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Address of the editorial office

Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa
ul. Strzegomska 55, 53-611 Wrocław
redakcja.tce@dsw.edu.pl
<http://www.dsw.edu.pl>
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Studies and Research Reports

Ospitare/Hosting Others: Looking for Traces of Transformation in Adults Through Somatic and Artistic Relational Work



Gaia Del Negro¹ 

Silvia Luraschi² 

Cinzia Delorenzi³ 

Dalia El Saadany⁴ 

Abstract

We are two researchers, an artist, and a social worker. The article presents two stories from an international research project on experiential translation. Our local contribution in the project consisted of two workshops of multimodal translation (Campbell & Vidal, 2019) of a performance and two poetic texts in a public park; and a final piece of art for a collective public exhibition with all other local teams of researchers and artists.

The reflections and creative response produced by two participants - a man, a writer/editor; and a woman, a writer/editor and an architect/performer - particularly struck us. The man was not used to somatic practice in groups, and the woman seemed less used to using words in writing and more used to creating things with others in a relationship. In response to our invitation they produced autobiographical texts, photos of an installation in a natural setting, and an audio of an informal conversation with one of us. We found traces in their material of transformation (Dirkx et al., 2006) in the use of creative languages as a possibility

¹ Department of Human Sciences for Education - University of Milano Bicocca, Italy, gaia.delnegro@unimib.it, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7863-5450>

² Department of Human Sciences for Education - University of Milano Bicocca, Italy, silvia.luraschi@unimib.it, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8761-9134>

³ Freelance artist, cinziadelorenzi@gmail.com

⁴ Social worker, dalia.elsaadany80@gmail.com

to encounter the others deeply with words, body, gesture, positioning, and movement in space.

We present the results of a creative compositional analysis (Formenti, 2018) conducted by meeting in a group and going through moments of individual reflexivity and auto/biographical writing as inquiry (Richardson, 1997) to produce connected knowledge about transformation in adult education. The game we want to play, after a long period of social isolation, is one of mirrors to give us the space to reflect on the desire for a collective human flourishing.

Others live in us and enable us to see from those other perspectives (Formenti & West, 2018).

Key words

somatic artistic work, transformation, writing as inquiry, otherness, collective flourishing

Introduction

In today's complex societies where multiple languages and modalities are simultaneously used for communication and learning, the question arises of how we can develop enhanced literacies that can support individuals and communities to meet each other and dialogue across diversity.

This article presents an experience of performance-based research and the use of *métissage* (Bishop et al., 2019) as a tool for analysing the materials collected during the research. Our aim was to look for traces of learning and transformation (Dirkx et al., 2006) in the materials of two participants with two very different backgrounds and biographies, in order to investigate how translation between different art forms could construct new meanings for a diverse group of people. This experience is part of *Experiential Translation: Meaning-making Across Languages and the Arts*, a study funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council¹ to investigate translation between languages (interlingual) and between media (intersemiotic) as a method of creation and communication (Campbell & Vidal, 2019; Del Negro, 2019). The study developed a practice-based method for participatory workshops that took place from April 2021 to July 2022 in network countries (UK, Portugal, Poland, Spain, Hungary, Italy, and Hong Kong) and conducted by network participants working in scholar-artist teams.

¹ AHRC is a British research council, established in 1998, supporting research and postgraduate study in the arts and humanities <https://www.ukri.org/councils/ahrc/>.

The participants were invited to explore intersemiotic translation via creative methods (e.g., writing, performance, artmaking) in different settings. The aims of the project were to understand how translation can be experienced in groups as a mode that contributes to meaning making in cross-cultural communication and to foster individual imagination, somatic playfulness, and vital creativity in education and arts institutions.

Our research draws on a framework of feminism, auto/biography, and post-qualitative theories. For the analysis of the materials, we use a compositional method (Formenti, 2018) and *métissage* with a particular interest in poetic language. In the first section, we present our theoretical and critical friends. In the second, we describe the methodological aspects with the biographies of the authors. Then we talk about the context of the research Ospitare/Hosting others and give an account of the experiences of two participants in the research. The fourth section offers our compositional analysis of the materials through a poetic creation of text and image. In the conclusions we discuss what our method does and what it does not do, namely its potential and limitations, in terms of transformation of adult lives in adult learning settings.

Our theoretical and critical friends²

We write as an emerging collective mind with different competences and experiences. Silvia and Gaia have a shared story as academic researchers. They have given support to the theoretical backup of the project in relation to adult education research.

Besides our (Silvia and Gaia) training in somatic practice, we draw on theories that we have encountered over the years through physical meetings with different groups of scholars. Our three main strands of theoretical reference are: feminism, (auto)biography, and post-qualitative research. We present them now together with descriptions of the people that inspired us through vital conversations.

Feminism

Darlene Clover, Kathy Sanford, and the international Connections grant research group on feminism were introduced to us by Laura Formenti, a critical friend at the University of Milano Bicocca (Sanford et al., 2020; Clover et al., 2013; Formenti et al., 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2022). The group organised a series of seminars on feminist critique in museums, both in person and online with feminist scholars and artists/activists. What we shared taught us that as women and different others

² This Section is written by Gaia Del Negro and Silvia Luraschi.

we have agency, and places of culture are still colonised by cultural limitations that we can challenge and subvert with creativity and imagination in collective ways.

From the feminist strand in the context of museum education where patriarchal ideologies hide behind illusions of neutrality and impartiality, we understand that:

“Collectively we take up ‘feminism’ as a theory, a practice and a social movement that fights for the rights of women and others who have been marginalised and oppressed. Feminisms are concerned with questions of power... They are also concerned with knowledge, its construction and reconstruction.” (Sanford et al., 2020, p. 2).

From them we learned *métissage* – a composition of voices to counter the monologic voice in academic research. We will come back to this practice in the methodological section.

Auto/biography

The Life History and Biography Network of ESREA – European Society for Research on the Education of Adults³ – is the research network we are most familiar with. The conferences have enriched our understanding of human life and learning in a psycho-social approach, and of dialogue as being vital to democratic life in fragmented and unequal societies.

From an auto/biography strand reflecting on culture, narrative, and subjectivity from a psychoanalytic perspective, we understand that:

- From a psychosocial perspective, selves are continuously “created and transformed in relationships with others and within the matrices of culture” (Sclater, 2004, p. 326).
- In narrative, biographical, and autobiographical research, telling stories of self to others has the potential to support self-construction and agency: “higher education [and education in general] is potentially a space in which to manage and transcend feelings of marginalisation, meaninglessness and inauthenticity in interaction with others; in which it is possible, given their support and encouragement, to compose a new life, a different story and a more cohesive self” (West, 1996, p. 10).
- In critical research, “The desire to do research differently and conduct critical research *with* rather than *about* people demands theoretical and methodological creativity. It calls for a willingness to rupture hierarchical relations in order to create new collaborative spaces for learning and research” (Grummell & Finnegan, 2020, pp. 2-3).

³ <https://esrea.org/networks/life-history-and-biography/>.

Research is complex, relational, and multi-layered so we need to take care of the complexity of processes and the multidiversity that participants bring on to it. This can limit participation even if we are careful.

Post-qualitative

The online posthuman/post-qualitative reading group led by Luise Fischer and Karen Kaufman at the University of Edinburgh meets every two weeks to discuss articles selected to help the participants make sense of their own research through ideas of nomadism, diffraction, space, and place. The reading group is helpful to sustain a theoretical reflection based on our research experience and the sharing of epistemological/ontological doubts and resonances with the authors we read together (reminiscences, feelings, thoughts).

From a post-qualitative strand that draws attention to epistemological critiques on knowing in a more-than-human world, we understand that:

- In ontological terms, St. Pierre suggests that “[...] this distinction between self and other, a legacy of the Cartesian cogito, pushes toward destructive hierarchies” (St. Pierre, 2014, 2016, as cited in Carter, 2022, p. 36).
- In methodological terms, this means an inspiration for playing with methods and subjectivities in a rhizomatic way. The post-qualitative methodologies entangle and perform what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) refer to as a rhizome. According to Irwin and Springgay who used this concept in their research in *a/r/tography*, “a rhizome is an assemblage that moves and flows in dynamic momentum. The rhizome operates by variation, preserves mutation, and flows of intensities that penetrate meanings” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, XX). This is a vague definition that attracts us as we do not fully grasp its meaning, the same way as we do not fully grasp what happens during research, or life. Furthermore, Cinzia uses this idea as a guiding concept in her artistic and teaching practice, that is not directive, but generative, combining elements of difference in unpredictable ways.

We now turn to the methodological section where we present our research workshop.

Methodological aspects

Our research is based on practices of translation between media, fostering collaboration and participation within multilingual, multicultural, and

multimodal settings⁴ (Campbell & Vidal, 2019; Del Negro, 2019). In the words of the two researchers who lead the international project:

“Intersemiotic translation (e.g., the translation of a poem into dance, or a short story into an olfactory experience, or a film into a painting) opens a myriad of possibilities to carry form and sense from one culture into another beyond the limitations of words. At the same time, such processes impact on the original culture and source artefact, enriching them with new layers of understanding” (Campbell & Vidal, 2019, p. XXVI).

According to Ros i Solé, Fenoulhet, and Quist (2020), researchers of languages and translation, trans-cultural meaning outside of words needs a new definition of identity “that thrives in chaos rather than in order” (Ros i Solé, 2020, p. 2) to think about the encounter between cultures and subjects. An understanding of “vibrant identities... gives primacy to the materiality and force of life rather than man-made language and culture... by focusing on perceptual and pre-verbal aspects of languages and cultures... forces us to focus on the material and sensual aspects of our make-up” (ibid.).

Translation across media therefore operates to create transitional space of self- and other- making (Del Negro, 2019). We consider playing an exploration of staying in contact with the possibility of not knowing. Therefore, we found a way to experiment with bodily and artistic practices that we are fond of, but often are kept at the margin (or on the surface) in adult and higher education. In these years, in fact, Silvia trained as a Feldenkrais practitioner to teach awareness through movement (Feldenkrais, 1985, 1990, 2010), and Gaia trained in somatic practice in natural space. Cinzia, a dancer, choreographer, and trainer, directs a three-year training in somatic movement education with an ecosomatic and artistic orientation (in which Gaia trained). Dalia, a social worker in child protection with Italian-Egyptian origins, practices African dance and yoga.

In this project we are interested in exploring the composition of differences (Bateson, 1972) at two levels: during the field work and during the ‘data’ analysis. By composition we mean bringing together different subjects in a space, by listening and connecting the patterns among voices and texts.

In the research workshop, we used somatic practice and poetic therapy (Cupane, 2009). For Leonora Cupane: “We treat words in a poetic way when we expand them, we welcome their innovative potential, the ability to tell us things that we ourselves do not know, ‘to make’ truth (poetry by *poiein*, make) well beyond the logical order and code already established” (Cupane, 2009, pp. 50-51).

⁴ <https://experientialtranslation.net>.

By positioning poetic words and bodies in the natural landscape we experiment with intersemiotic translation with movement and poetic landscape (Perteghella, 2019), combining different languages in a creative endeavour: “Here the translation of poetry in motion is not therefore a random exercise, but an intervention borne out of a dialogic engagement with both source text writer and poetic text, but also with the contemporary, post-modern contexts of meaning making, which emphasise the interconnectedness of translation and artistic practice” (Perteghella, 2019, p. 83).

In order to analyse what happened during the workshop, in line with these principles we decided to experiment with a practice used in feminist adult education called *métissage* (Bishop et al., 2019). This method of creative engagement blurs texts and identities drawing on storytelling, theatre, and (symbolically) the act of weaving or braiding (Chambers et al., 2008; Etmanski et al., 2013). It constructs a panoply of voices that explores liminality and contradiction. Doing *métissage* is a strategy to explore differences. For us, it was an attempt to engage four of us (two scholars, one artist and one social worker) emotionally and in an accessible way to generate a new text with the narratives collected during and after the workshop. The practice of writing a new performative text for analysis bears resemblance to the post-qualitative method of writing as inquiry (Richardson, 1997) in social research. Laurel Richardson speaks of the difficulty to embrace uncertainty and offers the image of the reflecting and refracting crystal to access the phenomenon under study, including the researcher(s). Writing as inquiry allows the researcher to become playful and try out different textual forms “casting off in different directions” (p. 92) interpretations that are dependent upon situated viewpoints. The analysis brings to light the process at work and the learning of the researcher, making space for the reader to position themselves in the text.

In the following sections, we are going to present: the *Ospitare/Hosting Others* project and workshop, the narratives chosen for analysis, the analysis with the *métissage*, and our conclusions.

***Ospitare/Hosting Others* project**

Our project, titled “*Ospitare/Hosting Others*”, engages us from different positions: Gaia and Silvia as researchers, Cinzia as the artist/performer, and Dalia as a participant in the workshops. In our case, the translation takes place between verbal and non-verbal communication, in order to explore relationships in education, health, care, and artistic professions, but also in lived lives “without the obsession of understanding” (Candiani, 2021, p. 11).

Last year in July 2021, we organised a workshop (Figure 1) with eight participants (six women and two men⁵) in Parco di Trenno, a public park in the city of Milan, with Cinzia and a photographer. We worked to translate two kinds of objects:

- Object n. 1 Performance: *Ospitare / lavoro in divenire, di e con Cinzia Delorenzi*, in residence, from 24 to 31 May 2019, open rehearsal on 3 June 2019.
- Object n. 2 Poem: two poems from Antonella Anedda, *Notti di pace occidentale* (Donzelli Editore, Roma 1999).



Figure 1 – Workshop *Incontrare l'altro attraverso il corpo e le parole*/Meeting the other through body and words, Milan, July 2021, Image: Gaia Bonanomi

The participants chosen through an opportunistic sampling (Merrill & West, 2009), met at the park on a Sunday morning. Only a few knew each other. They defined themselves as: a teacher of Italian as a second language, two social workers – one with a migratory background – a cultural worker, an editor and creative writing teacher, a researcher and lecturer of cinema and visual arts, an architect, and an actor. The photographer participated as an inside observer.

To prepare ourselves for translating, Cinzia (Figure 2) guided us with voice (about 40 minutes) in perceiving our body (immune system/border, from the skin

⁵ All participants have given their permission to use their materials and images for the research.

to the digestive system) with the aim to explore coexistence inside our own bodies, in relation to the space, and open ourselves to translation. During her life, Cinzia has developed somatic practice with movement, for listening, transmission, and artistic creation, with different people and the environment and their relationship with each other and the environment.



Figure 2 – Cinzia during the workshop, Milan, July 2021, Image: Gaia Bononomi

The somatic listening in the environment (for example, we heard a summer camp of school children playing loudly) prepared us to perform a translation from Cinzia's performance (object 1). We constructed a personal safe space with unrolling wool strings and small personal objects – taken from home – and then positioned and walked across the space. After translating object no. 1, we introduced object no. 2, the first two poems of Antonella Anedda's *Notti di pace occidentale* (Donzelli Editore, Roma 1999), a book that questions the destinies of our world starting from memory of the bloody history of the West: *Vedo dal buio*⁶ and *Non volevo nomi per morti sconosciuti*⁷. The book was used by Cinzia as an inspiration for the performance, and some poems were present on stage, although invisible to the audience.

⁶ Read the poem *Vedo dal buio* (in Italian): <https://poesiainrete.com/2019/01/02/vedo-dal-buio-antonella-anedda/>.

⁷ Read the poem *Non volevo nomi per morti sconosciuti* (in Italian): <https://formavera.com/2014/01/17/antonella-anedda-notti-di-pace-occidentale/>.

The participants read the poems aloud, then we individually chose a line of one poem that attracted us in that moment and wrote it on a piece of cardboard with a coloured pencil, with the idea to draw attention to the quality of the bodily gesture of writing and the shape of the letters. The cardboards were then circulated in the group to read and “touch” the translations (Barad, 2012). Then the participants (and Silvia and Gaia) walked to locate their translation card/object. We stopped and read the line to the others twice, listening to create a multivocal composition in which new combinations of sound and words are created in improvisation, revealing further layers of meaning in the original poems.



Figure 3 – Luciano and Maddalena from behind during the workshop, Milan, July 2021, Image: Gaia Bonanomi

At the end of the workshop, the participants wrote a few lines about the day. After the workshop, we asked them to translate one of the two Anedda poems of their choice. During a later meeting between the four of us, we read the writings and looked at the visual translations produced (photos of home, photos, and videos of performances). We noticed two stories that spoke to us, and a photo taken at the park. What connected these two participants?

Two stories: A writer/editor and an architect/performer

“I liked being aware of my body without the anxiety of translating it into well-constructed words.”

(Luciano Sartirana, our translation from a fragment of written reflections after the workshop)

“The sense of self starts from the mouth. Kissing. Can you live without it?”

(Maddalena Ferraresi, our translation from a fragment of written reflections after the workshop)

These words were written by Luciano (Figure 3) and Maddalena (Figure 3 and 4) after the workshop. They are a man and a woman, a writer/editor, and an architect/performer, which particularly struck us because we felt some traces of transformation. In fact, he is not used to somatic practice in groups, and she seems less used to using words in writing and more used to creating things with others in a relationship. Furthermore, Luciano is always the first to reply to our emails with enthusiasm – maybe the relationship is spontaneous since he is friends with Gaia – despite our approach being different from (what we understand to be) his usual engagement with writing. Maddalena is a friend of Gaia. On a Saturday, Maddalena and Gaia had a conversation at the street market that they decided to record before they started it, which is part of the material produced. We are now going to analyse their materials together. Before recounting their stories, we would like to share some biographical information that we found online⁸, since we did not ask for personal details in the research. On the website of his networks called “*Edizioni del Gattaccio*”⁹, Luciano introduces himself:

He was born in Milan on 6 November 1957.

He has been working in publishing since the 1980s as a reader for Feltrinelli, series director for Demetra, editor and consultant for associations, institutions, and individual authors. Screenplay writer, director, creator, and host of creative writing, dramaturgy, and cinema workshops in Milan and Venice.

Dramatic turn in 2008: the *Edizioni del Gattaccio* opens.

He saw things live on TV that today is difficult even to imagine: the funeral of John Kennedy, the first landing on the moon, Italy 4 – Germany 3 at Mexico ‘70.

And – of course – the C-beams flash at the gates of Tannhäuser.

(Luciano, our translation from “*Edizioni del Gattaccio*” website)

Maddalena presents herself with a video on a website for sustainable architecture¹⁰ – the video is dated 2015, however we liked the personal touch of it:

“I am an architect and I deal with sustainable architectural design, and I am currently a guest with the Geological Collective at Green Utopia, where we have

⁸ With their permission to publish, see below.

⁹ Edizioni del Gattaccio: <http://edizionidelgattaccio.it/autori/luciano-sartirana/>

¹⁰ Design artigianale: <https://www.designartigianale.it/maddalena-ferraresi/>

built a house made of earth-straw and chestnut wood. In my work on sustainable design, I am also involved in participation, and I believe that self-production is important because people must have the awareness and the possibility to build with their own hands, to create their own space with their own hands, with natural materials, those that are part of nature, using earth, wood, and grass. A house must be everything, it must be the production of food, it must be the projection of oneself, it must be something that you can touch with your own hands, that you can do, that you can get to know, it must not be something extraneous. This is what sustainability in construction is all about, this is why self-production in architecture is important, this is why it is important to make your own homes with your own hands or with technologies whose nature you understand, and which are connected to nature, which are not extraneous.”

(Maddalena, our translation from “*Design artigianale*” website)



Figure 4 – Maddalena constructing a door with strings during the workshop, Milan, July 2021, Image: Gaia Bonanomi.

When we shared the article with the two participants, Maddalena gave her consent upon trust since she was unable to read the document from Senegal, where she was on a work trip. When she returned to Milan, we had a conversation and she confirmed that the exploration of the mouth, conducted by Cinzia, was important since it is a ‘door’ that connects ‘inner’ and ‘outer’, us and others in

complex ways (nutrition, language, sexuality...). The metaphor of the door identifies her profession as an architect and her research as a performer celebrating material connections of body, nature, and the city. Luciano sent an email saying that in facilitating creative writing workshops he tries to bring with lightness an exercise of awareness about how history and the lived stories of people intertwine in unique ways. He said he feels more attentive now to the sensation that words evoke in our bodies when we read or listen or write.

We are now going to offer our analysis of their materials with a creative reflection based on an online performance of reading and making sense together of the process.

