aktualne i inspirujące. Jego teksty uświadamiają nam, jak wiele jest do zrobienia w tych sprawach.

Był profesorem między innymi w University of California Irvine (UCI) oraz w City University of New York (CUNY). Bogata spuścizna naukowa Stanley'a Aronowitza obejmuje, poza 25 książkami i ponad 200 artykułami także współtworzenie czasopism. W1979 roku uczestniczył w powstaniu kwartalnika „Social Text", na którego łamach podejmowane jest szerokie spektrum lokalnych i globalnych zjawisk społecznych i kulturowych, z wykorzystywaniem najnowszych podejść teoretycznych i metodologicznych[3]. W 2005 roku był współzałożycielem czasopisma „Situations: Project of the Radical Imagination". Wyobraźni nadawał znaczenie siły sprawczej w odkrywaniu nowych idei i rozwijania teorii. Wraz z H. A. Giroux redagował serię wydawniczą „The Radical Imagination Series" publikowaną w wydawnictwie Routledge. Był członkiem rad naukowych prestiżowych czasopism.

We wspomnieniach po śmierci Stanley'a Aronowitza wiele osób dzieli się swoimi emocjami i doświadczeniami w relacjach z nim. Nancy Romer pisze, że kultura, edukacja i polityka były dla niego chlebem życia. Miał piękny głos. Chętnie śpiewał a capella pieśni robotnicze, które zachował z czasów swojej młodości w lewicowej rodzinie. Cieszyły go bezpośrednie kontakty z ludźmi zaangażowanymi w walkę polityczną poprzez kulturę i edukację. Zachęcał do solidarności, ale też do stawiania sobie nawzajem i między sobą trudnych pytań.

Spuścizna naukowa Stanley'a Aronowitza zasługuje na pogłębione analizy pedagogiczne. Jest ona nieprzebranym zasobem inspiracji i refleksji o edukacji, kulturze, pracy i relacjach międzyludzkich.

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[3] Jak piszą na stronie domowej czasopisma jest ono odważnym i kontrowersyjnym liderem w dziedzinie studiów kulturowych, skupiając uwagę na kwestiach płci, seksualności, rasy i środowiska, publikując kluczowe prace najbardziej wpływowych teoretyków społecznych i kulturowych. Na łamach czasopisma zamieszczane są krytyczne głosy, prowokacyjne wywiady i ambitne teksty. Każdy numer otwiera nowe możliwości w debatach na temat postkolonializmu, postmodernizmu i kultury popularnej. „Social Text" https://read.dukeupress.edu/social-text [dostęp 30.10.2021].

Reviews

Sztuka – życie – arteterapia. Recenzja książki: Wita Szulc (2021). *Arteterapia i życie. Historia osobista*. Legnica: Wydawnictwo Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej im. Witelona, ss. 196

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Najnowsza książka Wity Szulc *Arteterapia i życie. Historia osobista*[3] łączy w sobie naukowe spojrzenie na arteterapię z perspektywą autobiograficzną, tzn. osobistą narracją autorki akcentującą okoliczności, które współkształtowały jej wrażliwość, zainteresowania i w konsekwencji prowadziły zarówno do praktykowania zawodu arteterapeuty, jak i podjęcia naukowych eksploracji w jej obrębie. Książka ma wiele zalet i przedstawia kilka różnych perspektyw, które pod innym kątem naświetlają tytułowy temat. Po pierwsze, pracę tę można czytać przez pryzmat socjologii i historii nauki, a konkretnie tej interdyscyplinarnej gałęzi naukowej – i oczywiście praktycznej – jaką jest terapia przez sztukę oraz jej poszczególne działy i odmiany. W tej perspektywie ujęta została geneza i drogi rozwoju polskiej arteterapii ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem osób tworzących tę dziedzinę,

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[3] Już po lekturze książki Wity Szulc *Arteterapia i życie* i po napisaniu recenzji dotarła do nas niezwykle smutna wiadomość o nagłej śmierci Autorki. Z wielkim smutkiem i żalem przyjęliśmy tę informację. W poczuciu wielkiej straty musimy więc zaznaczyć, że omawiana „najnowsza książka Wity Szulc" jest zarazem ostatnią książką pani Profesor.