A play of mirrors: Compositional analysis

Creative compositional analysis (Formenti, 2018) using *métissage* (Bishop et al., 2019; Clover & Sanford, 2016) entails engaging with the research material first individually and then in conversation, drawing on personal resonance, curiosity, and surprise. Usually, *métissage* starts from a prompt to write around a theme, and the collective work on autobiographical texts. The steps for at least two participants are to write about a topic after a prompt, then to break up the text or pick parts of it, and then to recombine these in a new text that includes more than one voice, following pleasure and curiosity. In our analysis we worked on texts, written and spoken, by Luciano and Maddalena in relation to the research on *Ospitare/* Hosting others. Performing a collective *métissage* with the participants' voices, and not our own, limited the space for ourselves (which is originally a feature of *métissage*); however, as other researchers using this technique have said before:

“*métissage* is not bound simply by words. In *métissage* it all belongs silence, phrases, gesture, imagery, and song. It has the potential to transcend dialect, language, class, and generation. For one moment, we all stand in the same field, diverse, yet connected by the thread of one prompt, one invitation. It is an invitation to reveal that which is unique to one and connected to many” (Bishop et al., 2019, p. 13).

We decided to analyse all the materials produced by the two participants that made us curious:

- Two written reflections after the workshop by Luciano and Maddalena.
- A written translation of the poem *Non volevo nomi per morti sconosciuti* (Anedda, 1999), by Luciano.
- A document with photos and captions translating the same poem, by Maddalena.

- A recorded conversation between Maddalena and Gaia.

We worked in two phases. First, we read individually the material in our own time and selected chunks of text that resonated as traces of transformation (Dirkx et al., 2006). They consider transformation as a largely embodied and unconscious process:

“As we tune into the inner world and how it relates to and interacts with our outer worlds, through our sensitivity and responsiveness to these feelings and images, we also become aware of more powerful forces and dynamics at work in our lives, forces and feel beyond us, as if we are living out parts of a larger script, one in which we are player but not the whole play, one in which we seem to be part of a larger whole. Learning that is transformative is in part directed to deepening our understanding of and work with these dynamics and relationships.” (Dirkx et al., 2006, p. 128).

Secondly, we met online to read aloud the material selected one by one. After the first reading, we read them aloud again, selecting the sentences that we felt more strongly in resonance or contraposition with what others had just read. From a systemic point of view, taking together assonances and oppositions generates tension that is potentially transformative (Bateson, 1972; Formenti & West, 2018). Thus, we created a *métissage* by improvisation reading aloud. In the end, with the multi-voice text that we had formed and copied on a page, we attended to the visual aspect of the text, changing the font and inserting an image that we had selected from one of the original materials. The photo was sent to us by Maddalena as part of her translation of the poem. We chose to insert that image as a deliberate creation of a word and text artefact. The image felt to us during our performative act of analysis as entangled with the text, with nature, with the human hand of Maddalena that created the structure with threads. We decided to keep the initials of our names (Dalia, Silvia, Gaia and Cinzia, in the order they appear in the *métissage*) to emphasise the idea of a playscript and multivocality. We present the text in Italian and a translation in English below:

D: materiali e spazio hanno dato significato agli oggetti

S: è bello sentire vicinanza con persone quasi del tutto sconosciute

D: coesistenza anche invidia

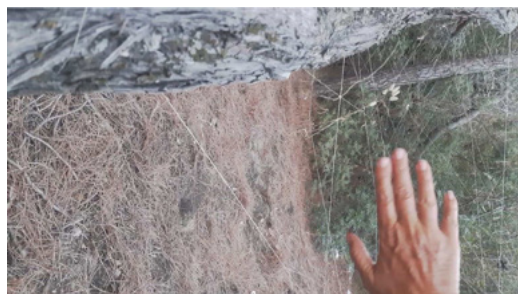
G: la promessa che qualcosa succederà

C: ci mostriamo, ci segnaliamo

S: ...per questo non siamo salvi e non salviamo

D: non ci sono che luoghi da cui scrutare

G: baciarsi: si può vivere senza?
D: il senso del sé parte dalla bocca
C: vivere insieme e in ciascuno di noi
S: coesistere, accogliere la presenza dell'altro per essere in due nello stesso luogo, nello stesso tempo
C: stare insieme non in eterno, non uguali ma aspettando cose
G: infilarsi in mezzo ai fili
D: tradurre è portare da un luogo all'altro
G: sì, mi aiuta un confine rotondo verso gli altri
S: questo incontro che ha dentro una casualità, un'interpretazione libera
C: vedere un dentro "illuminato" ... mi fa trovare un confine
S: con un gesto di minima luce



D: materials and space have given meaning to objects

S: it is nice to feel closeness with people almost completely unknown

D: coexistence also envy

G: the promise that something will happen

C: we show ourselves; we give a sign

S: ... for this we are not saved, and we do not save

D: there are only places from which to view
G: kissing: can you live without it?
D: the sense of self starts from the mouth
C: living together and in each of us
S: coexist, welcome the presence of the other to be two in the same place, at the same time
C: being together not forever, not equal but waiting for things
G: slip between the threads
D: translating is carrying from one place to another
G: yes, a round border helps me towards others
S: this encounter that has a chance, a free interpretation

C: seeing an inside “illuminated”...makes me find a border

S: with a gesture of minimum light

(Milan, Wednesday evening at the computer, 9 February 2022, *métissage*, our translation, Image: Maddalena Ferraresi)

The photo of Maddalena was originally in a vertical position, but during the visual work on the text we decided to turn it in this way as it made us happier. Silvia and Gaia had an occasion to read aloud the *métissage* during the Life History and Biography network conference in March 2022 with the collaboration of two Italian speaking colleagues, Donata Puntil and Rob Evans. Reading aloud continues to give life to these words because:

“It broadens the breath and implies an ethical dimension, i.e., an authentic tension towards listening to the other, bearer of an irreducible otherness” (Cupane, 2009, p. 50, our translation).

In keeping with a feminist and systemic framework, after some shared reflections we chose to offer an interpretation and discussion of the data from our four perspectives, as often articles by many authors seem to have one voice.

At the level of the participants’ engagement in our research, we noticed two movements. Luciano speaks about being bodies without the necessity to explain by word this experience. This for us is a sign that he experienced embodiment during the workshop. Maddalena speaks about how the arts talk to each other and we don’t know what another person encounters when we communicate. These reflections suggested to us the possibility to include more languages and media for engaging people in research, learning, teaching, and community development, in order to increase the possibility to communicate and interact, adding more levels, senses, and languages for self-other making. A newly created ‘attempt’ to communicate across barriers of understanding, of sentiment, of intellect and time, can take the form of a re-creation. It is not what was uttered. It is an attempt to make something experienceable to another, that may be beyond words. It has been transformed. It can be a further space for exploring otherness and connection, ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. For this reason, we include in this article two languages (English and Italian), two types of writing (prose and poetry), word and image, different fonts, and the authors come from different backgrounds and approaches (academia, social work, art).

At the level of our engagement in compositional analysis, we noticed how poetry can emerge between people of differences working together and offering their voices to be in touch through reading aloud in an informal setting of companionship (on a Wednesday evening at the computer). During the meeting, Dalia read to us in the Italian translation a fragment by French poet and writer

Christian Bobin known for a metaphysical and meditative quality revealing fundamental aspects of everyday existence:

“Poetry enters the world as in a friendly house, reveals the object, leads it to reveal itself, does not force it ... it seems to me that things come more easily to us if we give them the time they require.” (Bobin, 2019, p. 49, our translation)

For Dalia poetry is a form of transcendence. In fact, she describes her experience in the whole project as a disorienting experience of transcendence that gave her the opportunity to explore and express/translate in a language that went beyond words which, although important, are hardly capable of expressing such invisible and intangible yet fundamental dimensions. From her point of view, as a participant, starting from the body and thanks to this confined body of ours, it was possible to go beyond its boundaries to understand/feel and taste for a moment that one is part of a greater and more mysterious whole. Mysterious because inexplicable but translatable through less confined languages than the word and written language other than the poetic word. For her, there are moments in life, sometimes just a few moments, when the invisible threads between things become visible. Sometimes this happens by chance, other times it can be achieved through research work such as this, provided the ‘good’ disposition is there. In any case, these threads are there! In search of words to describe this profound texture of reality, Dalia introduced in our analysis the words of the theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli who tells the theories of general relativity and quantum mechanics with a look capable of wonder:

“Light is but a rapid vibration of the web of Faraday lines, which ripple like a lake when the wind blows. So, it is actually not true that ‘we do not see’ Faraday lines. We only see the Faraday lines vibrating. To “see” is to perceive light, and light is the movement of the Faraday lines. Nothing jumps from one place to another in space without something to transport it. If we see a child playing on the beach, it is only because there is this lake of vibrating lines between him and us. Isn’t the world wonderful?” (Rovelli, 2014, pp. 54-55, our translation)

Cinzia shared with the group some of the somatic experiences she used during the process of creating the materials for her performance ‘host’.

It was a chance for her to take the exploration further by moving from the one to the multiple without necessarily imposing the lines of meaning suggested by the performance.

The participants experienced a new process of learning and creation through their own experiences, leading to a new performance practice that enhanced the

title (Host) even more by hosting a co-creation of new spaces and meanings. A question that guided her was: how can I construct an experience to explore concepts of boundary and coexistence by integrating qualities such as permeability and porosity? How can I create my personal space (understood as the innate sense of self of an immune cell) in a collective creation?

Another step was to share the poetic material selected from a book by Antonella Anedda that was hidden from the audience in her performance, hidden in the set design. This material, which had been part of a ‘not knowing’ for her, a creative engine from which she had drawn energy by translating it differently into gestures, movement, and song, was handed over to the creative action of the group. Through Gaia’s and Silvia’s proposals participants could read, select, assemble, and through her proposal return to the body and the practice of presence by positioning themselves with these words in the space of threads, expressing them with the voice. This practice finally led to the identification, among many, of an undefined space, created by Maddalena, which summed up the concept of coexistence and the permeability of boundaries, in which we played together with new people who were present as witnesses and who had not participated in the whole process. It was not simply the summation of different experiences but a layering of planes and connections, which remained open and in progress.

The idea of threads as vibrant lines is something that continues to question us. In fact, the practice of performance, that we practised three times (in the workshop, in the analysis and in the LHBN conference) is the practice of presence, a gesture of minimal light (“*con un gesto di minima luce*”, see the *métissage*), through which we show ourselves, we signal ourselves (“*ci mostriamo, ci segnaliamo*”, see the *métissage*), it shows life that continuously is a field of potential action and transformation, that happens every day if we nurture the capacity to perceive it. Both during the workshop and the analysis we were present because we were creating something together (Formenti & West, 2018). Maybe, to encounter the Other we need to create with the Other and the less we know, the more we experiment (Candiani, 2021):

“*Stare insieme non in eterno, non uguali ma aspettando cose...*”

“*Staying together not in eternity, not the same but awaiting things...*” (see the *métissage*).

Ongoing conclusions

We think that our research promotes the connection of people with the territory they inhabit and aims to reconstruct the trust necessary to live in their own skin

and in an open relationship with others, during a pandemic that was still not over and in a historical period characterised by deep fragmentation, fear, anger, and inequality (West, 2016). Polymodal engagement with a text emphasises the “psycho-physiological and kinaesthetic responses” (Scott 2012, as cited in Fenoulhet, 2020, p. 499) when reading a text. This process can be more accessible for some people at some moment in time and space, than others. Not all the participants in the first workshop came back to the other two workshops. It was difficult for us to engage teachers of second languages as it is unusual in Italy to do multimodal, embodied, and theatrical practice in language pedagogy with adults. We have not invited persons studying Italian as a foreign or second language (students, migrants, refugees, etc.) because the project was directed to teachers, artists, and adult educators. Only one participant was not an Italian speaker (one had Italian as a second language), so we are cautious to claim linguistic accessibility of the methodology.

As an analytical tool of analysis, *métissage* allowed the four of us to write together across differences, trusting each other to bring Cinzia (a dancer) and Dalia (a social worker) to respect each other’s voice without hierarchical order. It also made our analysis more creative, free of a rationalising thinking, and spacious, hosting multiple traces of what might be at stake, “dreams, desires, imaginations and memories, and our body materialities” (Ros i Solé et al., 2020, p. 398) in our languages and in our communication. Furthermore, *métissage* can be used as an idea, not just an activity, to experiment “translation as an assemblage” (Fenoulhet, 2020, p. 497) between different art forms, and people, for constructing and promoting new meanings and relationality.

What the method does, we claim, given its limitations mentioned above, is that researchers and participants alike may encounter experiences of transformation, in the sense of coexistence or awareness of, paraphrasing John Dirkx (Dirkx et al., 2006), different forces and wider webs of interaction at work in our lives... a dynamic composition in which “we” are a multidimensional element but not the whole circuit. These experiences are difficult to trace and speak about, they are vibrant, pulsing, and alive. Our approach to somatic and artistic relational work fosters imagination beyond the individual, toward co-individuality. It may be usefully applied in community development and arts institutions to explore multiplicity and messiness.

We hope this way of doing research contributes to reducing fragmentation by offering trust in staying with experimentation in an ongoing process that systemics like Gregory Bateson (1972) call “collective mind”.

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Experiences of (Mis)Recognition in Language Classes and Asylum Seekers' Camp: An Account

Darasimi Powei Oshodi¹ 



Abstract

Encounters between immigrants and members of the host society throw up discourses on topics such as integration, assimilation, and discrimination. Some scholars have argued that the social class or educational level of migrants can play a significant role in their experience of living in the receiving society (Morrice et al., 2017; Portes, 2010). Therefore, the objective of this paper is to explore how a black asylum seeker perceived Italians from his experiences in language classes and an asylum seekers' camp. I tried to provide my understanding of why our experiences might not be similar. This study adopted a narrative method with an interpretative approach, in which narratives gathered from interviews were systematically analysed in order to arrive at an understanding (Bochner & Herrmann, 2020). Drawing on Axel Honneth's theory of recognition (Honneth, 1995), the study found experiences of recognition and disrespect in the participant's story, with the experiences of misrecognition seeming to shape his perception about Italians. Glimpses of recognition included being seen and valued by teachers and camp operators as someone with the potential to be a successful student while clues of misrecognition included being disrespected by teachers and camp operators, on the one hand, and a feeling of being cheated or denied justice because he was black, on the other hand. This paper concludes that the participant perceived Italians as employing othering as a strategy to feel united and that a black person was not afforded the same rights to seek redress for the violation of their rights.

Keywords

recognition, misrecognition, asylum seeking, informal learning

¹ „Riccardo Massa” Department of Human Sciences for Education, Italy, d.oshodi@campus.unimib.it, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8239-4178>

Introduction

This paper is part of my ongoing PhD study where I employ narrative methods to explore the learning experiences of asylum seekers in Italy. Using narrative methods have allowed me to explore the experiences of my participants from an insider's perspective. The concept of insider research refers to studies in which the researcher identifies with the participants "on some significant level" (Voloder, 2013, p. 3). In my case, I am a black Nigerian migrant who is carrying out a study on black asylum seekers and refugees (migrants), mostly from Nigeria. The objective of this paper is to explore the perception of Italians by a black asylum seeker based on his experiences in language classes and an asylum seekers' camp. Thus, I explore how the participants' interactions and experiences with Italians in the contexts of the classroom and camp shaped his identity in relation to Italians. Furthermore, I juxtapose my personal experience with Tamuno's experience to tease out similarities and differences, and I try to provide my understanding of why our experiences might not be similar.

While a good number of scholars have studied adult education in the context of migration in general and a few others have focused on asylum seekers (Andersson & Fejes, 2010; Colliander & Fejes, 2020; Dalziel & Piazzoli, 2018; Damiani, 2019; Fejes, 2019; Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2017; Morrice, 2013; Souto-Otero & Villalba-Garcia, 2015; Thunborg et al., 2021; West, 2014) not too many studies have focused on black asylum seekers' experiences and perspectives and how these impact their self-identity. Thus, my aim in this paper is to illustrate how Tamuno's experiences could be seen as an example of how experiences in language classes and camps can shape black asylum seekers perceptions about their host society due to the fact that it is usually in these contexts that asylum seekers first come into contact with members of the host society in Italy.

Although limited in scope, since this paper focuses on the experience of only one participant, West (1996, 2014) demonstrates how the use of a single story as a case can illuminate complex themes. Merrill & West posit that "Single life histories can provide rich material while the unique and human-centred can be used as a basis for generating highly original forms of interdisciplinary understanding, drawing on historical, social and psychological imaginations" (2009, p. 105). Rustin (2000, cited in Merrill and West, 2009) adds that individual case studies can bring to the fore what is common in human experiences.

Merrill and West (2009) and Merrill (2015) note that the use of single stories in biographical research is not without criticism. Some of the criticisms are that using a single story is too individualistic and that the focus is on the micro

level, and that the story might be atypical or eccentric. Merrill (2015), however, argues that exploring a single story has the potential to illuminate a person's life within a historical or social context. She adds that individual stories can reveal "the collectivities of lives, such as class, gender and race, the interplay between structure and agency, and history and the present" (2015, p. 1861) and "offer a rich insight into attitudes, meanings and complex behaviour as well as highlighting shared experiences" (2015, p. 1863). Furthermore, Merrill and West agree with Rustin (2000) that,

...the validity of individual cases rests in their capacity to generate understanding of how people make their worlds in interaction with others, in diverse ways. One good case study can, in its luminosity, reveal the self-reflection, decision and action, and/or the ambivalence, pain, loss, messiness and satisfaction in a life that has resonance and meaning for us all (2009, p. 167).

Squire (2008, 2013) suggests that in order to make a single story meaningful, there may be a need to include some description and theorising. Squire further suggests that the relationship between the researcher and interviewee can be a rich resource for analysing a single story. Thus, it will be useful for the researcher to demonstrate his reflexivity, and if possible include the participant's reflections. This view is supported by Merrill and West (2009) and West (2016). Squire (2008, 2013) and West (2016) further suggest that a study might be more enriched if the researcher maintains a long-term relationship with the interviewee and thus conducts several interviews with the interviewee. Multiple interviews about the same phenomena can also be conducted with different people (Squire, 2013).

In the following sections, I discuss the macro context of asylum seeking in Italy and informal learning. Other sections include methodology, analysis, discussion, and conclusion.

Macro context: Asylum seeking in Italy

Italy is a European country containing many transnational migrants, particularly refugees and asylum seekers since its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea makes it a popular destination for immigrants (Dovigo, 2019; Nuzzolese & di Vella, 2008; Paynter, 2022). Italian law makes provision for asylum seekers to be housed in reception centres or asylum seekers centres (Duso & Marigo, 2018; Paynter, 2020, 2022; Russo et al., 2016). In these centres, asylum seekers are provided with food, a bed, basic supplies, and a little money for expenses. During their stay in

the reception centres, asylum seekers receive education as well as education, legal, social, and health assistance. Learning and training provisions vary from one centre to the other. Russo et al. (2016) distinguishes between an asylum seeker and refugee in Italy: an asylum seeker is a person who has submitted an application for asylum, while a refugee is the individual whose application for asylum has been granted.

Asylum applications in Italy

Asylum seekers are expected to make their application for asylum as soon as they arrive in Italy; the law specifies a deadline of eight days from arrival. An asylum application can be made orally and in the applicant's language. In this case they would need an interpreter. An application for asylum can be made at the border with the border police or at the immigration desk of the police service. This place is called *questura* in Italian. When making the application, the applicant's biometric details are collected. If the application was made at the border, the applicant still has to go to the *questura* for formal registration (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2021). The police's or *questura*'s role is only to accept and register an asylum application and then forward the application to the "Territorial Commissions or sub-Commissions for International Protection" (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2021, p. 24). Within 30 days of submitting an application, the applicant is invited for an interview by members of the Territorial Commission or sub-Commission (hereinafter referred to as Commission throughout this paper). A member of the commission interviews the applicant but the decision on the application is taken by all members of the panel after discussing the application. The decision is supposed to be made within three days after the interview. If a negative decision is reached, the applicant has the right to appeal. This appeal is made before a civil court and it must be made within 30 days after the decision was given (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2016; Ghio & Blangiardo, 2019).

Integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Italy

Although Caneva (2014) claims that integration in Italy is (narrowly) conceptualised in terms of economic insertion or participation in the labour market, Italy complies with the European Union's integration policy (Scardigno, 2019) which is spelt out in Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council "establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person" (EU, 2015, p. 31). The integration of asylum seekers

in Italy operates in three phases. The first phase entails rescue and identification. Identification is carried out by fingerprinting and photographing the new arrivals. This happens at the places of disembarkation, and it is coordinated by national authorities. The second phase involves the accommodation of the newly arrived persons, and it is coordinated by local authorities. In the third phase, applicants for asylum and beneficiaries of asylum are involved in integration programmes such as language and vocational classes. These programmes are coordinated by municipalities and non-governmental organisations (European Social Policy Network, 2017; Ghio & Blangiardo, 2019).