instytucji, w których praktyka i naukowa refleksja nad wpływem sztuki na zdrowie i dobrostan człowieka miały szansę się pojawić i znaleźć wsparcie (szpitale, biblioteki, uczelnie czy zakłady pracy), stowarzyszeń zrzeszających twórców, praktyków i sympatyków tej dziedziny, uczelni i oddzielnych kierunków studiów kształcących specjalistów w tym zakresie, konferencji naukowych poświęconych zagadnieniom arteterapii oraz najważniejszych prac naukowych ją formujących, a również pierwszych awansach naukowych, tzn. rozprawach doktorskich. Co istotne, Autorka nie skupia się jedynie na naukowych monografiach, lecz wiele uwagi poświęca tak zwanym pracom pod redakcją, czyli zbiorom artykułów, a także pojedynczym wybranym artykułom oraz wystąpieniom konferencyjnym. Rys historyczny uzupełniony jest szkicem społeczno-politycznych okoliczności, w których arteterapeutyczna działalność formowała się w kontekście polskim.

W części 1: „Fakty, wydarzenia opinie" odnajdziemy historyczny rys dotyczący refleksji arteterapeutycznej oraz omówienie dystynkcji terminologicznych związanych z samą nazwą arteterapia. Ciekawym wątkiem jest tu przywołanie dawnej i zamkniętej już dziś dyskusji o zasadach słowotwórstwa w języku polskim, w myśl których odpowiedniejszą nazwą wydawała się „artoterapia", a zasadach odwołujących do łaciny, w myśl których odpowiedniejszą formą wydawała się „arteterapia, ze względu na formę narzędnika („arte-", łac. ablativus) „kim", „czym?" (s. 32). Ta ostatnia forma miała implikować „terapię sztuką", „poprzez sztukę", „za pomocą sztuki". W części tej poruszone są również kwestie – egzemplifikowane faktografią – związane z tożsamością autoterapii i jej „autodefiniowaniem", interdyscyplinarnością, oczekiwanymi standardami profesjonalizmu oraz instytucjonalnym ulokowaniem.

Wspomniany wymiar socjologiczno-historyczny nie ogranicza się ściśle do arteterapii praktykowanej w polskich instytucjach, lecz uzupełniony jest kontekstem międzynarodowym nakierowanym na dwa nieco odmienne aspekty. Pierwszy z nich to polskie uczestnictwo w organizacjach międzynarodowych i wkład polskich badaczy w światowe dyskusje o arteterapii, zaś drugi aspekt to arteterapia w otoczeniu międzynarodowym, tzn. innych krajach rozwijających tę dziedzinę praktyki terapeutycznej. Aspekt pierwszy znajduje swoje odzwierciedlenie w Części 1 w opisie okoliczności powstania w 1991 roku Europejskiego Konsorcjum Edukacji Arteterapeutów (The European Consortium for Arts Therapies, ECArTE), zrzeszający najpierw 5, a obecnie 35 uczelni, w tym polskie: w latach 2004-2012 członkiem konsorcjum był Uniwersytet Wrocławski (niestety Autorka nie wspomina nic na temat okoliczności opuszczenia przez tę uczelnię ECArTE), a obecnie są to Akademia Ingatianum w Krakowie oraz Uniwersytet Zielonogórski

(s. 22). Również analiza powstania i rozwoju Europejskiej Konfederacji Muzykoterapii (*European Music Therapy Confederation, EMCT*) – wcześniej funkcjonującej pod nazwą Europejskiego Stowarzyszenia Muzykoterapeutów (od 1991 roku), obecnie jako Europejska Konfederacja Muzykoterapeutów – dotyczy tego pierwszego aspektu, w którym polski udział reprezentowany jest przede wszystkim przez Stowarzyszenie Muzykoterapeutów Polskich z siedzibą we Wrocławiu, Polskie Stowarzyszenie Muzykoterapii z siedzibą w Lublinie oraz Stowarzyszenie Arteterapeutów Polskich „Kairos" (s. 27-28). Drugi aspekt, dotyczący arteterapii światowej przedstawiony jest przede wszystkim w Części 4 pt. „Światowa arteterapia z polskiej perspektywy. Kulturoterapia na zagranicznych uczelniach" (s. 135-181). Ujęty jest również w Części 1 w uwagach poświęconych okolicznościom i powodom włączenia zawodu arteterapeuty w obręb zawodów medycznych przez Światową Organizację Zdrowia (s. 28).