Adult learning and education for asylum seekers and refugees in Italy

Slade & Dickson (2020) state that member states of the United Nations are obliged to provide access and ensure participation in adult learning and education for disadvantaged groups. In Italy, the Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli Adulti (CPIA) (the Provincial Centres for Adult Education), which are the major public institutions for adult education in Italy, provide access to adult education and learning to asylum seekers and refugees. They are present in all the provinces of Italy, promoting adult education and lifelong learning in Italy. Part of the duties of these centres is the provision of educational offerings for immigrants. Therefore, adult persons seeking asylum in Italy mainly access formal education and vocational training through the CPIA. The CPIA is the successor to Centro Territoriale Permanente (CTP) (Permanent Territorial Centre) and other institutions that carried out evening classes (Daniele et al., 2018; Deiana & Spina, 2021; Loprieno et al., 2019; OECD, 2021). The CPIA was established by a presidential decree in 2012 and started operations in 2014/2015. The CPIA also offers qualification lower secondary school and upper secondary school courses for migrants and for Italians interested in continuing education (Deiana & Spina, 2021; Longo, 2019). While the CPIA is meant to serve both Italians and foreigners, the learners at the CPIA are predominantly foreigners who come to learn Italian due to its importance in aiding integration and due to it being part of the requirement for obtaining long-term residency (Deiana & Spina, 2021; Longo, 2019). Therefore, a major part of the CPIA's educational provisions is language classes for migrants (Deiana & Spina, 2021). These centres provide Italian language classes and classes for some other languages such as English, Arabic, French, and Chinese.

Informal learning

Thunborg et al. (2021) have studied how young adult asylum seekers in Sweden learn to belong to their host society. They found out that some learned to be

marginalised; some learned to be disconnected while others learned to be co-participants in the host society. This enlightens us to the fact that a lot of learning that is not organised or conscious is taking place among asylum seekers, and this kind of learning has the potential to shape the kind of self-identity asylum seekers construct and also how they perceive their host society. This kind of learning is called informal learning. Informal learning is one of the types of learning identified by the European Commission (2001).

According to UNESCO, informal learning “is learning that occurs in daily life, in the family, in the workplace, in communities and through interests and activities of individuals” (UIL, 2012, p. 10). Informal learning is in most cases unintentional though there are situations where it may be intentional (Rogers, 2014). Some other terms used for informal learning are ‘experiential learning’ or ‘tacit learning’. “Informal learning will include all the unconscious influences through the family and groups within the wider society, through religion and sport, through shared music and peer pressures in such things as dress and computer games, and through the many accidents which occur during the course of our lives” (Rogers, 2014, pp. 16-17). Thus, the scale of informal learning is as broad as the practice of living itself. In the context of migration, one of the ways in which informal learning takes place is when people make sense of what they need and how to act in their new socio-cultural contexts. Most often, informal learning takes place via “social learning, distributed throughout the lifeworld; it proceeds through social interaction” (Rogers, 2014, p. 41).

Theory of recognition

This research draws on Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition. Axel Honneth, in his work *The Struggle for recognition: The moral grammar of social conflicts* (Honneth, 1995), sought to outline and explicate the conditions that can aid an individual’s self-realisation. He stated that social relations are regulated by mutual recognition or intersubjective recognition, and when an individual is accorded the recognition they feel they deserve, it can help them to develop a positive relation to self. Honneth identified three forms or spheres of recognition. They are: love, rights, and social esteem. Thus, these forms of intersubjective recognition are the conditions that can aid an individual’s self-realisation or development of positive self-identity.

The first sphere of recognition identified by Honneth is love. Love relationships, according to Honneth, are primary relationships that include friendships, parent-child relationships, and even erotic relationships. These are relationships that “are constituted by strong emotional attachments among a small number of people”

(Honneth, 1995, p. 95). This sphere is characterised by subjects' dependence on each other, and encouragement or affective approval are important. Essentially, individuals recognise each other as needy creatures and feel accepted by the other person when their needs are satisfied. Honneth claims that the sphere of love is "both conceptually and genetically prior to every other form of reciprocal recognition" (Honneth, 1995, p. 107). The sphere of love is thus regarded as the first stage of mutual recognition where positive affirmation from the significant other helps an individual to develop self-confidence.

The second form or sphere of recognition identified by Honneth is the sphere of law or rights. According to him, this sphere refers "only to the situation in which self and other respect each other as legal subjects for the sole reason that they are both aware of the social norms by which rights and duties are distributed in their community" (Honneth, 1995, pp. 108–109). He explains that people should be seen as morally responsible persons with rights and capability to participate in societal affairs. Honneth uses the terms 'law' and 'rights' interchangeably. Honneth's explanation of the term 'rights' is that they are "those individual claims that a person can legitimately expect to have socially met because he or she participates, with equal rights, in the institutional order as a full-fledged member of a community" (Honneth, 1995, p. 133). Every individual deserves to be treated equally in society. That is, they must be accorded the status of a legal person; a person who possesses rights. The ability to exercise one's rights is what develops an individual's self-respect because it empowers the individual who bears rights to "engage in action that can be perceived by interaction partners" (Honneth, 1995, p. 120). Recognition in the sphere of rights requires a society to create conditions for individual rights to be accorded equally to everyone as free beings rather than granting such rights disparately based on membership of social status group.

The third sphere of recognition identified by Honneth is social esteem. This sphere concerns a person's traits and abilities. For this kind of recognition to take place there must exist what Honneth calls "an intersubjectively shared value-horizon" (Honneth, 1995, p. 121) because it is only when people share "values and goals that indicate to each other the significance or contribution of their qualities for the life of the other" (Honneth, 1995, p. 121) that they can mutually esteem one another. In the sphere of social esteem, the unique characteristics of a person or the specific contribution a person makes to the society are acknowledged.

Misrecognition (disrespect)

What if a person is denied the recognition they expect? Honneth calls it disrespect, and he says what disrespect, which he also calls injustice, does to a person is

that it “injures them with regard to the positive understanding of themselves that they have acquired intersubjectively” (Honneth, 1995, p. 131). This injury, according to Honneth, can cause a person’s identity to collapse. This highlights the vulnerability of humans in needing recognition from others in order to develop a good or healthy sense of self. Honneth categorises disrespect according to the three forms of recognition.

In the sphere of love, disrespect takes the form of any “attempt to gain control of a person’s body against his or her will” (Honneth, 1995, p. 132). So, this usually constitutes physical injuries or abuse such as torture or rape. This kind of injury causes both physical and psychological injury to the victim. The victim feels defenceless and at the mercy of another person. This form of disrespect damages a person’s self-confidence and leads to a loss of trust in themselves and others, thus impacting negatively on their relationship with others. Disrespect in the sphere of love destroys the “most fundamental form of practical relation-to-self, namely, one’s underlying trust in oneself” (Honneth, 1995, p. 133).

In the sphere of rights, disrespect takes the form of structural exclusion of individuals from the “possession of certain rights within a society” (Honneth, 1995, p. 133). This denial of rights or social ostracism, in the words of Honneth, is the refusal to accord to an individual the status of equality with other members of the community and the refusal to acknowledge such an individual “the same degree of moral responsibility as other members of the society” (Honneth, 1995, p. 133). This causes the individual to feel he does not enjoy the privilege of being seen as a full member of society having the same rights as others. Honneth states that, “For the individual, having socially valid rights-claims denied signifies a violation of the intersubjective expectation to be recognised as a subject capable of forming moral judgments” (Honneth, 1995, pp. 133–134). Disrespect in the sphere of rights thus takes the form of discrimination and injures a person’s self-identity with regard to self-respect.

The form of disrespect that can manifest in the sphere of social esteem is the downgrading of the social value of an individual or a group. This happens when an individual’s or a group’s characteristics, contributions, beliefs, abilities, or way of life are regarded as inferior or deficient. The result of this is that the individual loses their self-esteem as they are deprived social approval of their abilities and contributions. To experience disrespect in any of the three spheres of recognition thus is to be denied certain forms of recognition which can endanger a person’s sense of self or self-identity.

Methodology and context

This study adopted a narrative method with an interpretative approach, in which narratives gathered from interviews were systematically analysed in order to arrive at an understanding. (Bochner & Herrmann, 2020). Thus, for this paper, narratives from an interview I had with an asylum seeker were transcribed and interpreted. Before the interview, I explained my aim to the participant, after which he signed a consent form prepared by the ethical committee of my university. The interview was transcribed in full and there was no attempt to ensure the grammatical correctness of the speech. Pauses are indicated by three dots. Four dots are used to indicate that a speech has been shortened. Italics were used when the participant was reporting someone else's speech. For the sake of anonymity, the participant's name has been changed. In the analysis, I tried to "understand the overall form, or gestalt of lives, for appreciating the significance of the detail" (Merrill & West, 2009, 136) and identified themes in the narrative material. As much as possible, I tried to remember that our relationship was not neutral. On the one hand, I considered how his interpretation and perception of me, and how I asked questions and the relationship between us, would shape the stories he was telling me (Riessman, 2008 cited in Bochner & Herrmann, 2020; Formenti, 2014; Galimberti, 2014. On the other hand, I tried to be reflexive in my analysis of the interview, asking myself how it was shaped by my memories of it, my own experience and identity as a black man and PhD student with funding and who came to Italy with a visa, and how oppression, recognition, and privileges may clash, in our stories (Bochner & Herrmann, 2020; Chant, 2016; Cunningham & Carmichael, 2018) (Chant, 2016; Cunningham and Carmichael, 2018; Bochner & Herrmann, 2020).

Tamuno

Tamuno arrived in Italy in May 2018. He first attended language classes and then middle school at an adult education centre in the Lombardy region of Italy. At the time of the interview, he was about to start high school and also begin an apprenticeship as a welder. He was 25 years old at the time of the interview. The interview lasted for close to two hours. Throughout the interview, we switched between standard English and Nigerian Pidgin English. Nigerian Pidgin English is a mixture of English words with words from Nigerian languages, so a majority of the population regardless of their educational status are able to communicate in Pidgin English.

Analysis

Arrival and motivation for learning Italian language

Tamuno narrated that he arrived in Italy from Libya in May 2018. He arrived in Sicily where he was placed in a camp. He noticed that most of the people in the camp were not going to school and instead were going out to beg, which was not the kind of life he wanted, so he left Sicily with the hope of going to Germany, which he had heard was better than Italy. Tamuno's decision to go to Germany was informed by what he was told by other asylum seekers while he was seeking information about Italy and other countries in Europe during his first days in Italy. He was told that in Germany he would be sent to school and he could become anything he wanted to be in life. This shows one of the ways informal learning takes place: peer learning. A lot of learning apparently takes place among peers, that is, when asylum seekers, like any other group of migrants, encounter one another and exchange information in a new society.

On his way to Germany, Tamuno was stopped by the police in Switzerland and was brought back to Como in the northern part of Italy. He was later transferred to a camp in Lecco in the Lombardy region of Italy where after some months he was registered in an adult education centre. Tamuno was told by camp operators that learning Italian was necessary for communication and for him to achieve his life's dreams in Italy. This apparently served as a motivation for him to attend Italian language classes. Furthermore, another way by which asylum seekers acquire informal learning is through interactions with camp operators. Usually, camp operators are asylum seekers' first contact in Italy apart from the official who received and processed them on arrival. So, most of the information about what they need to do is acquired from camp operators:

I told them what I want to do. So, they said, "Okay. First, you will start Italian school. When you start learning Italian, this is a way of communicating with people. You will be able to communicate with us, we will be able to communicate with you because Italy don't speak English." So... because I speak English... So... "Then you will be able to choose the road and your dream, what you want to face in life and continue with that. So, because you are enable to speak English," Italian language sorry.

Tamuno also spoke about another motivation for attending school. He said living in camp made him feel like he was not in control of his life. Experiences in camp, such as lack of freedom and deprivation induced painful feelings, and

he related that this made him resolve to take every opportunity that may present itself for him to go to school. The implication of this is that Tamuno saw language learning and formal education as his way out of dependency and to regain control of his life. He probably thought that learning the language and getting an education would help him secure a good job and thus be able to afford to rent his own accommodation and live the way he would like to live. The painful camp experiences, which are experiences of misrecognition, served as a spur for Tamuno to seek recognition through formal learning. Thus, attending classes was one of the strategies he adopted in his search for recognition.

Experiences of recognition

Tamuno narrated that his teachers in the language school in Lecco were supportive and showed interest in his learning progress. Even when he was transferred to another camp which led to him leaving the school, he still kept contact with his former teachers who would send him lessons and exercises to do:

The teachers are good. The teachers are good. The teachers are good. I can say they are good.... When I come to class, I stay in my chair.... So, I respect you, respect me. *"Good morning."* *"Good morning, teacher. How are you?"* *"Are you here?"* *"Yes."* *"Sit down."* I go to my seat and sit down. I will wait for the time of the lecture. I listen to the lecture. I ask questions where I did not understand.... Like the teachers there, even when I told them that I'm going out, dem like, *"Why?"* I told them, *"I got transfer. I'm not at Lecco again. I'm going back to Monza."* So dem say, *"Eeyah, eeyah."*So, most of them, they send me message in my Instagram, like lessons of the day for my level to go through....

Tamuno related that his teachers were not happy to see him go. They kept offering him educational support to help keep him updated in his learning. This would seem to reveal something like the supportive relationship which evokes recognition in the sphere of love that, as mentioned above is proposed by Honneth (1995, 2004). Feeling recognised by teachers can make a student feel valued and make them want to stay in school (Fleming, 2016; West, 2014; West et al., 2013). Tamuno also conveyed a sense of an expectation of mutual recognition between teachers and students (asylum seekers). Teachers were not the only ones who showed him support. Tamuno talked about a particular camp worker who helped him with his language learning. This person observed that Tamuno was serious with his language classes and he monitored his progress and helped him with his homework. He also gave him constant encouragement. This again

suggests recognition in the first sphere, love. Going by Honneth's arguments, all these forms of support Tamuno received contribute to feelings of self-confidence (Honneth, 1995, 2014). These experiences of feeling seen and valued as a student promoted a positive self-identity in Tamuno. They helped him to create an identity of someone with the potential to succeed academically. This encouraged him to keep studying. In his narration, he also positioned himself as an agentic subject who understood and was committed to doing what he needed to do to succeed in Italy.

Experiences of misrecognition and disrespect

Tamuno narrated some unpleasant experiences he had both in class and in camp. These experiences influenced his perception of Italians, particularly when it concerned matters of respect and justice between Italians and black people. He remembered a teacher who talked disrespectfully to students in his language class:

Yeah, like me, I saw some teachers. The manners... like there is a teacher, I will not call her name there in CPIA. I will not call her name. So, like the way she talk to student is not no, no, no. It's not... Because if the student began to talk to her the way she talk, there will be argument. There will be problem in the school.

Tamuno described the teacher's behaviour as unacceptable. There are glimpses of misrecognition between the teacher and the students. Tamuno implied that she treated students like children. What could have made Tamuno feel this way? Was it the way she addressed the students? Or could it be the way students had to seek permission for things such as answering the call of nature (as we will see below)? Tamuno's narration indicated that the teacher did not regard her students as morally responsible adults but as immature children.

Tamuno had an angry exchange with the teacher one time when she made a racist remark about another student. According to Tamuno, he challenged the teacher for uttering such an expression. From that point, he never had a good relationship with the teacher; she lost his respect:

...there is one Nigerian girl that is always come to school. There is a time that girl began... There was a day that girl stand up... stood up to go and ease herself in the bathroom. The teacher said no. So... The girl don't know how to speak Italy but the girl has lived in Italy for five years but she refuse to go to school in the initial place. So, the girl was like... she sat down, like

respect. Okay. The girl told me where we are sitting, "*Tamuno...*" He called my name. He said, "*I want to ease myself.*" I say, "*Go now.*" He say, "*The teacher said, 'No.'*" I say, "*Stand up. Go again.*" He stand up. She stood up. The teacher ask her to sit down.

The lady eventually went to the bathroom but as she was going, Tamuno said the teacher spoke some words of insult in Italian which he understood. Tamuno challenged the teacher for uttering the insult. This led to an angry exchange between him and the teacher. The teacher then went ahead and called his camp operators and reported that he was disturbing the class. This was an attempt to intimidate him into unquestioning submission to the teacher. This narration by Tamuno suggests clues of mutual misrecognition between Tamuno and the teacher. Tamuno said the teacher's actions made him to stop respecting her. He recounted that he told her he could not respect her since she did not respect others. This shows how (mis)recognition can be intersubjective. In this narration, Tamuno constructed an identity of confident and courageous subject who though was still waiting for his asylum application to be approved but still demanded to be respected.

Italy is one – A chauvinistic slogan?

I asked Tamuno if it was not possible to report teachers who treated students wrongly, he replied that reporting Italians would not yield any result. He explained his reasons for saying so.

Like people say Italy are one and Italy call them Italy Uno. They always say Italy is one. So, most people has complained even in camp, people that stayed in camp, like for example now, I'm staying in camp. Like there's some things my workers is doing. I talk to maybe the boss of the house, tell him this thing is not good. Look at what this person did. Instead of that worker... I have never seen any black being supported even during my stay of Italy, my camp, my school or anywhere or anywhere I enter, black get problem with Italy, Italy man will support black.

Tamuno claimed that reporting an Italian over a wrong done to a black person is an exercise in futility as nothing will be done about it. He claimed that Italians had a solidarity that made them support each other over black individuals even when an Italian was clearly in the wrong. He narrated that this solidarity is expressed in the slogan "*Italia uno*" which translates to "*Italy is one*". While I have never heard the slogan before, it seems Tamuno's experiences of discrimination seem to have influenced his interpretation of this slogan.

Tamuno's story reveals a probable source from which he learned about the slogan, 'Italia Uno'. He narrated how a friend of his told him about the slogan and what it meant:

...The boy said, *"I'm working with... I work with Italy. I came here. I'm in this country for ten years before you. So there is nothing you will tell me about this country. Italia Uno, you no dey hear am for television?"* When he tell dat word, I say I dey hear am. So Italia Uno. That is Italia One. So when he tell me all those things, I was like... I said no problem. Thank you....

Tamuno narrated that his friend said having lived in Italy for ten years, he had observed that Italians would never admit a wrongdoing against a black person. They would also support each other against a black person. This friend claimed that this was what 'Italia Uno' meant. This gives us a clue that one of the things that had influenced Tamuno's perception about Italians was what friends and acquaintances told him. The role of informal learning in shaping Tamuno's perception about Italians is again demonstrated.

Tamuno narrated another story to reiterate his position that Italians supported each other against blacks. He complained about a teacher and another asylum seeker, a student in the same class, who corroborated Tamuno's complaints about the teacher's attitude but instead of investigating his complaints about this teacher, her behaviour was excused by his camp officials as human behaviour. In his view, this was because he and the other students were black. He claimed that if Italians made the same complaints, the outcome would have been different:

Like this one in Monza here, she don't have manner, like manner. Ask anybody. Ask that Gloria, maybe she will still...

So, I told them (camp operators). So, when they (camp operators) tell her, she said, *"Haha, but I'm not like that now."* One boy that's in office, that go to the same school with me said, *"You said what?"* Everybody in the office start laughing. That means what this boy is saying, the former boy is saying is truth because the one in the office that is with them... Like that day, they are... all of them they are talking in the office. When they called that woman, they was like talking to her saying this is what so-so boy talk o, is it true? She said, *"No, no, no, no."* The other boy that's in the office that hear their voice said, *"You said what?"*

Oh, who is also a student too?

Who is also a student, *"You said what?"* He say, *"Even that boy don't know you. You are even more cativ, more bad than the experience of that boy because I started school before that boy."* So, everybody start laughing in the office. So... Instead of them to support, like we... they still try to like, *"Human being are like that"* because it's still their people. They still cover her. They didn't say anything o or report to school, anything o, say these people are complaining. Because if it's Italian – I stay with Italians – they will call school. They will tell school, *"These people are complaining. Investigate this person. So if there is a manner... at least calm her down. Let her know sey this is school"* and all that but they will not. They didn't do that.

Discussion

The objective of this paper is to explore the perception of a black asylum seeker about Italians from his experiences in language classes and asylum seekers' camp. The study found experiences of recognition and disrespect in Tamuno's story, with the experiences of misrecognition seeming to shape his perception more than the experiences of recognition. Glimpses of recognition included being seen and valued by teachers and camp operators as someone with the potential to be a successful student, while clues of misrecognition included being disrespected by teachers and camp operators, one the one hand, and a feeling of being cheated or denied justice because he was black, on the other. Thus, Tamuno's construction of his perception of Italians is that Italians use othering as a strategy to feel united. He constructed a self-identity of someone who did not expect to be treated with justice by Italians.

According to Honneth, experiences of misrecognition can impact a person's self-identity with respect to self-respect negatively. I would like to argue that integration cannot take place when a person's self-respect is impaired and that two things might result from such an injury to a person's self-identity: (1) negative assimilation, where the immigrant feels compelled to become similar to members of the host society with regard to values and traditions (Bartram et al., 2014), thereby taking on a new identity, and (2) a struggle for recognition, whereby a person attempts to seek a redress of their situation (Honneth, 1995). Tamuno has not presented himself as a helpless asylum seeker. He constructed himself as person who demanded to be accorded the recognition he deserved. Honneth (1995) argues that individuals' struggle for recognition can arise from the experience of being disrespected (p. 138). This experience of disrespect, he

says, can be a motivational impetus (p. 138) for seeking recognition because individuals' agitations can only be assuaged by seeking a redress of their situation and when individual experiences become typical for a whole group, then the group begins a collective struggle for recognition.

Tamuno's story shows that his perception was shaped by his informal learning experiences: what he learned from others and his personal experiences. He learned from his encounters with Italians as well as what his friend told him that he was an 'other' who was treated differently and without the same rights as Italians. Just like Tamuno, most of the perceptions I have about Italians today were shaped by what I have been told by other Nigerians, many of whom advise me about Italy by the virtue of the fact that they have spent more years in Italy than me. My perception about Italy and Italians has also been shaped by the interviews I have conducted for my PhD research. While I have had similar experiences to other black migrants, regardless of whether or not they are asylum seekers, some of the experiences asylum seekers have told me are not what I have experienced.

Unlike Tamuno, I have not had any major conflict with an Italian except for a particular time I felt that a neighbour was being racist. I lodged complaints against her with the hostel concierge who addressed the matter with this neighbour. She came and apologised and told me she was not racist. I was really surprised. I concluded that the senior concierge took my complaint seriously and remonstrated with this neighbour causing her to come to me and apologise. My experience therefore is different from Tamuno's in this regard. What could account for this difference? Is it because I am a PhD student while Tamuno is an asylum seeker? Is an asylum seeker seen as someone who is vulnerable and who could be taken advantage of? Or is it because the university frowns upon racism and seeks to ensure equal treatment for all regardless of nationality or skin colour while this is not the case with those who work with asylum seekers?

Conclusion

This paper has presented an account of only one participant, Tamuno, and it has illustrated how experiences of misrecognition had shaped the participant's perception about Italians. His experiences were varied. He had positive experiences as well as negative ones but it appeared that the experiences of misrecognition shaped his views about Italians. How his experiences of recognition affected his perception of Italians is not evident in the material. Tamuno seemed to make the allusion that Italians use othering as a strategy to be feel united and that a black person was not accorded the same rights to seek redress for the violation of their rights. The implication of this for persons who work with asylum seekers

is to be conscious of providing an environment for asylum seekers and refugees to experience the “ethical life” (Honneth, 1995, p. 173). In other words, an environment where conditions for self-realisation are present for asylum seekers and refugees. That is asylum seekers and refugees need to feel like they possess equal rights and opportunities to flourish as Italians.

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Lorenzo Milani's Thought and the Present Italian School Crisis

Tommaso Lo Monte¹ 



Abstract

Presently, the Italian school system is in the midst of a profound crisis. The aim of this article is to attempt to find a solution to some of the problems with the aid of Lorenzo Milani's ideas. The scientific pedagogic method used is based on the analysis of all Milani's publications, which were recently peer-reviewed. Contrary to other published studies, this article will focus on the link between the Italian school system and Milani's analysis of society, drawing attention to the responsibility of the teachers who are, in fact, the instruments by which society has perpetuated the existing oppressive system. According to Milani, the school's role should consist of giving the students all the necessary instruments to become an integral part of a democratic society. Thanks to Milani's analysis of society and the school system, it would be possible to offer a solution to the crisis from its "core" origin. In other words, beginning with the responsibility of the teachers, the only ones capable of changing the status quo.

Key words

Lorenzo Milani, cultural capital, school, social discrimination

Introduction

Although more than 40 years have passed since his death, Lorenzo Milani's approach is now more relevant than ever before (Cristofanelli, 2018). This is

¹ Cannizzaro Scientific High School in Palermo, Italy,
lomontedibenedetto@inwind.it, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9769-6048>

because the Italian school system is undergoing a crisis whereby there is no clear way out. Milani was one of the first in Italy to link social discrimination to the public school, which would later be discussed by Paolo Freire (Cristofanelli, 2018, May 2011) and Pierre Bourdieu.

It is, therefore, necessary to highlight some central aspects of Milani's analysis such as the "social pyramid", control of the language by the dominating social class, and the role of the public schools and the teachers. Combined together, all of these aspects maintain the status quo. In particular, it would be necessary to analyze Milani's concept of "the primacy of consciousness", no longer limiting it to the defense of conscientious objection to the military and pacifism in general, as it has been up to now, but also to include the teacher's role in state schools. In other words, "Milani saw the legitimacy of a nation's defense against imperial aggressors" (Papastephanou, 2014, p. 107).

Furthermore, Milani's concept of the primacy of consciousness was based, above all, on his experience as a priest and teacher as he did not have a university education in pedagogy, but was self-taught. As a result, it would be necessary to mention some aspects of his life before analyzing his ideas, so that one could better understand both his analysis of society and his proposals in the didactic field.

A brief outline of Lorenzo Milani's life

Milani was born into a cultured, rich, and agnostic upper-middle-class family; however, at the age of twenty he converted to Catholicism and chose to live as a Catholic priest. He never frequented ecclesiastical circles, parishes, or the circles of the Catholic tradition in general, so he understood the Gospel message literally: first of all, the need to take care of the poor. He soon realized that the primary need of the poor is to possess the word, that language allows them to understand that the Christian God is on their side.

During his life he worked hard to educate the poorest children and young people, that is, those who came from rural and working families. He was one of the first to describe the mechanism by which the Italian school system guarantees the maintenance of upper-middle-class hegemony over the whole country. But he did not limit himself to theory, he put his ideas into practice by dedicating himself to the education of the children of workers and peasants first in a small workers' center near Florence, Calenzano, and then in an even more depressed context, Barbiana, a mountain town strongly disadvantaged and destined for depopulation.

His first assignment, leaving aside a very brief parenthesis in Montespetoli, was that of chaplain of the church of San Donato in Calenzano, a small town near

Florence, where he remained from 1947 until 1954. In Calenzano Milani learned about the daily life of the workers and peasants, the real conditions in which they live, the constant difficulties, the stubborn resignation; he gathered detailed information on the living conditions of parishioners, gathered statistics, analyzed data, denounced social inequalities and proposed solutions. His research, analysis and proposals were published years later (1958) in a volume called “Pastoral Experiences” (Milani, 2017a, pp. 5-520). This was his first book and in some respects the only one, since the next was published in the name of the School of Barbiana.

1954 was a very important year for Milani. After seven years in Calenzano he was transferred, indeed exiled, to the parish of Sant’Andrea in Barbiana, in the Mugello mountains, a village with a few houses scattered among the mountains, where neither electricity nor running water reaches. Even knowing that it was in fact a punishment for his commitment to the side of the poor, Milani faced the new challenge with a serene soul. He immediately decided to spend the rest of his life there in the mountains. In Barbiana he found an even poorer and more marginalized people than previously: the mountain farmers. He learned all about them, as he had already done with the workers of Calenzano, thus he continued his commitment to helping the poor. This was a commitment that he always maintained despite the long illness that would accompany him until his death in 1967.

The schools of Calenzano and Barbiana were completely different from the Italian state schools of the time. For Milani, the education of the poor was fundamental, while for public schools social selection is more important and therefore excluded those who do not belong to the upper-middle social class from the school system. The tool with which selections were made was “the vote”. Therefore, potential students were evaluated less on their skills and knowledge of the individual but on “cultural capital” factors, meaning those who did not have an educated family upper-middle-class background were precluded from attaining a certain level of knowledge.

Social hierarchy and command of the language

From the brief biography of Milani’s life, it can be seen how well he understood the life and problems of the farmers and working class, having spent his entire adult life by their side. His analysis of the entire Italian society, therefore, starts from the bottom up – the life of the poor.

Milani describes Italian society as a pyramid. “The base is made up largely of the illiterate who are oppressed by everyone and oppress no one. The top is

made up of the few very rich who hold the reins. They oppress everyone and are not oppressed by anyone. All the others in the middle, that is, the majority, are both oppressed and oppressors. For instance, a worker who becomes a supervisor continues to be oppressed by his bosses while he himself becomes an oppressor of the workers under him” (Milani, 2017b, p. 1000). The oppressors are the upper-middle-class who hold political, economic, cultural power, de facto dominating the entire Italian society. The oppressed are the farmers and factory workers. Milani does not use the term “proletarians” except for a couple of times during a didactic directors’ conference, which he was invited to participate in (Milani, 2017a, pp. 1158-1182). He considered the oppressed as individuals and not as a generic category, dividing them into factory workers and farmers. Milani then subdivided the farmers into two categories: lowland and mountain farmers. The mountain farmers were referred to by their first name and surname, as he knew them personally, making them real people. The upper-middle-class, on the other hand, are a dehumanized entity whose existence hinges on maintaining its privileges and power. This was an analysis that Freire would develop in the following years (Freire, 1970/1971; 1967/1973, 1972/1974).

However, when the “upper-middle class” is no longer an abstract category and becomes a real person, such as his mother Alice Weiss or his friend Elena Pirelli, Milani’s approach changes. Every single human being can be good or bad, so he writes in a letter to his students: “simply dividing the world into rich ‘bad’ and poor ‘good’, is certainly not what I have taught you, even though the Gospel heavily defines the rich as evil, most of the time. However, at the moment of the Passion of Christ, it is the poor who flee, leaving two rich men to bury Christ (Giuseppe d’Arimatea and Nicodemo)” (Milani, 2017b, p. 1126).

The difference between social classes for Milani does not depend only on the economic aspect: “the poverty of the poor is not measured by bread, by home, by heat. It is measured on the degree of culture and ... on the social function. [...] The distinction in social classes cannot therefore be made on the cadastral taxable amount, but on cultural values” (Milani, 2017a, p. 234). What the oppressed lack is education, understood in the broadest possible sense, that is, “all that is interior elevation” (Milani, 2017a, p. 1007). This lack of education is not based on the possession of simple notions, even the peasants possess a quantity of knowledge that the upper-middle-class people do not have. But in Italian society knowledge has a hierarchy, the upper-middle-class people establish what are more important and those that have less value. While for Milani every culture has an equal dignity, the upper-middle class in Italy imposes a cultural hierarchy based on the

possession of the word so as to maintain control over the poorer social classes: “a doctor today when he speaks to an engineer or a lawyer discusses as an equal. But that’s not because he knows as much about engineering or law as they do. He speaks as an equal because he has in common with them the dominion of the word” (Milani, 2017a, p. 1012).

Peasants and workers are oppressed because they do not know how to express their culture in the language of the hegemonic social class. Therefore the difference “is not in the quantity nor in the quality of the treasure closed inside the mind and heart, but in something that is on the threshold between the inside and the outside, indeed it is the threshold itself: the Word. [...] What my children lack is therefore only this: dominion over the word. On the word of others to grasp its intimate essence and precise boundaries, on one’s own so that it expresses without effort and without betraying the infinite riches that the mind contains” (Milani, 2017a, p. 1011). To free the poor from oppression, indeed to help them free themselves, they need to be taught the Italian language, the tool for dealing with the “daily problems that modern life imposes” (Milani, 2017a, p. 1011). The tool chosen by Milani is that of a school open to all, or rather reserved only for the poor, where their needs and their learning times are respected.

As written by Milani himself, in one of his many letters, “The evening school, which I have spoken about several times, is frequented by young factory workers. It has always been the work where I have placed more hope. It is more necessary than bread. Teaching the ignorant, removing the rust on such wonderful intelligence, turned bad by work and social inferiority. Extending all privileges such as those enjoyed by children of the rich is key to every conquest. Trying to prevent a bloody revolution with that of a voluntary and introspective one. Building an intellectual premise up to the religious rebirth in the world of the poor who no longer live a Christian life because their life has nothing human about it. Finally, there are many reasons why the best of my time, and my passion as a priest is spent on schools. I hope that you will understand me and that you will not be afraid to help me to accelerate the destruction of a world which sooner or later must fall!” (Milani, 2017b, p. 177).

It is therefore necessary to overcome this oppressive system and the only way to do it is to build a new society where there are no more oppressed and oppressors. The task of this change certainly cannot fall on the upper-middle-class people who have so far shown that they want to protect their privileges at all costs. For Milani, only the peasants and workers, that is the oppressed, can give life to a new culture where there is no longer a hegemonic social class, but to achieve this

goal peasants and workers must have the word, the word that would allow them to develop a critical thought towards the society that surrounds them and that oppresses them.

The instrument through which the poor can speak is the school. A school that makes them sovereign citizens, that gives them effective social equality with the upper-middle class: “there will always be the worker and the engineer, there is no remedy. But this does not matter at all that the injustice of today is perpetuated for which the engineer must be more of a man than a worker (I call a man who is the master of the language). This is not part of the professional needs, but of the life necessity of every man from the first to the last that is called a man” (Milani, 2017a, p. 1012).

Problems in Italian public schools in milani’s time

Schools should, therefore, teach the oppressed the use of language to allow them to free themselves from the oppressive system. If this does not occur, then the schools have not fulfilled their role. According to Milani, Italian schools “only have one problem. The boys and girls who lose” (Milani, 2017a, p. 710). In other words, the schools only help a few selected students, not all.

Although Article 34 of the Italian Constitution had provided since 1948 that the first eight years of school must be compulsory for everyone, this obligation remained a theoretical principle that was never applied, at least until the early 1970s. From the second half of the 1940s to the 1960s, as Milani denounced in his writings (Milani, 2017a, 2017b), the Italian school system was profoundly unjust and classist, a system built by the upper-middle class to exclude the poor from education.

The first injustice is evident in the choice of the language used at school: Italian, which is the tool that should give everyone the opportunity to develop critical thinking. The problem arises when the school system puts all children enrolled in the first year in the same class, while in reality this uniformity does not exist, as not everyone has the same command of the Italian language.

As Milani writes, poorer people speak a local dialect at home and not the official Italian language. Since only Italian is used in the classroom, the poor actually start with a huge disadvantage compared to the children of the upper-middle class who instead use Italian fluently in the family. For this reason Milani harshly criticizes this classist use of the Italian language: “we should agree on what is the correct language. Languages are created by the poor and then they continue to renew them indefinitely. The rich crystallize them in order to make fun of those

who don't speak like them. Or fail to do it. You say that Pierino the son of the doctor writes well. Of course, he talks like you. He belongs to the firm. Instead the language that Gianni speaks and writes is that of his father. [...] Now, if it is possible, it is good for Gianni to learn how to say the word radio. Your language might suit him. But in the meantime, you can't kick him out of school. 'All citizens are equal regardless of language,' the Constitution says while thinking of him. [...] But you honor the grammar more than the Constitution." (Milani, 2017a, pp. 696-697). Pierino is the upper-middle class student par excellence and, in turn, Gianni represents the poor students, while the "firm" in this case is the upper-middle social class as a whole.

Milani's analysis is confirmed by the data on early school leaving reported in his latest work, "Letter to a teacher" (Milani, 2017a, pp. 683-826): 78.9% of those who failed in the fifth grade and the sixth grade are children of peasants, while 15.8% are children of workers. Thus peasant children do not go beyond five years of elementary school, years they often repeat more than once before being promoted; in the end they just have to go to work in the fields like their parents: "they work and between the lines of the law it turns out that we know, but we don't say. Law 29-1-1961 'On the protection of the work of women and children' prohibits work before the age of 15. It does not apply to agriculture. It's right. The lower race has no children, we are all men ahead of time. Article 205 of the INAIL consolidated act establishes that peasants are paid for accidents at work aged 12 and over. So we know that we work" (Milani, 2017a, pp. 718). If on the one hand the children of poor families have enormous difficulties since the first grade, on the other hand the little offspring of the upper-middle class try to enroll directly in the second grade at six years, thus skipping the first grade to finish their studies a year earlier. They almost never fail until university.

The hypocrisy of the school system hides injustice behind a semblance of fairness. In fact, the school is impartial, those who know are welcomed, those who do not know are rejected, without any distinction of class or gender. On the other hand, "playing equal parts among unequal", as Milani writes, is the greatest injustice of the state school. The teachers claim to reject only "the idiots and the listless" (Milani, 2017a, pp. 732). But if the majority of those who fail are the sons of workers and peasants then it should be admitted that "God gives birth to idiots and listless people in the homes of the poor. But God does not do these treats to the poor. [...] At the Constituent Assembly who supported the theory of birth differences was a fascist: 'Hon. Mastroianni, referring to the word compulsory, observes that there are pupils who demonstrate an organic insufficiency to attend

schools” (Milani, 2017a, p. 732). The fascist notion of social selection, therefore, continued to exist in schools even though the Italian Constitution had, in the past, rejected it in its Article 3. This article “eliminated those obstacles of a social and economic order, which limited the freedom and equality of the citizens, prohibiting their full development as a human being” (Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana 2012). This principle should have re-established equality among citizens even if they were from different social classes.

Since it is not possible to accept the idea that the poor have genetic characteristics that prevent them from studying, then it is the approach of the Italian school that is wrong. First of all, school hours penalize those who do not have cultural capital from their family of origin. In the morning the teachers explain and in the afternoon the students have to study at home alone, which means that those with a cultural background have a clear advantage over those who do not have a family that can support them. If children spent more time in school and did their homework together with their teachers, the weight of cultural capital would be significantly reduced. Instead, the children of the poor are left to fend for themselves, forced to study alone in the afternoon without their parents being able to help them.

The family of origin also conditions the pupils’ vision of the study itself. The upper-middle class people know that the Italian school requires intense study during the afternoon hours, while those coming from the poorest social classes do not have a measuring tool that allows them to establish how much time their children must dedicate in the afternoon to carry out the tasks assigned to them in the morning from the teachers. If these differences were not enough to prevent the children of peasants and workers from studying, what Milani calls “fashions” intervene, that is, tools of mass distraction created with art to distract from studying those who do not belong to the upper-middle class. Milani identifies football or television among these tools, but today it is possible to broaden the field by inserting new “fashions” such as the intensive use of social media or the video games themselves. As Milani writes, on the son of workers or peasants weigh: “all fashions except the good ones. Whoever does not accept them isolates himself. It would take a courage that he cannot have when he is so young, uneducated, not helped by anyone. Nor from the father who falls for it too. Nor from the parish priest who sells games at the ACLI bar. Nor by the Communists who sell games to the Casa del Popolo. They compete to see who drags it further down. [...] They have hidden from him that 12-15 years are the right age to master the word. 15-21 to use it in trade unions and parties” (Milani, 2017a, pp. 736-737).

The responsibility of teachers and the primacy of conscience

The Italian school is, therefore, one of the most ruthless in Western democracies in that it is used to ensure that the poor are excluded from the managing class. Not only does language become a barrier, excluding the poor from school, but there are also the so-called distractions - pastimes which alienate the young from their studies. In Milani's day, there were the recreational activities in the auditoriums and recreational centers. Nowadays, these activities are social media and too much use of the Internet. However, most important is the role of the teachers, who instead of recognizing and rejecting this blatant injustice, follow the directives imposed upon them.

Milani applies the principle of the "primacy of conscience" to Italian state school teachers. The teacher who strictly respects the rules imposed by the politicians on duty is complicit in the injustice perpetrated by the school, thus becoming "one of the 411,000 useful idiots that the master has armed with a register and report card. Reserve troops charged with stopping 1,031,000 Gianni a year, in case the game of fashions were not enough to distract them. One million and 31,000 rejected a year. It is a technical term of what you call school. but it is also a word of military science. To reject them before they grasp the levers" (Milani, 2017a, p. 738) to control society. The little "Gianni" of Milani, the son of poor peasants, has no chance of passing the school selection and thus remains without that minimum of education that is necessary for every citizen to exercise their rights and become a sovereign citizen within a democratic political system.