Książkę Wity Szulc *Arteterapia i życie* można również odczytywać w perspektywie bardziej szczegółowej, a mianowicie jako próbę przypomnienia i oddania historycznej sprawiedliwości niektórym postaciom, tekstom i przedsięwzięciom, które funkcjonowały w obrębie arteterapii niejako *avant la lettre*, tzn. przed pojawieniem się i utrwaleniem w Polsce samej nazwy „arteterapia". Wydaje się, że w tym kontekście należy umieścić, między innymi, wzmianki o Stefanie Szumanie, który, będąc lekarzem i psychologiem, już w latach 20. XX w. dostrzegał diagnostyczne aspekty rysunków dziecięcych (s. 18); podobnie gdy chodzi o wspomnienie Juliana Aleksandrowicza, kierownika Kliniki Chorób Wewnętrznych w Krakowie i autora książek *Literatura a zdrowie psychiczne* (1971) oraz *Wiedza stwarza nadzieję* (1977), który już w latach 60. i 70. XX w. „stosował sztukę w celach leczniczych" (s. 26). Tę samą funkcję pełni poniższy fragment:

> […] p. Danuta Gostyńska, bibliotekarka, jedna z prekursorek polskiej biblioterapii, autorka unikatowego katalogu książek podzielonych według rodzaju oddziaływania na czytelnika na 3 kategorie: sedativa (uspokajające), stimulativa (pobudzające) i problematica (poruszające określone problemy, skłaniające do refleksji). Informacje o tym katalogu pojawiają się m.in. w tekstach szkoleniowych dla nauczycieli, ale bez nazwiska autorki tego unikatowego katalogu, który nie ukazał się drukiem. Danuta Gostyńska prowadziła biblioterapię nie tylko w bibliotece szpitalnej, ale nawet przy łóżku chorego. Dowodem jest jej książka pt. *Terapia Wielkiego Ładu – zapis rozmów z pacjentami w stanie terminalnym*. W tej samej klinice lekarz, dr Cwynar stosował muzykoterapię dla pacjentów i nawet nagrał płytę ze stosowną muzyką. W Krakowie działał dr med. Andrzej Kowal, lekarz psychiatra, wybitny specjalista w zakresie *art brut* i założyciel Stowarzyszenia Psychiatria i Sztuka, noszącego obecnie Jego imię […]. Postacią wręcz

pomnikową w tej dziedzinie jest doc. dr hab. med. Magdalena Tyszkiewicz, związana z Gdynią, od lat 60. XX. w. zajmująca się analizowaniem prac plastycznych chorych na schizofrenię. Autorka kilkuset publikacji, której rozprawa pt. *Psychopatologia ekspresji*, kilkakrotnie wznawiana, wciąż zajmuje należne jej miejsce w piśmiennictwie na temat arteterapii w psychiatrii (Szulc, 2021, s. 26).

Wydaje się, że zwłaszcza uwagi dotyczące katalogu Danuty Gostyńskiej – w ocenie Szulc unikatowego – który nigdy nie ukazał się drukiem, są ze strony Szulc próbą ukazania dawnej rzeczywistości „analogowej", papierowej, która z oczywistych względów wymyka się poza ramy wszechobecnej rzeczywistości cyfrowej, wirtualnej, i podkreślenia, że ta pierwsza jest równie istotna, zaś ta druga nie jest całkowicie samowystarczalna. Jest to jednocześnie próba przypomnienia, że warsztat naukowy badacza nie może bezkrytycznie poprzestawać jedynie na źródłach wirtualnych; nie może zresztą – w równej mierze – bezkrytycznie, bezrefleksyjnie powtarzać informacji przeczytanych gdzieś raz w źródłach drukowanych.

Powyższy wątek ma – w naszej ocenie – związek również z przedstawioną przez Szulc krytyką nieuczciwych praktyk naukowych i publikacyjnych w interesującej Autorkę dziedzinie (s. 179-181). Szulc w następujący sposób pisze o takich praktykach:

> Wadliwe cytowania i przemilczenia dotyczące innych, dokładniejszych opracowań tworzą mylny obraz stanu nauki w danej dziedzinie wiedzy, w tym wypadku arteterapii. Widać to najlepiej na przykładzie książki pt. *Arteterapia w teorii i praktyce*, która dzięki kolejnym wznowieniom utrwala nieaktualny, a tym samym nieprawdziwy obraz stanu wiedzy o arteterapii i jej poszczególnych dziedzinach. Cóż bowiem znaczy np. takie oto zdanie na stronie 46. tej książki, w wydaniu I z roku 2003, powtarzane w wydaniach następnych aż po rok 2014: „Chociaż obserwacje na temat leczniczych walorów muzyki trwają od wielu lat, to »nie udało się jeszcze stworzyć teoretycznie ugruntowanego systemu metod muzykoterapeutycznych«" (podkreślenie moje W. S.). Odsyłacz nr 153, jakim to zdanie jest opatrzone, kieruje do artykułu E. Galińskiej *Podstawy teoretyczne muzykoterapii* z roku 1978 (sic!). To jedno zdanie przekreśla dorobek i ustalenia całej plejady naukowców amerykańskich z profesor dr Barbarą Wheeler, dobrze w Polsce znaną i równie znaną prof. dr Cheryl Dileo, nie wspominając już o znanym na całym świecie autorze definicji muzykoterapii wskazującej na jej znaczenie dla jakości życia, profesorze muzykoterapii o nazwisku Keneth Bruschia (Szulc, 2021, s. 197).

Warto w tym miejscu pokreślić jedną istotną cechę rozważań Wity Szulc. Jej rozważania natury socjologiczno-historycznej maja tę właściwość, że prowadzone są z perspektywy biograficznej i w pewnym sensie „insiderskiej". Oznacza to, że Autorka nie pretenduje w swojej książce do przedstawienia w pełni encyklopedycznego i systematycznego ujęcia tematu, lecz kładzie nacisk na te wątki i aspekty, o których może więcej powiedzieć ze względu na jej własną biografię, działalność i doświadczenie. W tym też znaczeniu rozważania Autorki mają oczywiste zabarwienie subiektywne. Trzeba więc zapytać: czy Autorka ma prawo do takiej właśnie decyzji i narracji?

Zanim odpowiemy na to pytanie przywołamy opinię Stephena Toulmina, który w książce *Return to Reason* (2001) stanął przed podobnym problemem wprowadzenia elementu subiektywności do swoich – częściowo autobiograficznych – rozważań. Otóż pisał on na ten temat następująco:

> Pozwolę sobie uprzedzić zarzut, jakobym popadał w łatwą do przewidzenia pułapkę, polegającą na zastąpieniu autobiograficznymi wspomnieniami analizę zmian obejmujących osiemdziesiąt lat intelektualnej historii. Otóż taka krytyka nie trafia celu. Pojęcie racjonalności mierzy się dziś z tak poważnymi wyzwaniami, że teoretyczna analiza ego okresu będzie „racjonalna" i przekonująca jedynie dla nielicznej kadry czytelników. Jedyny sposób to pójść własną drogą, a więc wyjść poza rywalizujące z sobą stanowiska teoretyczne i przedstawić narrację prowadzoną z osobistej perspektywy. Jakaż jednak będzie dla nas korzyść z takiej osobistej narracji? Czy moje własne wykształcenie i opinia nie dadzą z konieczności do zniekształconego obrazu? Jak więc mogę twierdzić, że rzucam światło na historię dwudziestowiecznej myśli „tak, jak się ona rzeczywiście wydarzyła"?