If on the one hand the injustice suffered by the little "Gianni" is knowingly foreseen by the school system at the service of the class in power, on the other hand the one who puts this injustice into practice in everyday life is the teacher who believes he is operating in the right way, respecting the laws and regulations. Furthermore, the teachers themselves consider it perfectly legitimate to work in the afternoon giving paid lessons to the children of the rich upper-middle class people, so "instead of removing obstacles, they work to increase differences" (Milani, 2017a, p. 735). In the morning they claim to be impartial by actually proceeding to a systematic elimination from the school system of those who do not come from an upper-middle-class family, then "in the evening they take money from the richest to teach the gentlemen different school. In June, at our expense, they sit in court and judge the differences" (Milani, 2017a, p. 735).

It is not possible to fully understand the responsibility that Milani attributes to teachers if one does not know the central role that the "primacy of conscience" has in Milani's thought. In fact, Milani firmly believes that every individual has

a personal responsibility with respect to the actions he takes, even when it comes to obeying the laws imposed by the State. Milani treats the “primacy of conscience” in two writings: the “Letter to the military chaplains” [Lettera ai cappellani militari] (Milani, 2017a, pp. 929-937) and the “Letter to the judges” [Lettera ai giudici] (Milani 2017a, pp. 939-961). The occasion is given by the debate on the legitimacy or otherwise of obeying a state law that imposes compulsory military service on all male citizens. Milani therefore sides with young people who choose to go to prison in order not to become soldiers, but his position is not so much a defense of conscientious objection in itself as it is a condemnation of blind and uncritical obedience to the orders and rules in genre. Therefore Milani turns to the judges and says: “But if you have the right to divide the world into Italians and foreigners then I will tell you that, in your sense, I have no homeland and I claim the right to divide the world into dispossessed and oppressed on the one hand, privileged and oppressors on the other. Some are from my homeland, the others my foreigners. [...] I claim the right to say that even the poor can and must fight the rich. And at least in the choice of means I am better than you [...]. The only weapons I approve of are noble and bloodless: the strike and the vote” (Milani, 2017a, pp. 929-930).

It is therefore not a question of a rejection of the law itself, but of a critical position towards the laws and any power. As he teaches his students, one must always remain consistent with one’s principles and therefore respect the laws when they are right “that is, when they are the strength of the weak” (Milani, 2017a, p. 944). But we must fight against unjust laws “that is, when they sanction the abuse of the fort” (Milani, 2017a, p. 944), a criterion that will always accompany Milani’s students even after the death of their teacher (Landi, 2021). In this the role of the judge differs from that of the teacher, the judge must enforce the law whatever it is, but “The school is different from the courtroom. For you magistrates only what is established law is valid. The school, on the other hand, sits between the past and the future and must have both present. It is the delicate art of leading children on a razor’s edge: on the one hand forming their sense of legality (and in this it resembles your function), on the other the desire for better laws that is the political sense (and in this differs from your function)” (Milani, 2017a, p. 943).

In today’s Italian school, the primacy of conscience is more relevant than ever. Teachers are increasingly forced to accept the rules imposed from above, without having the strength to oppose an unjust school. Furthermore, the idea of a “high” school that selects the “best” still survives in Italian society today. The host school is considered “lax”, while the adoption of a pedagogical method that places the pupil and not abstract notions at the center of the educational intervention is criticized as the absolute evil of contemporary school.

In this climate of mistrust towards the school, there are also the opinions of intellectuals and university professors who are longing for a return to a school of the past, which today would have no connection with social reality - such a school would only be a nostalgic abstraction and an anachronism that helps no one (Santerini, 2021; Salomon, 2011). Supporters of a “high” school believe that not all children are born to study and this idea masks a class vision of society because, as Milani has shown, those who in reality come from poor families would be born to do the most humble work or that for which no diploma or degree is required, while those who come from rich and educated families are destined for professions such as doctor, lawyer, notary and the like. The study is not the preparation for the liberal professions, but it is the art of reasoning, reflecting, criticizing, abstracting from the particular to the universal and these are skills that everyone must possess, from this point of view studying is a right for everyone and not a privilege for a few (Santerini, 2021, p. 210).

The method of Lorenzo Milani

The solution identified by Milani is for a society without oppression and, therefore, a school for the poor. This may seem utopian, however it is not, as Milani himself had created such a school in Calenzano and Barbiana, both located in the province of Florence. Moreover, what sets Milani apart is that he makes a strong connection between theoretical analysis and field intervention.

His working method is very simple. First of all, he collects information on the people and the cultural contexts where he works, then identifies their needs and, thereafter, acts by building a pedagogical path suitable *hic et nunc*. Theory and practice become a hendiadys whose elements are interdependent.

So in Calenzano, a working-class village near Florence, he organizes an evening Popular School for young local workers. But the most interesting aspect of the Calenzano evening school will be the weekly meetings with experienced personalities in various fields, an experience that the children will continue even after Milani's departure. Young workers thus come together to learn to think, to analyze the society in which they live, to learn the tools with which to fight for social equality. And in Milani's school the main instrument of struggle is always the word, because critical thinking derives from the possession of the word.

However, different people and contexts require equally different interventions. If in Calenzano the evening school is the answer to the needs of local young people, in Barbiana the same experience lasts only a few weeks. Barbiana is not even a village, it is rather a church lost in the Mugello mountains in Tuscany, the only meeting place for peasant families scattered among the mountains.

The reality of Barbiana is profoundly different from Calenzano. The first is a place where the peasants work hard and from where they try to emigrate to the city or to the plain. There are no workers; here the peasants work from dawn to dusk and therefore go to bed early in the evening, they certainly cannot meet in an evening popular school like that of Calenzano. This is why in Barbiana Milani created a school for all the local children and young people. They are the children of the peasants whom the public school rejected, considering them *de facto* unworthy of receiving adequate education. At first it started with six boys, then the number grew over the years. It is a school that lasts from ten to twelve hours a day, every day of the year including Sundays: the Barbiana School (Corradi, 2012).

What the peasants lacked was the possession of the word, exactly as the young workers of Calenzano lacked this power. Milani's social analysis was the same; what changed was its realization on the ground. In Barbiana the children of the peasants studied from morning to evening, taking exams at the end of the year at a public school in order to obtain a qualification recognized by the state. But the method was certainly not the same as that of the Italian public school. The fundamental error of the Italian school considering "cultural capital" to be the same for all students of the same age. On the contrary, those who come from less well-off families have a culture and therefore a "cultural capital" different from that of the children of the upper-middle-class. If we consider the "cultural capital" of the upper-middle-class as an element on which to build the school path, then all those who do not belong to this social class will encounter considerable difficulties in following the course of study, so much so that they will abandon it, or in any case pursue it with little benefit.

In Barbiana, on the other hand, there were no evaluations, everyone studied together and the goal was to first learn the use of the word and then develop critical thinking. Studying was cooperative: whoever knew best taught the others; everyone was teacher and pupil. This method is very reminiscent of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1934/1990): the role of peers, as well as that of older students compared to younger ones, allowed the children of the Barbiana school to grow together with the help of each other. Milani and the children studied the Italian language by reading the newspaper together every day, discovering new words that the children of the peasants did not know, dwelling on the etymologies, playing with grammar, listening to recorded foreign language courses. The important thing is not how they studied but what they did. The true pedagogy of the School of Barbiana is summarized by Milani with the

motto “I Care”, written in large letters on the wall of the poor room in which they spent their days. Milani taught children that they must take an interest in the world around them, and in order to understand it they must know the language so that they can speak as equals with upper-middle class people. One of his students wrote in Letter to a teacher: “I have learned that the problem of others is the same as mine. Sorting them all together is politics. Sorting it out alone is avarice” (Milani, 2017a, p. 693). One does not study for oneself, but for others. A new topic was not addressed if not everyone had understood the previous topic. No one was questioned, there were no votes, there were no failures. It might seem easy, but in reality selfishness is a subtle temptation: “I wasn’t vaccinated from greed. Under the exams I wanted to send the little ones to hell and study for myself. I was a boy like yours, but up there I couldn’t confess it to others or to myself. I had to be generous even when I was not” (Milani, 2017a, p. 693).

The “cultural artefacts”, closely linked to the Vygotsky ZPD, played a central role in the Barbiana school. These are often books or records, but also resources built by the children themselves, such as the astrolabe to study the position of celestial bodies or the construction of sets in order to represent a theatrical work.

Social selection in contemporary Italian schools

Both Italian schools and society today are certainly different from the years in which Milani lived. Different does not mean better, however, since problems and inequalities persist. Today compulsory schooling goes beyond the first eight years provided for by the Constitution, but a fundamental problem remains: Milani had already understood that the level of education necessary to become a sovereign citizen changes from age to age. Just as in the 1950s the five years of elementary school did not make the worker more educated than an illiterate peasant of the last century (Milani, 2017a, p. 187), so today eight years of study do not allow our children to possess the necessary tools to critically integrate into Italian society. To become sovereign citizens in a complex and ever-changing society like today’s one, you need an education equal to at least a high school diploma.

First of all, it is necessary to start from concrete data. According to the 2017 ISTAT survey, “overall, between the school years 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 over 136 thousand secondary school students, equal to 5.2 per cent of those enrolled, dropped out of school” (ISTAT, 2017, p. 37). Analyzing the data relating to various types of school, it is noted that 11.8% of children who attend a vocational school do not enroll in the following year, while for high schools the figure is 1.5% (ISTAT, 2017, pp. 38-39). These data in themselves indicate that almost all high

school students graduate, while more than one in ten youngsters fail to complete their studies at a vocational school.

At this point, following Milani's example, it is necessary to better understand the possible correlation between early school leaving and the economic-cultural conditions of the families of origin of students enrolling in high schools and those enrolling in technical or professional institutes. Starting from the economic conditions, it is possible to note that high school students have parents with much higher incomes than their peers enrolled in technical and professional institutes (ISTAT, 2017, p. 50), so family wealth is a "determining factor in school choices" (ISTAT, 2017, p. 50). Another fact that confirms this analysis is that relating to the working reality of the families of origin. High school students have parents who work with permanent or self-employed contracts, while 20 percent of students in professional institutes "show signs of employment less frequently, in fact, almost one in five students enrolled in this type of institute has both parents for whom no sign of employment was found in the administrative sources used" (ISTAT, 2017, p. 53).

Finally, the other factor that differentiates the families of high school students from those of the families of children attending other institutions is a cultural one. "By restricting the analysis to secondary school children only, a fairly clear relationship emerges between the educational qualifications of the parents and the type of school attended. Generally speaking, students from more educated families show a greater preference for certain study paths [...]. There is a greater presence in high schools of students with at least one parent holding a degree [...]; in particular, the percentage stands at 28.8 percent for high school students, while the same percentages for students enrolled in technical and professional institutes stop, respectively, at 8.3 percent and 4.6 percent" (ISTAT, 2017, pp. 56-57).

We can therefore confirm what Milani noted: educated and wealthy families enroll their children in high schools so that they can then continue their studies at universities. In contrast, less wealthy families with a lower cultural level prefer technical and vocational schools for their children, which in fact make it very difficult, often impossible, to continue their studies.

The perverse mechanism for maintaining an unfair system

Faced with these blatant injustices, in order to avoid any possible intervention that could change the status quo, Italian politics is not interested in the school crisis (Santerini, 2021, p. 205), or at most intervenes not by addressing the problem but by changing the terms with which this problem is described: at first there was the "selection" of students, then the same phenomenon becomes school

“dropout” and finally today the more neutral “dispersion” is used, which does not require a manager because it is something that happens without any implications for anyone (Lucisano, 2021, p. 240), according to an old principle “to change everything so as not to change anything”.

The most evident aspect of the desire to maintain this injustice is that relating to state investments. In Italy these investments to support public schools are not the same throughout the territory. From research in the 1990s on funding “it emerged that a school in the South [...] had from the combined state, regions and municipalities for 500 students a figure that was 1/5 of what a school had from the combined state and regions of the Northeast. The first interesting thing was to understand that the State unfairly divided the money between North and South” (Lucisano, 2021, p. 238). There are two tools through which to perpetrate this injustice: school time and funding from the municipalities.

As regards school time, the State assigns to the North a number of full-time or extended-time classes far higher than those assigned to the South (Landi, 2021, p. 352; Lucisano, 2021, p. 238). The weekly timetable for elementary schools is 24 hours, while for full-time classes there are 40 hours per week. While lower secondary school classes normally hold 29 hours of lessons per week, this time becomes 40 hours in extended-time classes. Thus students from the North have almost twice the school time compared to their peers in the South. In addition, the municipalities allocate the same percentage of the budget to finance public schools, but the municipalities in the North are richer so their funding is higher in absolute terms compared to that provided by the municipalities of the South. From the Lucisano research, therefore, an enormous difference in per capita financial allocations per pupil emerges between schools in the South and those in the North; an injustice that clearly explains the results of international surveys which show that students from the South achieve worse results than students from the North (Benvenuto, 2021, p. 264; Lucisano, 2021, p. 238).

The conditioning of the family of origin in the schooling of children

Regardless of the terminology used, the number of children who fail to complete the five years of upper-secondary school is closely correlated with the economic and cultural level of the family of origin: “the level of education of the parents, an indicator of ‘cultural capital’, represents an aspect that affects, as seen, the school choices of the children and, indirectly, also on the propensity to enroll in a university course. In fact, according to Miur data, the propensity to continue their studies

is higher for graduates with a classical and scientific high school diploma, while it drastically decreases among those who have obtained a professional diploma” (ISTAT, 2017, p. 57).

The ISTAT analysis is confirmed by the OECD data according to which “the results achieved in mathematics by 15-year-olds [...] seem to depend more on factors such as urban or rural residence and economic, social and cultural status” than on anything else (Benvenuto, 2021, p. 254). If we consider the age group between 24 and 64, it can be seen that most of those who have both non-graduated parents have a very high probability of not achieving even the diploma (81% in Italy against an OECD average of 37%), while only 9% of them manage to graduate (Benvenuto, 2021, p. 255).

Again, the OECD, through the Economic Social and Cultural Status (ESCS), has divided schools into four categories to better understand the relationship between the socio-economic status of families and the percentage of pupils who fail in schools. The result confirms the previous analyzes: “In Italy it is recorded that in schools characterized by a lower average ESCS index (first quarter) the repetition rate reaches 27.4%, while in schools characterized by a high index (fourth quarter) the incidence stops at 4.4%: a gap of 23 percentage points. The gap recorded in Italy is 9 points above the OECD average (14.3%), one of the highest differentials in Europe” (Benvenuto, 2021, p. 263).

Conclusion

At this point it might seem unrealistic to propose a solution to give back to Italian schools the role of affecting social change that it partly had in the 1970s and 1980s. Certainly it is useless to expect political intervention in this sense. All the reforms of the last twenty years have had in common the idea of a school linked to the economic world rather than a school based on a solid pedagogical project.

In this bleak panorama, the accusations of classism made by Milani and his children against public school teachers remain pertinent (Milani, 2017a, pp. 683-826). But such accusations actually hide the hope that teachers can change schools, and that hope is more relevant than ever.

Milani proposes three solutions: don't fail students, give more time to those who encounter difficulties at school, and help motivate students who seem lost. It is an inseparable whole. Today's schools often solve the problem by promoting everyone, but in doing so it does not solve anything; on the contrary, it aggravates the social gap between those who still receive an education in the family and those who do not have such a cultural capital behind them. In fact, in recent years in

Italy, functional illiteracy among adults has reached a worrying level (about 70% if we consider the two lowest levels recorded by OECD PIAAC in 2020), while the data relating to promotions are constantly improving.

Promoting everyone therefore does not mean giving adequate education, unless Milani's proposal is fully implemented and thus, in addition to not failing, school hours are extended and educational paths are developed starting from the level of children from less-educated families. In fact, it is the culture of the family, of the social context, that determines the individual's thinking, more than his intellectual level. Milani manages to get Marcellino Alpi, a child considered mute and with cognitive deficits, to speak in just over a month, simply by placing him at the center of his educational intervention.

Today's students need to spend a lot more time in school, exactly the boys of the Barbiana School did. Milani condemns the "fashions" that distance young people from education and, therefore, from a development of critical thinking, so it is necessary to find adequate spaces to share with them a path of human growth that is not limited only to the subjects of study. Today's kids are eager to learn, but this desire must not be stifled by the selfishness linked to personal success.

Given that those who govern have every interest in maintaining the status quo, the system must be changed from the ground up and the only ones who can create a just school are the teachers of state schools, as well as the students and their families. Only by starting with the teachers is it possible to save the school and therefore the whole society. Otherwise, the fate of the Italian school will closely follow that of the American school (Giroux, 2014).

A synergistic commitment of teachers and students could change the fate of the school because: "The struggle over public education is the most important struggle of the 21st century because it is one of the few public spheres left [...] in which formative cultures can be developed that nourish critical thinking, dissent, civic literacy and social movements capable of struggling against those antidemocratic forces that are ushering in dark, savage and dire times" (Giroux, 2014, p. 50). We need the courage to go against the bureaucracy that is paralyzing the work of teachers, it is time to take risks in person so as not to become accomplices of an aberrant system that selects on the basis of social class: "obedience is no longer a virtue".

Once again it is necessary to return to the great teaching left to us by Milani, who first and foremost was a great teacher. If you really want to follow his example, you must first free teachers from the oppressive bureaucracy that distracts them from their real work: adapting teaching to the context in which they find

themselves. There is no teaching model that is suitable for all schools and for all classes of a school. We must abandon the idea of standardization and suffocating control. Each teacher and each class are unique, just as Milani was unique with his students.

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Telling Dreams: Shifting Child Images in Three Swedish Iconotexts

Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska¹ 



Abstract

The aim of the article is to reflect on transformations of the motif of a child's dream fantasy in three Swedish iconotexts: *I Skymningslandet* [In the Land of Twilight] by Astrid Lindgren and Eva Billow (1949), *Vilda bebin får en hund* [The Wild Baby Gets a Puppy] by Barbro Lindgren and Eva Eriksson (1985), and *Kivi & monsterhund* [Kivi & Monsterdog] by Jesper Lundqvist and Bettina Johansson (2012). I focus on the functions and constructions of the protagonists' fantasies to trace the representations of childhood as they were changing over the course of about 60 years. The three discussed iconotexts employ a similar narrative tool: an interplay of primary and secondary worlds based on the concept of a dream that may concurrently be interpreted as a real story, reflecting the shifting societal paradigms and aesthetics.

Key words

dream, iconotext, empowerment, gender neutrality, Sweden

Introduction

All texts and iconotexts² are deeply embedded in their cultural contexts, and the child images they contain are stamped by the prevailing societal norms, as

¹ Uniwersytet Gdański, Poland, hanna.dymel.trzebiatowska@gmail.com,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7753-5463>.

² I understand iconotext as an interplay of words and images in and beyond picturebooks, as defined by Kristin Hallberg in her revised approach to the concept (2022). Hallberg coined this popular term in 1982 in close association with picturebooks. Forty years later, she extended its meaning to include all kinds of word-image relations.

observed by John Stephens: “All aspects of textual discourse, from story outcomes to the expressive forms of language and pictorial representation, are informed and shaped by ideology” (1992, p. 137). In this study, I want to focus on the correlation between literary representations of the child and contemporaneous child images. I will explore three children’s books – one illustrated short story and two picturebooks – which were created in the same country, Sweden, approximately 60 years apart: *I Skymningslandet* [*In the Land of Twilight*] by Astrid Lindgren and Eva Billow from 1949, *Vilda bebin får en hund* [*The Wild Baby Gets a Puppy*] by Barbro Lindgren and Eva Eriksson from 1985, and *Kivi & monsterhund* [*Kivi & Monsterdog*] by Jesper Lundqvist and Bettina Johansson from 2012. This selection was determined by the narrative similarity of the texts as all of them revolve around the same motif: a child’s fantastic adventure which is ambiguously framed as a real experience (presumably with novice readers in mind) and at the same time as a dream (accessible mainly to a more experienced readership). Despite their discernible intertextual resemblance, the books differ in many respects, offering a glimpse at shifting paradigms and aesthetics, inherently interwoven with the ideological fabric of their times. In the subsequent sections, I will discuss child images in the selected iconotexts to conclude by pointing out their common features and differences.

In the Land of Twilight: A sick child’s dream

Boel Westin relates that after the Second World War there was a breakthrough in children’s literature in Sweden, which opened to experimentation (1999, p. 23). Pippi Longstocking, a red-haired rebel created by Astrid Lindgren, was the most representative character of those decades and revolutionized the children’s book. Pippi is acknowledged to be ‘one of the most convincing examples of unconditional child empowerment in children’s literature’ (Nikolajeva, 2010, p. 49). She is a principal member of a large group of powerful girl protagonists invented by Lindgren, and a big literary experiment of her times. By contrast, Lindgren’s boy characters seem rather fragile and vulnerable. This dichotomy can be interpreted as an explicit challenge to the traditional gender roles, but a deeper exploration reveals another kind of boys’ empowerment, which I explore below.