> Z filozoficznego punktu widzenia zarzut ten należy uciąć już na samym początku. Pogląd, że każdy z nas widzi wydarzenia naszych czasów w sposób niekompletny, to nie to samo, co twierdzenie, że nasze widzenie jest zniekształcone: że jest z zasady stronnicze […]. Zamiast tego możemy wysunąć pewne twierdzenie antropologiczne: jeżeli prezentowany przeze mnie obraz opiera się – jak to będzie czasem miało miejsce – na mojej pamięci wydarzeń i zmian, jest tak jedynie ze względów etnograficznych, nie egoistycznych. Widzę się więc tutaj jako „natywnego informatora", którego świadectwo jest wystarczająco rzetelne dla zamierzonych celów, nawet jeśli nie zostało poparte kosztownym zbiorem danych i analiz, do czego skłanialiby się niektórzy socjologowie (Toulmin, 2001, s. 7).

Deklarację Toulmina można w równym stopniu zastosować do rozważań Wity Szulc. Ze względu na jej aktywne zaangażowanie w budowanie arteterapii – w obrębie której, przypomnijmy, jest twórczynią oryginalnej koncepcji „kulturoterapii", czyli „terapii opartej na kulturze" (Szulc, 1994) – nasza odpowiedź jest twierdząca i akceptująca. Jej relacja ma więc z pewnością status nie tyko analogiczny do „natywnego informatora", lecz do dobrze poinformowanego uczestnika wydarzeń. Ten aspekt elementu subiektywności można więc w przypadku książki *Arteterapia i życie* uznać za zaletę.

Koncentrując się aspekcie subiektywności, na książkę Wity Szulc należy patrzeć z jeszcze jednej perspektywy, a mianowicie rozróżnienia, które wyrażają dwa przeciwstawne pojęcia greckie (i ich boskie ucieleśnienia) odnoszące się do czasu, a mianowicie Chronos i Kairos. O ile Chronos wyraża porządek, chronologię, systematyzację, Kronos reprezentuje „ulotność chwili" (s. 129). Stosownie do tego rozróżnienia, w książce Szulc są elementy Chronosu – dotyczą one głównie omówionego aspektu socjologiczno-historycznego – ale również Kairosu. Ten ostatni aspekt dotyczy zaś głównie historii osobistej (rodzaju autobiografii Autorki), który jest jednocześnie asumptem to pokazania, gdzie i w jaki sposób elementy arteterapii występować mogę, i rzeczywiście się pojawiają, w dostępnym niemal każdemu, codziennym życiu. Przede wszystkim więc, samą opowieść Szulc o jej życiu można potraktować jako rodzaj autoarteterapii reminiscencyjnej i narracyjnej, w której pojawiają się też elementy poezjoterapii (kreatywnej, Autorka prezentuje kilka swoich wierszy), jak również biblioterapii (w postaci opowieści o książkach z różnych powodów zapamiętanych, np. bajkach) czy fotografoterapii. Jednak snując swą opowieść, Autorka wskazuje na szereg innych aspektów ujawniających się w ulotności różnych życiowych chwil, w których do głosu dochodzą elementy, mogące stać się podstawą rozmaitych form i odmian arteterapii takich, jak talassoterapia (terapia w kontakcie z morzem), *sand play therapy* (terapia piaskiem, piaskownicą), hortikuloterapia (ogrodoterapia), horti-fotografoterapia, itd. Osobista opowieść Wity Szulc ma oczywiście istotny walor historyczny, jako wspomnienie. Jednak lektura tej opowieści ma, jak się wydaje, również potencjał wyzwolenia w czytelniku pewnych emocji właściwych działaniom arteterapeutycznym.

Czy czegoś ważnego w książce Wity Szulc brakuje? Wydaje się, że uważny czytelnik pozostanie z poczuciem pewnego niedosytu w kwestii współczesnych sporów i debat na temat natury arteterapii jako dyscypliny, zwłaszcza pod kątem jej interdyscyplinarnego charakteru. Autorka wskazuje na ten problem, kiedy pisze o związku arteterapii ze sztuką i podkreślając wielostronność pojęcia sztuki:

Arteterapia bazuje na sztuce, a ta wymyka się sztywnym definicjom. Nieokreśloność a zarazem istotę sztuki najlepiej wyraził chyba Arystoteles, bo jego słowa mimo upływu dwóch i pół tysiąca lat nie straciły aktualności: „[…] przedmiotem sztuki są rzeczy, które mogą się mieć inaczej […]. Wszelka sztuka łączy się z powstaniem i obmyślaniem tego, by powstało coś z rzeczy, które mogą być i nie być i których źródło tkwi w wytwarzającym, a nie w wytworze" (Szulc, 2021, za: Arystoteles, *Etyka nikomachejska*, 1149a, Warszawa 1982, s. 14)