Göran, the protagonist of *In the Land of Twilight*, personifies this type of the boy character. He is incurably sick and lonely, and an unspecified pain in his leg has kept him bedridden for a long time. One day, he overhears his mother saying that he will never walk again, and at dusk, a fanciful little Mr. Lilyvale appears on the windowsill in Göran’s room and invites him to take a magic flight to the

Land of Twilight, which is a slightly modified version of Stockholm. On the one hand, this fantastic secondary world abounds with unequivocal references to the primary one and fulfils children's dreams of an eternal arcadia. On the other, it is shrouded in an eerie blue glow, marked by overall emptiness, and inhabited by some strange little people. These properties dovetail with the other name of this place, the Land That Is Not, the title of a famous poem by Edith Södergran, and they allude to the afterlife and seem to have been devised for more experienced readers. Vivi Edström calls this deliberate technique a double exposure, meaning that 'at the same time we are in Stockholm [...] and a weird fairy-tale land' (1997, p. 80). She also detects other intertexts in the verbal story, hinting not only at Södergran but also at Selma Lagerlöf, Viktor Rydberg, and Nordic folk tales.

During the fantastic trip, Göran and Mr. Lilyvale have a great time, and the boy is given an opportunity not only to experience many activities from which he is barred in his primary world, but also to take part in those that transcend everyday life and embody the dreams of all boys (at least in those times): flying, picking sweets that grow on trees, driving a tram, meeting the queen and the king, and operating a digger. Stereotypical masculine dreams are presumably different today. Growing up in digital worlds among characters from fantasy books, computer games and dystopian movies, boys more likely dream of operating a spacecraft rather than a digger, or of having superpowers that may save the world instead of meeting a royal family. Göran's fears about physical constraints are countered in the Land of Twilight by Mr. Lilyvale's repeated assurance: 'It does not matter in the Land of Twilight' and turn out to be groundless. In this world, he is completely healthy and strong, and he can walk, dance, and fish with his new rod.

The first-person verbal narrative is told by Göran himself, who is thus an autodiegetic narrator since he is also the protagonist of the book. This method of telling the story makes it more convincing, engages young readers, and invites them to empathize and identify with the character. However, Göran is focalized externally, which means that he mainly recounts the events around him and does not express his own feelings. The only vaguely emotional remark occurs at the end, when he exclaims that the Twilight Land is wonderful, professing that he would like to return there and that it does not matter that his leg hurts. This manner of narrating may promote a well-balanced emotional engagement of young readers, who are exposed to moving and sorrowful content but are protected from too deep an immersion in it.

Obviously, the verbal message is informationally complete since this is a short story which is illustrated. But the visual component – four full-page images and

one minor picture of Mr. Lilyvale by illustrator Eva Billow – contributes to the interpretation of the iconotext, making it more comprehensive. The choice of episodes to illustrate was purposive and meaningful, and the additional visual information provides reader-viewers with numerous specific details affecting their perception. All the illustrations are black and white drawings, which not only elevates³ what is primarily a children's book but also evokes nostalgia, whereas their relation to the text is predominantly symmetrical and complementary⁴.

The first image is representative and depicts the initial situation in the primary world: a bed with a young boy in it. Half-lying and propped on a big pillow, he is staring at a book he is holding in his hands. The boy has a little snub nose and round, slightly freckled cheeks. He is wearing striped pyjamas with a small collar, and his thick black hair is slightly rumpled. The image conveys the sense of loneliness and is deeply poignant. The boy's palpable vulnerability and helplessness are not expressed in the text, and the visual message is complementary in this respect. Interestingly, the subsequent illustrations, which show Göran in the Land of Twilight, portray him as wearing the same pyjamas but participating in quite different activities. In the first one, he is holding Mr. Lilyvale's hand as they are flying over Stockholm, and in the second, he is sitting in a tree and eating sweets. Later, he is meeting the queen and dancing in Skansen. In all of them, he is smiling and enjoying somebody's company, so it seems that the illustrator tried to highlight the difference in the boy's condition.

Since viewers can see Göran, the visual narrator⁵ employs a third-person perspective and consequently is not identical to the verbal one. Although these two different forms of focalization put high demands on inexperienced readers (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 125), they belong to the convention of visual communication in which readers-viewers expect to see protagonists even if they hear their first-person voices. Furthermore, in this iconotext the external visual narrator enhances the distance and, along with the external verbal focalization, contributes to constructing a safe buffer that protects young readers, who may be distressed and made anxious by Göran's illness and suffering in the primary world.

³ Black and white drawings impart an air of elegance associated with literature for an older readership.

⁴ I refer to the taxonomy developed by Nikolajeva and Scott (2006, p. 12).

⁵ In this article, I build on Nikolajeva and Scott's system of iconotextual narrative perspectives (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p. 117-120). The visual narrator tells her/his story using images.

Lindgren's literary production reflects her times by combining the traditional pre- and wartime child image and the novel, post-war belief in a better future constructed by the "new" kind of child. Interestingly, this new child is mainly epitomized by self-sufficient, empowered girl characters, whereas boy protagonists, such as Göran, still embody innocence and vulnerability, reminiscent of the old times of poverty and war. However, Göran copes with his predicament by escaping into a fantasy land where he obtains support and develops self-identity. Instead of relying on his parents or complaining, he makes use of his imagination to trigger an inner combat, which makes his life tolerable. He is a precursor of Lindgren's other boy figures, Mio and Rusky⁶, who will transform from timid children into real heroes fighting for the right cause in the secondary worlds.

The Wild Baby Gets a Puppy: An angry child's dream

After the politically and socially engaged 1970s, the Swedish children's book market of the 1980s saw a return to the fantasy and fairy-tale tradition, and picturebooks experienced a particularly spectacular revival. Increasingly experimental, they became more and more complex, blending numerous generic features (Westin, 1999, p. 48-51). They did not try to convince readers that there was such a thing as happy childhood, but honestly showed both its bright and its dark sides. Adults were neither omniscient nor omnipotent in these books, and they often did not know the answers to many questions posed in them (Rhedin, 2004, p. 164-165). In those days, Eva Erikson was a prominent illustrator and made pictures for popular picturebooks about Vilda bebin, the Wild Baby, written by Barbro Lindgren, an ALMA-winner in 2014.

The Wild Baby Gets a Puppy from 1985⁷ is the last part of the picturebook trilogy. Its opening considerably differs from the beginning of *In the Land of Twilight* as readers encounter a small but very strong-willed and determined protagonist. The rhymed text reveals that he is nagging his mum about getting a dog or, alternatively, a horse or a cat. His demands are written in block letters, expressing his shouting and resolve. Finally, his poor mum promises that he will be given a dog on his birthday, and the boy awaits the gift impatiently. When the longed-for day comes, to his surprise and great disappointment, he is given merely a stuffed toy dog: "There's a puppy here, but the puppy is not real" (Lindgren & Eriksson, 1988, *unpaginated*). Naturally, the boy becomes extremely angry and exclaims – again in block letters –

⁶ I mean the protagonists of Lindgren's novels *Mio*, *My Son* and *Brothers Lionheart*.

⁷ This is the year the book was published in Sweden.

his displeasure: "I WANTED A DOG THAT COULD BARK! I WANTED A DOG THAT WAS ALIVE, NOT ONE LIKE THIS! I AM GOING TO SHOOT IT WITH MY GUN!" (Lindgren & Eriksson, 1988, *unpaginated*).

But the same night, the Wild Baby is woken up by the dog, which has come to life, and they set out on a fantastic journey together with the boy's other toys. The story is told verbally in a lively and humorous way. The boy, his plush friend and the other toy animals travel through a fabulous universe, visiting various planets – including an ice-cream planet, where they eat so much that they slip down and fall off it – and the moon, overcrowded with other babies and their dogs. There is a lot of drifting, falling and laughing in this playful journey, which finishes at home, where the Wild Baby's longing mum is waiting for the travellers, as is her wont.

The verbal third-person narrator internally focalizes the protagonist, producing an impression that the story is told from the Baby's perspective. Readers obtain an insight into the boy's emotions and can see, for example, that he continues to be upset and is not going to be glad. His anger is spectacularly shouted out, and thus his disappointment and desperation are tangibly conveyed, making readers empathize with him rather with anyone else.

Eva Eriksson's watercolour illustrations in this picturebook predominantly stand in a complementary and expanding relation to the text, depicting the Wild Baby in a comic manner: he is visualized with a mixture of characteristics typical of both a toddler and a little child. His frowning face expresses his constant dissatisfaction, and his postures are dynamic and hyperbolized, which makes him hilarious. The boy's tiny physique, chubby childish cheeks, blond spiky hair, and white nightgown are in contrast with his determination. Partly symmetrical with the verbal information, this visual information also enhances it, strengthening its evidently humorous tone. As opposed to the boy's vigour, his mother is portrayed as a lonely woman, carrying heavy bags and tired of struggling with her little, stubborn "wild" son, and she is scarcely featured in the text. Readers are only given two verbal signals of the woman's condition: she is dizzy and faint, and she sighs deeply. The gloominess around her is visually suggested by her invariably brown clothes, weary body postures, and facial expressions manifesting helplessness in confrontation with her little child.

The visual narrative converges with the third-person verbal narrative; both stories – told in images and in words – are presented by the same external agent, which can theoretically make reading easier for young children. The illustrated rag dog is brown, lop-eared, and cute, and its slightly clumsy movements suggest it is of a young age. All images are brightly coloured and crafted in a fairy-

tale convention, living up to the traditional expectations of a bedtime story. A particularly meaningful point in the visual narrative is marked by the last double-spread, which is “syllaptic”, as the visual narrative becomes independent (Nikolajeva & Scott 2006, p. 12) and carries on its own story.

The picture depicts a garden enveloped in a typical picnic atmosphere, with the smiling mum crouching on the grass and holding the Wild Baby in her arms. The dog, perfectly alive, is sitting by their side while the other travellers, the stuffed toys, are lying around, inanimate. The visual narrative ends happily, hinting that magic exists and big wishes can come true, whereas the verbal one is open-ended, implying more ambiguity⁸. Based on the illustration, it cannot be ruled out that the boy's mum finally gave in and bought him a dog. This represents an ingenious use of the iconotext consistent with Nikolajeva's observation that: “Picturebooks have great potential for subversion of adult power and interrogation of the existing order. The two narrative levels, the verbal and the visual, allow counterpoint and contradiction between the power structures presented by words and images” (2010, p 169). As the Wild Baby's emotions are too difficult to express verbally because of his age, the iconotext relies on images to convey them. In the illustrations, the boy's facial expressions and postures express power and determination while his mum is pictured as trying to satisfy him. She is helpless, dominated by her empowered son and overwhelmed by her child-raising duties that rest exclusively with her as there is no dad in the family. She is depicted as a tired, unkempt woman, wringing her hands. The Baby is constantly with her, making new demands. The strong position of the child reflects societal changes in a slightly caricatured way: in Sweden, children's rights have been consistently strengthened since the early 1970s. In 1971, a politically and religiously independent organization called Barnens Rätt i Samhället (BRIS; Children's Rights in Society) was founded to support children's and young adults' rights in society. In 1979, Sweden became the first country in the world to make it illegal to hit children, both at home and in school.

Kivi & Monsterdog: A genderless child's dream

The third book, *Kivi & Monsterdog*, played a crucial role in a heated debate around the gender-neutral pronoun *hen* that swept across Sweden in 2012. *Hen* is

⁸ The Baby's mum only says how happy she is that her son is back and how much she has missed him. There is no mention of any dog. As Eriksson confessed, she decided to provide this additional bit of information because she felt sorry for the Wild Baby. Lindgren did not comment on it (Rhedin, 2004, p. 94).

an intentionally coined, artificial alternative to two gender-specific, natural Swedish pronouns – *hon* [she] and *han* [he] – and can be employed when referring to non-binary individuals, or when one's biological gender is irrelevant or unknown. The supporters of *hen* claimed that it was free of stereotypical associations and prejudice, and particularly useful when referring to transgender people. The opponents of the pronoun emphasized that *hen* was dangerous as it could eradicate the natural male and female gender roles and – if applied in early education – lead to disturbances in children's identities (Dymel-Trzebiatowska, 2017, p. 14). Surprisingly, the first attempts to implement it in the Swedish language took place as early as in the 1960s (Grönblad, 2017), but this venture did not receive a wider acknowledgment back then. About 50 years later, *Kivi & Monsterdog* helped the pronoun *hen* break through spectacularly, involving children's literature in a nationwide debate that even drew some attention from international media.

The picturebook narrates a story of the eponymous Kivi, who is consistently referred to as *hen* throughout the text. Kivi wants to get a dog, which is reported by the third-person, intra-heterodiegetic narrator at the very onset of the story. The opening rhymes explain that Kivi categorically demands to get a dog and threatens his family that otherwise s/he will not fall asleep. The concerned adults bend over the child and ensure her/him in all possible ways that s/he will be given a dog on condition that s/he goes to sleep. Notably, this first scene makes it explicit that we are dealing with a hybrid world where gender markers have been erased. Besides the use of *hen*, the names of all the family members are nonce-words in the form of hilarious compounds of regular lexemes, such as *pammor*, which resembles the plural form *mammor* [mums] with the first syllable taken from the word *pappa* [dad], and *parvelpysor*, combining the words *parvel* [toddler] and *pys* [a little fellow], completed with [or], a plural inflectional ending, typical of feminine forms.

When Kivi finally falls asleep, s/he has a dream about cute puppies, but when s/he wakes up the home is empty, and a gruesome monster dog is waiting at the door. The child enthusiastically welcomes the animal, but it soon turns out that the creature is not only physically disgusting but also bad-mannered. When Kivi tries to wash the dog, it wreaks havoc in the home, and Kivi decides to take it out. The animal continues its destructive activity outdoors, causing a commotion in the neighbourhood so that numerous emergency services must be called to the scene. When the dusk begins to fall, Kivi recalls her/his promise of going to sleep and returns home. S/he is tired and realizes how exhausting it is to have a dog. When s/he wakes up the next morning, her/his 'motley' relatives sing, play, and

congratulate him/her on her/his birthday. When they say that a sweet puppy will soon arrive by taxi, Kivi declares outright that s/he does not want a dog but... a gorilla.

The language of this picturebook does not shun colloquial adjectives when describing the monster dog's appearance and behaviour. The animal is mangy and scurfy; it devours everything while smacking loudly, stinks 'so that fleas flee', and 'goes to the toilet' in the middle of a fine carpet. All these nuisances are even more overtly featured in the visual narrative. Bettina Johansson, who illustrated this picturebook, seems to have been inspired by the style of the Danish modernist illustrator Ingrid Vang Nyman:

Vang Nyman displays curiously assorted objects, animate and inanimate, in a range of textures, colors and shapes. The elements in her compositions are often presented at tipped angles, where everything is observed without overlapping perspectives. Why this constant defiance of gravity, the free distortion of proportions and multiplicity of details? Everything seems to be in motion, in a state of flux and turmoil, pointing to the adventurous potential of everyday places and objects. (Druker, 2011, p. 57)

Elina Druker also points out that this sophisticated imagery captures a childlike liveliness and embraces the irrational, naive and playful. Similar visual tools⁹ were employed by Johansson. Kivi's home is filled with plentiful objects, some of them absurd – a palm tree, a beach umbrella, and a crocodile in a pram – chaotically scattered around, while the perspectives are distorted, enhancing the sense of *mundus inversus*, the world upside-down. The vivid bright colours and flat surfaces also invite associations with modernist artists. The onlookers can see Kivi in most of the scenes, so the visual narrator's perspective is the same as that of the verbal narrator, making it easier for young readers to appreciate the iconotextual narrative.

As regards gender neutrality, the visual representation in this picturebook is symmetrical with and complementary to the text. The textual *hen* is paralleled by hybrid images of Kivi and her/his family. Already the first opening offers a close-up of the protagonist's face, which is pictured in an ostensibly simplified style, imitating a child's drawing. The full-face image shows a child of ambiguous sex, with a funny checked hat on its head, closed eyes behind big round glasses and a wide-open mouth, black inside. The grimace evidently indicates that the child is

⁹ The convention can be called postmodern, for one, with touches/echoes of naturalistic ugliness.

crying, which fits in with her/his verbal demand to have a dog, whose vehemence is emphasized by three exclamation marks and capital letters. The face contrasts against a white background with a pattern of styled orange carrots, a visual leitmotif of the story, with no clear reference to its plot.

The subsequent image of Kivi's relatives illustrates their gender hybridity as well. A group of bizarre, caricatured figures that resemble a troupe of disguised circus clowns are leaning over the bed. The vivid colours – predominantly red, green, light blue, and orange – and the hyperbolized postures both imply that the family are unusual and evoke humour. It is impossible to determine whether the characters are male or female since they consistently combine all traditional sex markers. Furthermore, the image of the family seems to be a deliberate illustration of diversity as the picture depicts both slim and obese figures; bald and red-haired; short, medium-sized, and tall; and characters of different ages and races (one of the nine family members is dark-skinned). This variety implies people's right to be different, their right to be themselves, to be individuals with no concern for the norms and views of the majority. It constitutes an unmistakable call for nonconformity and is an iconotextual incarnation of the Swedish Discrimination Act, whose purpose is "to combat discrimination and in other ways promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age" (Discrimination Act, 2008). Hence both the text and the image of this book become powerful ideological tools employed in an elaborate and intentional manner. The book continues to be topical ten years after its publication as it discusses a still commonly debated issue of normativity.

The changing paradigms

All the three stories outlined above follow the same traditional pattern of old fairy tales: home [primary world] – trip/dream [secondary world] – back home [primary world], but the differences in how they handle this motif in words and images offer interesting insights into the child image. Göran is apparently rendered as fragile and vulnerable, and he still represents – verbally and visually – an innocent child. Importantly, he is empowered in a particular way as he proves capable of solving his serious problem on his own. In the secondary world, the boy is furnished with all the qualities he lacks in his real life, which indicates that his unconscious was unlocked and activated a huge therapeutic potential. He accomplishes the state of compensation all by himself, as the processing of his problem starts when his parents are out of his room, and it is quite explicit that he does not want to involve

them in his dilemma, or even that he is protecting them from his own sorrow and pain. Considering his age and condition, he is surprisingly strong and self-reliant, and his empowerment is psychological empowerment. Göran remains an obedient, though sorrowfully experienced, child, and his visual image enhances the seriousness of his condition.

Both Göran's and the Wild Baby's journeys start in the similar circumstances of darkness: Göran's at dusk (he even asks his mum not to switch on the lamp) and the Wild Baby's when the moon appears in the sky. The dark and the absence of adults are presented as necessary conditions for magic to start, or for... sleeping and dreaming. There are further similarities in the representation of the fantastic worlds in these two books as they rest on motifs of flight, fun, and play, and feature elements of "the culinary arcadia," such as sweets growing on trees and the ice-cream planet. Despite these narrative resemblances, the boys' characterization is significantly different, as the reflexive Göran does not defy adults and quietly accepts his fate, whereas the Wild Baby's predominant quality is his loud resistance.

The Wild Baby is a child of his times, self-confident and demanding. He is an absolute reverse of the sick and physically weak Göran. He is filled with vitality and aware of his power and rights, which he consistently uses against his resigned and lonely mum. Instead of the nuclear family, with the mum and the dad as in *In the Land of Twilight*, a single-parent family is portrayed, reflecting the tendency of the 1980s. For all this, the Wild Baby is still typically childish, and his visual representation partly overlaps with Göran's. Both boys have round cheeks and little stub noses, although the Wild Baby's body posture in images displays strength and motion while Göran appears distinctly vulnerable. Also, both are explicitly featured and constructed as boys.

The Wild Baby's plush dog is visually depicted in a traditionally child-friendly manner. Eriksson's pastel drawings express both the oneiric landscapes and the dynamics of the crazy adventures. They seem to invite the viewer to join and participate in the wonderful play; as such, they meet the traditional expectations of a good children's illustration. This iconotext sparkles with fantasy, in line with the prevailing tendency of the times, being a response to the societal and political preoccupations dominant in literature in the 1970s (Westin, 1999, p. 48).