Jednak nie rozwija tego wątku w obszerny sposób. A wydaje się, że mógłby to być dobry punkt wyjścia do dyskusji na temat tożsamości arteterapii, problemów z określeniem jej ram, standardów kształcenia arteterapeutów itd. Być może ma to związek z poglądem Szulc przedstawionym na przykład we wcześniejszym artykule „*Arteterapia. Narodziny idei, ewolucja teorii, rozwój praktyki*", gdzie Autorka analizuje fenomen arteterapii w kontekście teorii czasu wolnego, animacji kulturalnej, psychologii, teorii procesu twórczego i nauk o zdrowiu; w konsekwencji dochodzi do wniosku, że przy obecnym stanie refleksji teoretycznej niemożliwe, ale też zbędne, jest dążenie do stworzenia jednej spójnej teorii arteterapii, czego oczekują przedstawiciele innych dyscyplin naukowych, stawiając to za warunek uznania arteterapii za naukę (Szulc, 2014, s. 237). Pogląd ten współgra zresztą z innymi opiniami, na przykład Ludwiki Koniecznej-Nowak (2013), która o muzykoterapii pisze, że: „jest to wiedza i praktyka transdyscyplinarna, hybryda dwóch dziedzin muzyki i terapii, z których obie posiadają niejasne granice i same w sobie są trudne do zdefiniowania" (Konieczna-Nowak, 2013, s. 17). Jednak, pomimo dystansu Szulc do prób ścisłego określenia dyscypliny, nasuwają się pytania dotyczące istoty arteterapii, zarówno w kontekście jej przeszłości, jak i perspektyw rozwoju. Powstaje na przykład pytanie: czy nakładanie ram na tę będącą ciągle w procesie stawania się, poszukiwania własnej tożsamości, dziedzinę nauki, sztuki i praktyki może przyczynić się do jej rozwoju? Jednym z głosów w dyskusji może być opinia Joanny Gładyszewskiej-Cylulko (2010), która w artykule „*Od tożsamości do transgresji – dyskurs o naturze muzykoterapii*" pisze:

W nauce można zaobserwować coraz dalsze odchodzenie od atomizmu poszczególnych dziedzin na rzecz łączenia wiedzy z różnych nauk, dotyczącej interesującego badacza problemu […] Przekraczanie granic, niezawężanie się do tego, co znajduje się po „naszej" stronie, ale spoglądanie na rzeczywistość z szerszej perspektywy ułatwia rozumienie świata. Rozumienie będące świadomym aktem rozumiejącego umysłu, stanowi w swej istocie akt twórczy (Gładyszewska-Cylulko, 2010, s. 19).

Zawarte w książce *Arteterapia i życie* rozważania dotyczące arteterapii zachęcają wprawdzie do dyskusji o naturze i „ontologicznym" statusie tej ciągle formułującej się gałęzi nauki, która jest silnie zakorzeniona w praktyce. Brak jednak konfrontacji poglądów Autorki z innymi opiniami.

Oprócz powyższej kwestii, wydaje się, że bliższego objaśnienia czy rozwinięcia wymagają niektóre z poruszanych przez Szulc kwestii. Pewien dysonans może budzić na przykład zderzenie informacji, że Stowarzyszenie Arteterapeutów Polskich „Kajros" założone zostało w roku 2003 przez absolwentów studiów podyplomowych „Arteterapia" Wydziału Pedagogiczno-Artystycznym UAM (s. 16), z informacją, że zawód terapeuty uznawany jest za zawód medyczny (s. 28). Naturalnie pojawia się więc pytanie, dlaczego stowarzyszenie arteterapeutów tworzą pedagodzy, skoro arteterapia jest uznawana za zawód medyczny. Autorka podejmuje ten wątek w rozdziale „Arteterapia jako profesja zawodowa" (s. 20) i później „Troska o standardy edukacji arteterapeutów" (s. 22), ale brakuje uporządkowanego objaśnienia tej kwestii (zob. Cylulko, 2011). Ponadto, wydaje się, że w podrozdziale „Od arteterapii medycznej do pedagogicznej" (s. 42) zabrakło odniesień do bardziej aktualnych dokonań naukowych w obrębie arteterapii, na przykład do pracy J. Gładyszewskiej-Cylulko (2011) pod tytułem *Arteterapia w pracy pedagoga.*