Like the Wild Baby, Kivi is also physically empowered compared with Göran. His strong will and privileged position in the family are expressed in the same manner as in *The Wild Baby Gets a Puppy*, that is, by the extensive use of block letters to convey his shouting. Transformations in the family model are even more far-reaching, with the single mother replaced by a group of genderless individuals,

who are visualized in a hyperbolic way, emphasizing their diversity and producing comic effects. Both Kivi and the Wild Baby wish to get a dog for their birthdays, and both of them fall asleep and have a dream about it, which makes the basic narratives surprisingly akin. Furthermore, both texts are rhymed, which further enhances their similarity and hints that the storyline of *Kivi & Monsterdog* can be interpreted as a modernized hypertext of Lindgren and Eriksson's book¹⁰.

However, this storyline is presented in a significantly different manner, representing an empowered child and embedded in the parodic aesthetics of the 2010s. Kivi's relatives give in and buy the dog s/he wants, but it is not so evident in the case of the Wild Baby's mum. The dream that functions as compensation for the Wild Baby turns into a cautionary experience for Kivi. S/he needs no compensation, as s/he can successfully terrorize adults and be given a real pup, but the story reveals that s/he is not aware of what s/he wants. The book does communicate a didactic message, but its 'moral' is of a different kind. Its novelty lies in the aesthetic convention of the images – a cute dog has given way to a disgusting monstrous creature that stinks and flatulates, both verbally and visually contradicting the ideal of a child's book of former times.

Stephens observed that: "Picture books can, of course, exist for fun, but they can never be said to exist without either a socializing or educational intention, or else without a specific orientation towards the reality constructed by the society that produces them" (2018, p. 158). Maria Nikolajeva has developed this 'ideological' view of literature: "However, ideology is a dimension of a literary text that lies in the tension between the text itself, the reality behind it, the authors and their intentions or implicit views, and also the readers and their ability to create meaning out of texts" (2010, p. 3). Lundqvist, the author of *Kivi*, has explained that he decided to write the first 'hen book' because it did not matter to him whether the protagonist was a boy or a girl, and he hoped that it would promote the process of identification (Alvasdotter, 2012). The intentions of OLIKA (Swedish: DIFFERENT), the publisher of this picturebook, are even more straightforward and are explicitly stated on its website. The publisher's goal is to disseminate equality, inclusion, and diversity, "a hundred possibilities instead of one" (<https://www.olika.nu/foretag>), and to release books about various families, races, dysfunctions, and gender identifications, fostering children's openness and tolerance.

The fact that *Kivi & Monsterdog* employs exclusively the gender-neutral pronoun *hen*, dispensing with the traditional *hon* [she] and *han* [he], stands

¹⁰ In the light of Cherie Allan's theory, the book can be called postmodern since it utilizes metafictional strategies such as intertextuality, parody, and irony (2018, p. 202).

as the publisher's significant manifesto. The publisher insists that the book was supposed to address children in general, regardless of their biological sex. Be that as it may, the picturebook did stir up a lot of publicity and sparked a lively debate, which was called *hen-debatten* [*hen* debate] in Sweden, although in 2012 it was still impossible to predict whether *Kivi & Monsterdog* would be able to make the new pronoun settle in the Swedish language for good. Three years later, this became a fact when the Swedish Academy added *hen* to its official glossary, where new entries are determined by their frequency (Dymel-Trzebiatowska 2017, p. 17). Thus, the picturebook had a central part in establishing a new pronoun and thereby confirmed the pre-eminent position that children's literature has gained in the 21st century. *Kivi & Monsterdog* is a representative picturebook of the group that "functioned as a way to promote 'progressive' ideals concerning children and society" (Christensen, 2018, p. 365).

The three above-discussed books exemplify discourses typical of egalitarian systems and include components of both tradition and novelty, continuity and transformation. All of them draw on the same literary motif of a fantastic dream, but their verbal and visual contents differ, as they have developed and morphed in line with the social climate of their times.

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Avoidance Coping Strategy in Adolescents in a Social Conflict Situation with Respect to Cognitive Correlates

Danuta Borecka-Biernat¹ 



Abstract

The aim of the research was to search for cognitive correlates of avoidance coping strategies used by adolescents in a social conflict situation. The following tools have been used in the research: The Self-Esteem Scale (SES) developed by M. Rosenberg, adapted by M. Łaguna, K. Lachowicz-Tabaczek & I. Dzwonkowska, The Sense of Control Questionnaire (Polish: KBPK - Kwestionariusz do Badania Poczucia Kontroli) by G. Krasowicz & A. Kurzyp-Wojnarska, as well as the original Questionnaire to study adolescents' coping strategies employed in social conflict situations (Polish: KSMK- Kwestionariusz do badania strategii radzenia sobie młodzieży w sytuacji konfliktu społecznego) developed by D. Borecka-Biernat. The empirical research was carried out in junior high schools (Polish: gimnazjum). The research involved 893 adolescents (468 girls and 425 boys) aged 13-15. The research results analysis indicates that in adolescents, lower appraisal of one's potential co-occurs with the avoidance coping strategy in a social conflict situation. The research also indicated that a strong belief in the influence of others on the positive and negative results of events strengthens the avoidance strategy of coping with a social conflict situation in adolescents.

Key words

adolescents, self-esteem, locus of control, avoidance coping strategy, a social conflict situation

¹ Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences, University of Wrocław, Poland, e-mail: danuta.borecka-biernat@uw.edu.pl, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1401-9821>

Introduction

A conflict situation with another human being is one of the basic social situations in all of our lives. The word 'conflict' originates from the Latin noun *confligere*, *conflictatio*, meaning to strike together, a dispute, discussion, fight or a collision of two or more processes, powers specific to living creatures. 'Striking together' may begin a fight. Many people wrongly associate conflict solely with direct physical and/or verbal aggression and accompanying hostility, escalating the existing contradictions. This type of conflict is full of negative emotions. However, most phenomena that might be described as conflicts have relatively mild forms, e.g. a short quarrel, a discussion or a debate (Olubiński, 1992). In the context of interpersonal relationships, a conflict situation shows some type of an interaction between interlocutors in which they clearly realise their divergent interests, needs or pursuits (Balawajder, 2010).

Adolescence is a period in which youth experience various, often contradictory pursuits and a need to cope with inconsistent social expectations directed towards them. The results of research indicate that adolescents in this period consider interpersonal conflicts, including conflicts with teachers, arguments with school mates or romantic partners as well as quarrels with one or both parents or other members of the family, as the source of strong emotional arousal of a negative nature (Gawryś, 2002; Gurba, 2020; Guskowska et al., 2001; Honness et al., 1997; Lachowska, 2010; Lohman & Jarvis, 2000; Polak, 2010; Rostowska, 2001; Różańska-Kowal, 2004; Smetana & Dadais, 2002). The most problematic situations between students and teachers are connected with school grades, insensitive behaviour, controlling and oppressive attitude, and inflexible expectations on the teacher's part (Stańkowki, 2009). The main reasons for quarrels with peers are taunts, mocking, false accusations, betrayal, indiscretion, or impolite behaviour, as well as competing for grades, interest of the opposite sex, position among classmates and reputation (Komendant, 2007). Conflict is an inherent part of families with adolescent children (Brzezińska et al, 2016). The majority of problems that arise in mutual understanding between the parents and the children emerge as a result of changes in the adolescent's attitude towards parents. Young people become less open in their interactions with parents, while parents are frequently unable to cope with the increasing autonomy of their children and try to impose limitations. Many of those conflicts arise in ordinary daily situations, such as differing opinions and preferences regarding clothes, music, free time activities, or the young person's tendency to return home late in the evening (Garstka, 2011; Jaworski, 2000; Riesch et al, 2000). The adolescent's increased need to be independent clashes with the

standards, expectations, and limitations established by the parents, and with their tendency to control and supervise the life and behaviour of their children.

Social conflict situations are classified as difficult situations in social interactions. They accompany people in every period of their lives. Since birth, each human being needs to learn to cope with difficulties and challenges they face. A difficult situation encourages a young person to take action oriented towards regaining the balance between expectations and abilities, and/or towards the improvement of their emotional state. The activity undertaken by a young person in a difficult situation is viewed, in a particular situational context, as a coping strategy used in a current difficult situation (Heszen-Niejodek, 2000; Wrześniewski 1996). The ability of coping with a situation of social conflict may take on a form of a destructive strategy (Balawajder, 2010; Deutsch, 2005; Donaldson et al., 2000; Kobus-Reyes, 2000; Pisula & Sikora, 2008; Rostowska, 2001). Destructive coping strategies in situations of social conflict, such as defensive behaviours, are not oriented towards resolution and overcoming the situation of conflict, do not lead towards achieving understanding, escalate hostile behaviours, and allow the individual to decrease the unpleasant emotional tension. The aspiration to achieve a specific goal is replaced by the desire to decrease the unpleasant tension and restore good mood. It is accomplished by avoiding confrontation with a social conflict situation, escaping, withdrawing from the situation, staying out of contact with it, avoiding thinking and experiencing the situation by ignoring the problem, engaging in replacement activities focusing attention and distracting the individual from the conflict situation (thinking about pleasant matters, daydreaming, listening to music, doing sport, playing computer games, surfing the Internet, walking, sleeping), as well as looking for contact with other people.

The empirical material in the literature indicates that adolescents have at their disposal a considerable number of strategies for coping with social conflict situations which take place at school, in peer relationships, or at home (Borecka-Biernat, 2006; Donaldson et al., 2000; Frydenberg & Lewis, 1999; Lachowska, 2010; Sikora & Pisula, 2002; Trylińska-Tekielska, 2007). Among the coping strategies mentioned by young people in the context of difficult situations at school, we can distinguish attempts at diverting attention from a difficult situation and dealing with something else (surfing on social networking services or being 'glued' to the screen of a phone or tablet), for example, escaping from a difficult situation by physically moving away or isolating from it. Adolescents are also characterised by passive waiting and deceiving themselves that time will solve the problem on its own (Polak, 2010; Sikorski, 2015).

The results of the research cited by E. Frydenberg and R. Lewis (1999) and G. Miłkowska (2010) showed that in a situation of conflict with peers, young people use a coping strategy based on giving up, taking no action, avoiding the problem, and distancing themselves from difficult relationships with others. This means that withdrawing behaviour is connected with the necessity to make concessions and to resign. They reflect the act of an adolescent removing themselves from a conflict situation. As a result of the conducted research, M. Raffaelli (1990, cited from Collins & Laursen, 1992) found that in descriptions of conflicts with peers, the resolution of disputes included withdrawal in 54% of cases.

Conflicts which occur in child-parent relations constitute a common phenomenon during the period of adolescence (Gurba, 2020; Jaworski, 2000). The data obtained by A. Filip (2010), I. Obuchowska (1990), and J. Smetana et al. (1991) show that the behaviour of adolescents in a situation of conflict with their mothers and fathers is characterised by withdrawal and being passive. Adolescents try to avoid family problems or mentally distance themselves from them by looking for contact with other people in non-family structures.

The quoted review of research on methods for coping with a social conflict situation shows that some young people, when faced with a dispute at school, in peer relationships, or at home, adopt a destructive strategy in the form of avoiding reaction to a conflict.

As mentioned, situations of social conflict are connected with the problem of avoidant coping strategies in a specific situational context, applied in order to avoid or minimise the tension, loss, or unfavourable outcome. Why do young people in situations of social conflict choose the strategy of avoiding reacting to difficulties? According to M. Tyszkowa (1986), the cognitive schemes – that is, the image of the world (the “world” structure) and the image of oneself (the “self” structure) – are significant elements of human behavioural mechanisms in difficult situations. The cognitive structures of personality act as lenses, or filters, which are used by the personality to select information from outside. One’s perception of the world, their attitudes and expectations towards themselves, other people, tasks, and results of their activity, define the cognitive and emotional perception and interpretation of a difficult situation, which in turn influence behaviour in such a situation. A range of conceptions and images about oneself as well as expectations towards oneself, in other words the structure ‘me’, plays a significant role in human behaviour seen in difficult situations (Kulas, 1986). Information pertaining to oneself and traits constituting knowledge about oneself are the premise to assess one’s capabilities in difficult situations. Self-esteem is inseparably

connected with self-concept; it is the appraising and evaluating component of the system of a person's knowledge about 'me'. It is usually defined as a positive or a negative attitude towards oneself (Gregg, 2003). High self-esteem, in the view of M. Rosenberg (1965), is equal to the conviction that one is a good and a valuable person, whereas low self-esteem is equated with dissatisfaction with oneself or the rejection of one's 'me'. The influence of self-esteem is visible in the functioning of an individual in difficult situations. However, human activity in difficult situations depends not only on what the individual is like in reality, which means what qualities and capabilities are peculiar to the individual, but also on the way he or she perceives and appraises those features. As it turns out, the unfavourable, inadequately organised and inaccurate structure 'me' is threatened in a difficult situation, which leads to a shift of the goal of an activity towards the defence of one's 'me' (Tyszkowa, 1986). It leads to disorganisation of an activity directed towards the goal. Low (adequate or inadequate) and high (inadequate) self-esteem play an unfavourable role in young people's behaviour in difficult situations (Borecka-Biernat, 2006; Brytek, 2007; Kubacka-Jasiecka, 1986; Ogińska-Bulik, 2001). When an individual faces a difficult situation, inadequate self-esteem leads to an increase of the feeling of a personal threat, negative emotions, as well as the disorganisation of behaviour. In the case of low self-esteem, the tendency to resign from achieving the goal, refraining from activities, and withdrawal from social interaction may occur. An individual who appraises themselves negatively has a tendency to overrate difficulties and is rather ready to surrender to them than struggle with them (Tyszkowa, 1986). Lack of faith in one's powers, lack of resolve and self-confidence, willingness to resign from activities as a result of experienced failures impedes overcoming tensions and prevents solving conflict situations in people with low self-esteem (Kozielecki, 1981; Wosińska, 2004). Therefore, low self-esteem lowers mental resistance to difficult situations, lowers the effectiveness of activities, and inhibits adaptation or coping with a difficult situation. A tiny obstacle or a little threat in people with low self-esteem may provoke a tendency to withdraw from cooperation with others and avoid contacts with people.

An individual's active influence on the surrounding reality depends not only on the objective conditions in a particular situation, but also on the individual's general belief that their outcomes depend on their actions. The choice of the coping mechanism that a particular individual uses depends on their personality traits. Tyszkowa (1986) focuses on mechanisms of control and their functioning in the context of control over situations. The locus of control is understood as a cognitive style, a dimension of personality or its trait connected with

the perceived source of control of an individual's behaviour (Reber & Reber, 2005). An individual's subjective convictions concerning their control over the surrounding world are important variable conditioning behaviour in difficult situations. Where an individual acts in situations in which the successes and failures encountered are treated as consequences of forces being beyond their personal control, this is referred to as the sense of external control. However, if the outcome of actions depends on one's behaviour and skills, then it is referred to as the sense of internal control (Drwal, 1978; Oleś, 2003; Rotter, 1954). Locus of control determines strategies of human behaviour, since in the selection of correlation situation, as in the course of the conflict itself, the individual pursues to perform such a type of control that is specific to them (Dowhan & Sadowska, 1996). Different forms of the ability to control a situation or the belief in having such an ability is a crucial, individual factor modifying the functioning of a young person in difficult situations, determining the applied strategies of coping with problems (Krause & Stryker, 1984; Ogińska-Bulik, 2001; Talik, 2010). People with external locus of control function worse in difficult situations. Most often, they believe that they are unable to influence the outcomes of their own behaviour, therefore, they will not be motivated to change their behaviour in order to increase the likelihood of reaching a goal. Consequently, those who believe that their activity does not influence their achievements, and the outcome of their actions is perceived as being beyond their control, when finding themselves in a difficult situation do not make any effort to solve it, as they do not believe that they are capable of changing it. This leads to adopting destructive strategies and applying them routinely in a difficult situation. The results of research, referred to by D. Borecka-Biernat (2006), P. Kurtek (2005), and T. Rostowska (2001) indicated that people who are convinced that their activities do not influence their achievements to a great extent, and that the outcome of their actions is perceived as being beyond their control, when they find themselves in stressful confrontations that they appraise as not vulnerable to personal control, adopt distancing or remedial escape-avoidance strategies. This means that their lack of belief in the possibility to influence life events prevents them from being able to cope with difficulties occurring in socially organised system of human activity whose aim is to satisfy people's needs. A person with an external locus of control, in a difficult situation of a social interaction nature, concentrates on themselves, prepares to defend the threatened 'me' by distancing, thus escaping from the problem without attempting to solve it.

The research problem and hypotheses

The empirical research was focused on the cognitive determinants of avoidance coping strategy used by youths in a social conflict situation, with a particular emphasis put on the role of the level of self-esteem and the locus of control. The research aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. Is there any dependence between the level of self-esteem and the use of avoidance coping strategies in adolescents in a social conflict situation, and if so, what form does this dependence take?
2. Is there a relationship between the locus of control and the use of avoidance coping strategies in adolescents in a social conflict situation, and if so, what is it?

These research questions allow us to formulate the following hypotheses, which will be verified through an analysis of conducted empirical research:

- H1: Adolescents with a low level of self-esteem more often apply avoidance strategies in a social conflict situation.
- H2: Adolescents with external locus of control more often manifest avoidance strategies in a social conflict situation.

The methodology of individual research

The following methods have been used in the research:

The Self-Esteem Scale (SES) by M. Rosenberg adapted by M. Łaguna, K. Lachowicz-Tabaczek & I. Dzwonkowska (2007) allows to calculate the level of general (global) self-esteem both in adolescents and adults. SES consists of ten diagnostic, descriptive statements concerning oneself, by means of which, the respondent performs a description of one's 'me'. The person answers on a four-point scale. Each answer is assigned 1 to 4 points. Finally, the results range from 10 to 40 points. A high score means a high level of general (global) self-esteem. The Polish version of the SES method is a reliable tool (Cronbach α in different research ranges from 0.81 to 0.83) and its theoretical validity has been confirmed.

The Sense of Control Questionnaire (Polish: KBPK- Kwestionariusz do Badania Poczucia Kontroli) by G. Krasowicz & A. Kurzyp-Wojnarska (1990) consists of 46 forced-choice questions, including 36 diagnostic and 10 buffer ones. The diagnostic questions refer to simple situations connected with adolescent school life. They form two scales: The Scale of Success (S) and The Scale of Failure (F). The questions referring to favourable events are included in the Scale of Success (S)

whereas the questions referring to unfavourable events are included in the Scale of Failure (F). The sum of results obtained from both scales creates the ratio of the generalised sense of control (S+F). Low results obtained in KBPK questionnaire indicate an external sense of control of the consequences of events, whereas high results suggest an internal sense of control of the consequences of events. The questionnaire has satisfying reliability (the internal consistency ratio KR-20 for the Scale of Success is 0.54 and for the Scale of Failure- 0.69) and criterial validity.

The *Questionnaire to study adolescents' coping strategies employed in social conflict situations* (Polish: KSMK) developed by D. Borecka-Biernat (2012) is intended to study the coping strategies used by adolescents in a social conflict situation. It consists of a description of 33 social conflict situations. Each situation is given 4 behaviours describing coping with a social conflict situation. The first one refers to aggressive coping ('AG'), the second to avoidance coping ('A'), the third to submissive coping ('S'), and the fourth to task-oriented (constructive) coping in a social conflict situation ('T'). The results are obtained for each scale separately by summing up marked behaviours in 33 situations being part of a particular scale. For the individual research, the Avoidance coping Scale (A) in adolescents in a social conflict situation has been used. The questionnaire is characterised by satisfactory reliability in terms of the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha). The reliability of the scale of avoidant coping in parents in situations of social conflict as perceived by children ("A") (M: .66; F: .66) is slightly below .70; it can, however, be considered sufficient for research purposes. The questionnaire has a satisfactory level of diagnostic accuracy.

The participants of the research

Before the pandemic, a sample of 468 girls and 425 boys aged 13 to 15 participated in the study – 893 individuals in total. The participants were middle school students. The schools were selected randomly, but not all selected schools agreed to participate in the study; therefore, in several cases other schools were contacted and expressed willingness to participate. The study was conducted in a group and participation was voluntary. The questionnaires were distributed and completed by the students during form period. The students signed the questionnaires with their initials or nicknames. Detailed instructions were given before the questionnaires were distributed and the participants were allowed to ask questions about any elements of the questionnaires that they found unclear. It should be emphasised that the participants displayed a positive attitude towards their participation in the research, expressing interest and actively answering

the questions. The research was carried out in accordance with the rules of psychological scientific research.