W książce *Arteterapia i życie* pojawiają się też niestety inne nieścisłości związane z nazewnictwem. Szulc, jak się zdaje, mylnie używa nazwy „Europejski Komitet Muzykoterapii", włącznie z angielskim oryginałem „EMCT: European Music Therapy Committee" (np. s. 20, 27); podczas gdy na oficjalnej stronie www tego gremium widnieje nazwa „European Music Therapy Confederation", czyli „Europejska Konfederacja Muzykoterapii". Podobnie skrót EMTR rozwinięty jest jako „European Music Therapy Research Register", gdzie nie powinno być słowa „Research", tylko „European Music Therapy Register" – gdzie chodzi o rejestr praktykujących, spełniających standardy Europejskiej Federacji muzykoterapeutów. Natomiast zbieraniem danych dotyczących badań naukowych zajmuje się w EMTC tzw. Research Group, której obecnie przewodniczy reprezentantka Izraela Dr Tali Gottfried (Registered music therapist, certified supervisor Master program for special education, Herzog Academic College Private Practice for Music Therapy, Israeli delegate to the European Music Therapy Confederation EMTC) (*European Music Therapy Confederation: Israel*, 2021).

Osobna sprawa i niedopowiedzenie dotyczy kwestii członkostwa państwa Izrael w EMCT. Autorka opisuje okoliczności wykluczenia w roku 2010 Izraela z EMTC (s. 27). Pomija jednak fakt powrotu reprezentantki Izraela do federacji.

A przecież już w roku 2015 dr Tali Gottfried opublikowała, jako pełniąca funkcję reprezentanta krajowego w federacji, swoje sprawozdanie (Gottfried, 2015). Inne niedopatrzenie dotyczy członkostwa Polskiego Stowarzyszenia Muzykoterapii w Europejskiej Konfederacji Muzykoterapii. Wita Szulc podaje (s. 27), że Polskie Stowarzyszenie Muzykoterapii z Lublina, które powstało w 2007 roku, jest członkiem EMTC. Nie potwierdzają tego informacje zawarte na stronach internetowych ani opisująca działalność stowarzyszenia publikacja Krzysztofa Stachyry (red.) (2012) *Podstawy muzykoterapii*.

   Pomimo powyżej wskazanych wątpliwości książka Wity Szulc jest zdecydowanie warta lektury. Książka prezentuje historię arteterapii i auto-biograficzną historię arteterapeutki – jednej z czołowych twórczyń tej gałęzi refleksji i praktyki w Polsce. Jest to historia subiektywna, mająca w sporej mierze charakter świadectwa: zarówno kolei życiowych Autorki, jak i okoliczności, które wpłynęły na jej zawodowe i naukowe losy. Tak ujęta subiektywność ma więc zdecydowany walor autentyczności. Dodatkowym – i bezsprzecznym – atutem *Arteterapii i życia* jest jednak swobodna osobista narracja otwierająca wskazująca na terapeutyczną o rozwojową wartość sztuki w całej różnorodności życiowych sytuacji.

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The journal INSTED: Intedrisciplinary Studies in Education & Society (Teraźniejszość - Człowiek - Edukacja) offers a place for multi-field thinking about education, both in terms of theory and practice. The principal task of the journal consists in animating dialogue between academics working in social sciences and humanities, particularly ones dealing with philosophy of education and scrutinising educational processes and institutions from different disciplinary perspectives and theoretical orientations.

Current issues in education are everyone's concern because humans are not only social beings, but also learning beings. The social reality that we live in turns out to be complex, changing and erratic. Thence, while not foregoing the prospective thinking about education, our primary focus is on the present. This opaque and complex contempo-raneity requires interpretation and understanding. Such a task we set before the authors and associates of our journal.

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