Age was the basic criterion for selecting the surveyed students. The influence of age on the selection of strategies for coping with a social conflict situation was analysed in the group of students aged 13–15 years (early adolescence sub-period). Adolescence is an important stage in the life of every human being because it is considered a transition point between childhood and adulthood. The period of adolescence is a period of instability in teenagers' behaviour, a period of conflicts with the environment, with themselves and the feeling of incomprehension which often accompanies them (Obuchowska, 2000). It is also referred to as a period of rebellion and stress. Many biological, psychological, mental, motivational, and social attitude changes take place at that time, which make young people often have many problems with adjusting their behaviour to new situations, tasks, and social roles (Bee, 2004; Brzezińska et al., 2016; Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 2015; Trempała, 2011). Due to the development of a critical assessment of the surrounding reality and the increased formation of the self-image, the supremacy of the emotional sphere over other areas of mental life, as well as new forms of social contacts and directness in behaviour, adolescents aged 13–15 seem to be a good subject of research to learn about the avoidance strategy for coping with a situation of strong emotional tension such as a social conflict.

The research results analysis

In order to identify the possible dependencies between the level of self-esteem and the avoidance coping strategy used by adolescents in a social conflict situation, the results of the Self-esteem Scale (SES) and the 'A' Scale (avoidance coping in a social conflict situation) of the KSMK questionnaire have been correlated. Kurtosis and skewness for the analysed data fit within the range (-1,1); the calculations were conducted with a parametric test. Pearson correlation coefficients r for the whole sample of the researched group of adolescents as well as for groups determined by gender are shown in Table 1.

Data from Table 1 indicate a statistically relevant ($p < 0.001$) weak negative correlation between the level of self-esteem and the scale for avoidance coping strategy in a social conflict situation (A) for the whole sample ($r = -0.10$) which is confirmed in the group of boys ($r = -0.21$), however, in the group of girls ($r = -0.007$) the result shows a tendency in the same direction, but it does not reach the level of relevance ($p < 0.05$). It seems likely that the lower the self-esteem, the more often the adolescents (the whole sample, boys) use the avoidance strategy of coping in a conflict situation.

Table 1. Comparison of values of the Pearson correlation coefficient r between the Self-Esteem Scale (SES) and the 'A' Scale of the KSMK questionnaire for the whole sample ($N=893$) for girls only ($N=468$) and for boys only ($N=425$)

SES questionnaire	'A' Scale of the KSMK questionnaire		
	G	Gl	B
Self-Esteem Scale	-0.10 $p<0.004$	-0.007 irr.	-0.21 $p<0.001$

'A': avoidance coping in a social conflict situation; G: general; Gl: girls; B: boys;
irr: irrelevant

Source: Author's research.

The analysis of statistical results from Table 1 suggests that the level of self-esteem and the use of avoidance coping strategy in adolescents in a social conflict situation are not strongly correlated. Gender has not turned out to be a factor determining the strength of relationship between these variables. The empirical research confirmed the validity of the H.1 hypothesis.

The relationship between the locus of control (KBPK) and the use of avoidance coping strategy in adolescents in a social conflict situation (KSMK) is presented with the Pearson's correlation coefficient r . Kurtosis and skewness for the analysed data fit within the range $(-1,1)$. Information concerning the interdependence between the analysed variables is shown in Table 2.

The analysis of data from Table 2 indicates a low correlation between locus of control separately for successes and failures and the generalised sense of control and avoidance coping strategies in youth in a social conflict situation. The correlation coefficients for the entire sample were $r(S)=-0.30$, $r(F)=-0.26$, and $r(S+F)=-0.32$. A clear tendency for two-directional changes of the researched traits can be observed here: the higher the results obtained from the KBPK questionnaire, thus, the stronger the belief in internal control of the consequences of events, separately in success and failure situations and the generalised internal sense of control, then the lower the results for the avoidance strategy. The opposite also appears to be true: lower results in KBPK (a stronger belief in external control of the consequences of events, separately in success and failure, and the generalised internal sense of control) coincide with a higher level of avoidance coping strategy applied by adolescents in a social conflict situation.

Table 2. Comparison of values of the Pearson correlation coefficient r between the KBPK questionnaire Scale and the 'A' Scale of the KSMK questionnaire for the whole sample ($N=893$) as well as for girls only ($N=468$) and for boys only ($N=425$).

KBPK questionnaire Scales	'A' Scale of the KSMK questionnaire		
	G	Gl	B
S	-0.30 $p<0.001$	-0.25 $p<0.001$	-0.36 $p<0.001$
F	-0.26 $p<0.001$	-0.21 $p<0.001$	-0.32 $p<0.001$
S+F	-0.32 $p<0.001$	-0.26 $p<0.001$	-0.40 $p<0.001$

'A': avoidance coping in a social conflict situation; S: The Scale of Success; F: The Scale of Failure; S+F: the sum of results for the scales S and F; G: general; Gl: girls; B: boys

Source: Author's research.

Data from Table 2 allow to claim that gender has not turned out to be a factor determining the strength of the relationship between the researched variables. Almost identical correlation coefficients in girls and in boys were found between locus of control separately in success and failure and the generalised sense of control and the avoidance strategy of coping in a social conflict situation. Girls (0.21-0.26) and boys (0.32-0.40) obtained low Pearson's correlation coefficients r that are statistically relevant ($p<0.001$).

Overall, the analysis of the statistical results suggests that the locus of control (separately in Success (S) and Failure (F)), the generalised sense of control (S+F), and the avoidance coping strategy used in a situation of social conflict are not strongly correlated. In the light of the performed statistical verification, it can be concluded that the obtained results have confirmed the validity of hypothesis H.2.

Summary of the research results

The presented results of the research indicate that the level of general self-esteem plays a role in the choice of adopting an avoidance coping strategy in a social conflict situation. Adolescents are aware of their abilities and limitations influencing their way of functioning in a social conflict situation. It transpires that low self-esteem, and low appraisal of their abilities and effectiveness of action,

favours the appearance of avoiding forms of behaviour, reducing the emotional tension due to the conflicting nature of encountered difficulties (Campbell & Lavalley, 1993; Mazurkiewicz, 1996). As we can see, a negative attitude toward oneself, namely doubt in one's strength, favours withdrawal from interaction, avoiding relationships with others, not undertaking tasks, a lack of trust, and a hostile social attitude. Aversion towards other people, together with the inability to overcome social barriers, leads to numerous conflicts with the environment. A lack of faith in oneself, and abandoning actions as a consequence of experienced failures is an obstacle to coping with tensions. These elements comprising low self-esteem cause the inability to solve conflicts (Wosińska, 2004). On the other hand, low self-appraisal is connected with low activity, lack of involvement in problem solving, fear, and reluctance to be part of interpersonal contacts (Napora, 1999). Thus, low self-esteem is an indicator of withdrawal from activity and a lack of pursuit to achieve set goals in a difficult situation. An adolescent, adopting avoiding behaviour in a conflict situation, engages in replacement activities protecting their ego (escape from a problem) and/or looks for social contacts, without attempting to solve the conflict.

One feature of the 'me' structure is information about oneself and one's abilities to influence the course of events. Locus of control is a relevant variable modifying the behaviour of an adolescent in a social conflict situation. The conducted research indicated that in adolescents using avoidance strategy of coping with a social conflict situation, taking the form of engaging in replacement activities or looking for social contacts, there occurs 'a shift' of locus of control towards the external direction for the success and/or failure situations. Such a person does not believe that good and desirable events that they encounter are the results of their actions. These are rather attributed to some favourable combination of events or favourability of other people. Young people believe that the successes they achieve and the rewards they gain are the result of luck, blessing, or lucky coincidence. It may also create the conviction that positive outcomes do not come as a consequence of their actions, and becoming involved in activities is futile, because it does not have any impact on the final result. Furthermore, assigning the responsibility for one's successes to fate or luck may make young people lose motivation to control their own lives, and result in adopting passive behaviour in a conflict. The tendency to believe in a general, external source of control in adolescents using avoidance strategies in a social conflict situation is also evident when they experience failures. Such a person is unable to take on the responsibility for their failures, whose causes are seen in external factors being

beyond their control, e.g. bad fate or the viciousness of other people. The lack of a sense of responsibility for failures deprives such a person of motivation needed to attempt to change their fate, since 'whatever happens, happens.' However, not only. If a young person does not believe that effort pays off or might cause a change of situation, they passively wait for the consequences of a given situation; they behave passively while attempting to change the course of events. Instead, they accept their fate and engage in other activities, which serve as a distraction from the existing issue. (Borecka-Biernat, 2001; Dakowicz, 1996; Rostowska, 2001). These results indicate that the appraisal of a conflict situation as being beyond the young person's control is connected with the use of an avoidance coping strategy in a particular situation. The person's activity facing a conflict situation, being beyond personal control, is directed to escape the problem without attempting to solve it. As it turns out, the function of avoidance strategy is to escape from reality, from one's helplessness, lack of self-acceptation, and fear (Moos & Schafer, 1993).

Generalising the presented results, one may notice that young person's lower appraisal of their abilities, a strong belief in the influence of others on positive and/or negative consequences of events, co-occurs with a tendency to apply avoidance coping in a social conflict situation. The selected personality variables are not strong predictors determining the avoidant coping strategy applied by adolescents in situations of social conflict; this means that there must exist a relatively large number of other variables which might help to understand the avoidant coping strategy in situations of conflict in adolescents. The field worthy of further scientific exploration is the genetic (temperament-related) nature of the way an individual functions in conflict and the influence of the family environment on the capacity of the biological determinants, as well as its impact on the individual's ability to become a person who actively copes with conflict.

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Citizenship, Culture, and Politics: The Discussion on the Naturalization of Muslim Soldiers in the French Army during the Great War (1914–1918)

Jerzy Zdanowski¹ 



Abstract

Numerous examples in history show how the politicization of citizenship and invocation of cultural standards were used as an argument for the marginalization of certain groups. With that in mind, this article analyses the 1915 discussion about French colonial policy and republicanism provoked by the Minister of War's proposal to grant French citizenship to Muslim soldiers as a reward for their sacrifice for France. Although the proposal was rejected, the discussion revealed a complex relationship between citizenship, culture, and politics. The article maintains that citizenship was treated as an element of cultural identity and that its concept was born in a specific historical context, which was imperial domination over colonial people. This is confirmed by the fact that the positions of supporters of soldiers' naturalization based on recognition of the soldiers' cultural identity and opponents who called for their cultural assimilation were very similar and differed in the sequence of events; both opted for acculturation of the newcomers as the final step of naturalization. The discussion proves that culture in the relationship with citizenship means more than pluralism and that citizenship in the relationship with culture grows beyond the institutional dimension.

Key words

citizenship, culture, colonialism, France, Third Republic, Muslim soldiers, Great War, naturalization

¹ Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Kraków University, Poland, jerzyzda@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6878-0432>. This work was supported by National Science Centre, Poland: [Grant Number project 2017/27/B/HS3/02645].

Introduction

The concept of citizenship has been historically linked with the emergence of nation-states and was initially shaped in relation to civic, political, and social rights (Marshall, 1964, p. 92; Faist, 2010, pp. 200–202). However, since the 1980s, along with the progressive diversification of societies and multicultural policies, the links between citizenship and culture have become clear and have become essential to the relationship between the ‘native’ population and migrant groups (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 101). As a result, the concept of cultural citizenship was formed in the literature, expressing a close relationship between citizenship and culture, and two research approaches were developed: (1) a sociological method, which emphasized the relationship of the inclusion of new groups into the polity with the sphere of identity and belonging, which presupposes the primacy of cultural needs and leads to the modification of the polity; (2) a political science approach, which focuses on integrating new groups into an already existing political structure and emphasizes the importance of such aspects of this process as limits of tolerance, forms of political representation of new citizens, and the adaptation of new cultural elements to the existing polity (Delanty, 2007, p. 61).

The history of French colonialism shows a contradiction between the republican principle of equality and the restricted access of the colonial peoples to the civil rights enjoyed by the French citizens (Hincker, 2014, p. 359). This contradiction was based on the distinction between active and passive citizenship, introduced in 1789 by Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès in his work *Reconnaissance et exposition raisonnée Des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*. All inhabitants of the country were guaranteed personal protection and the protection of their property, but only those who made up the public sphere were truly active citizens. The precondition of “making up the public sphere” was to accept republicanism and French law (*Reconnaissance et exposition*, 1789; Pauquet, 2014; Belissa et al., 2014, p. 20; Brubaker, 1992). The concept of citizenship and its application were from the very beginning an instrument of political struggle. As early as 1789, the aristocracy and Jews were deprived of the rights of active citizens (Sahlins, 2004, pp. 267–312).

Cultural assimilation was, therefore, a necessary condition to obtain full civil rights, and the French authorities pursued such a policy in the colonies and protectorates. However, during the Great War of 1914–1918, nearly 250,000 soldiers from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia fought in the French army, and perceptions of the place of indigenous people changed. In 1914, the Minister of War applied

to grant French citizenship to these soldiers as a reward for their sacrifice for France. This step was motivated by the desire to attract new soldiers to the French army. The prospect of obtaining French citizenship was to encourage them to join the French army. The decision of the Minister of War sparked a lively discussion about colonial policy and republicanism, which was at the very foundations of French political culture. It revealed imperial pride and racial prejudices. The fact that the indigenous people of Algeria received the French nationality on the basis of the *sénatus-consulte* of 1865 but were deprived of the quality of citizen was called the “republican compromise” or the “paradox of French republicanism.” It was expressed in the limitation of the universal meaning of citizenship and the introduction of the criterion of nationality as the only legally legitimate criterion for political discrimination (Noiriel, 1988, pp. 110–113).

Materials and method

The presence of the Muslim soldiers in the French Army during the Great War resulted in significant studies. Pioneering works by G. Meynier (1979, 1981, 2000, 2017), M. Michel (1982, 2003), C.-R. Ageron (1959, 1964, 1966, 1972, 1973, 1991, 2005, 2010), J.-C. Vatin (1983, 2015) and J. Frémeaux (1991, 2002, 2006, 2016a, 2016b, 2019) have become classics and benchmarks for new research. Many publications refer to the broader context of the mobilization of colonial soldiers, particularly the political culture of the Third Republic and the French colonial doctrine combined with the republican concept of *citoyenneté* (Hincker, 2014; Reconnaissance et exposition, 1789; Pauquet, 2014; Belissa et al., 2014; Brubaker, 1992; Sahlins, 2004; Weil, 2008; Lehning, 2001), and the ‘science’ of races (Power, 1944; Burrows, 1986; Fogarty, 2008, 2016; Rogan, 2014). This framework has been determined by the discourse between colonial orientation and the anti-colonial tradition in France about the ways of integrating *indigènes* with metropolitan culture (Andrew & Kanya-Foster, 1974). There is a widespread opinion that the First World War accelerated the polarization of the mainstream views of colonial policy and marked a breakthrough in the relationship between the metropolis and colonies (Meynier, 1979, p. 219; Nouschi, 1979, pp. 77, 80).

Documentation on Muslim soldiers is extensive and is kept in the Archives Nationales d’Outre Mer in Aix-en-Provence, the Archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères (AMAE) in La Courneuve, and the archives of the Ministère des armées, the Service historique de la Défense (SHD) in Vincennes. For the purpose of this article, the most important were the archival materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the archival group Correspondence Politique et

Commerciale, Nouvelle Serie, Guerre 1914–1918, Affaires Musulmanes, Soldats Musulmans dans l'armée français. They are listed in subgroups: 1664 (July 1914–February 1915), 1665 (March 1915–October 1915), 1666 (November 1915–June 1916), 1667 (July 1916–December 1916), 1668 (January 1917–September 1917), 1669 (October 1917–August 1918), 1670 (Panislamisme 1914–1915), and 1671 (Panislamism 1916). The minutes of a special Inter-ministerial Commission for Muslim Affairs (*Commission interministerielle des Affaires musulmans*) established in 1914 to manage the problem of Muslim soldiers in the army (Le Pautremat 1998, 2003) are in the same archival group and they were an important source for the discussion.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. It raises the impact of the war on colonial policy and examines literature and relevant archival documents. European colonialism signified the domination of Europeans over the peoples of Asia and Africa, and included economic, political, social, and cultural aspects. Colonial politics and the history of European colonial empires is the subject of a very large body of literature. The novelty of this article is in discussing the presence of the Muslim soldiers in the French Army in the context of two concepts of citizenship defined by French republicanism in 1789 and colonial policy. The following research questions have been formulated: (1) How was the concept of active republicanism incorporated into the colonial policy? (2) What were the arguments against granting Muslim soldiers French citizenship? (3) Did the political elite of the Third Republic really depart from the policy of assimilationism towards the colonial peoples after 1901?

Citizenship and culture

Considerations about the relationship between culture and citizenship introduce a certain intellectual uncertainty. Many studies emphasize the politicization of citizenship, and numerous examples show that citizenship is used as an “instrument of administrative rationality” (Pfiffner, 1960, p. 125). It often serves either to marginalize certain social groups or to strengthen the position of the dominant group (Cohen & Ghosh, 2019). The result is semi-citizenship statuses “that offer some individuals partial bundles of rights and semi-citizen statuses” (Cohen, 2014, p. 1047). Often the basis for restricting access to full citizenship is linked to citizenship with the culture of the dominant group, which leads to the exclusion of groups representing other cultures (Volpp, 2007, p. 572). The emphasis that solutions to include new groups in the existing politics should be associated with the neutrality of the state raises, however, questions. The dominant group is most

convinced of the neutrality of its concept of citizenship, which may raise doubts. Volpp alludes to the headscarf debate in France in recent decades and believes that it has shown that “the republican citizen is not a purely neutral concept”, as “this figure emerges in opposition to a perceived, particularized threat, positioning an abstract, culture-free citizen against a culturally-laden other (Volpp, 2007, p. 574). On the other hand, one should not ignore the fact that the concept of citizenship is the result of a process specific to each historical process, and that people who identify with it are attached to it. In essence, it can be said that citizenship is “both a cultural and anti-cultural institution” as “citizenship positions itself as oppositional to specific cultures, even as it is constituted by quite specific cultural values” (Volpp, 2007, p. 574). Edwige L. Lefebvre stresses that “the French concept of citizenship has always intentionally neglected / ... / cultural pluralistic dimensions, because of a fear of social fragmentation” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 15). In the Third Republic, which in 1905 saw the separation of church and state and the consolidation of French *laïcité*, the colonial authorities in Algeria constantly controlled mosques, imams, muftis, and charities as a tool of strategic dominance over punishment. They ruled out on an ethno-religious basis qualification of indigenous peoples from the political sphere, depriving them of the rights reserved for the peoples of European culture. As a consequence, according to L. Blévis, the history of Algerian citizenship during the colonial period underwent few inflexions, which strengthened France’s presence and brought institutionalization of colonial domination (Blévis, 2001, p. 559)

Citizenship and empire

Skin colour and culture became other reasons for the deprivation, which was ‘justified’ by the ‘science’ of races, the ‘pinnacle’ of which was the work of Arthur de Gobineau *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* of 1850. Its author distinguished three races: “black”, “white”, and “yellow” and believed that race created culture. He posited that all races are inferior to the Europeans (de Gobineau, 1853, p. 22). Racial theories became very popular in the Third Republic in creating a colonial empire. In 1885, Jules Ferry presented the foundations of the colonial doctrine of the Third Republic and stressed that the metropole had one duty to the colonies – to civilize *indigènes* as inferior races (Hincker, 2014, pp. 236–237; Power, 1944; Burrows, 1986, pp. 109–135).

Racial theories were transferred to the military domain in the form of the *les races guerrières* theory. The most famous exponent of this theory was General Charles Mangin, who in 1907–1911 was the commander of the French armed

forces in West Africa. In 1910 his book *La Force Noire* was published. The author postulated West Africa as a reservoir of soldiers for the French Army due to the unique military abilities of some African peoples, especially Senegalese. Africans had the natural attributes of being excellent soldiers – they could withstand extreme climatic conditions, cover long distances without problems, and their nervous system made them more resistant to pain than “whites”. According to this author, “those primitive people for whom life has such a low price, and whose veins have young blood and if it is not shed, will manage to reach the level of French bravery and revive her if need be” (Mangin, 1910, pp. 228, 288–289).

Mangin’s views sparked a lively debate among the military, scholars, parliamentarians, and journalists about increasing the share of non-European races in the French Army. How widely this theory was discussed is demonstrated by the impressive number of 4,300 press articles published on this subject in 1909–1912 (Lunn, 1999, pp. 199, 523). Mangin’s theory was popular during the Great War. In 1916, the Société des Etudes Coloniales et Maritime, which published the popular magazine *Revue indigène*, called for the introduction of compulsory conscription in Algeria and Morocco, similar to the one in Tunisia, to create three armies among the North African *indigènes*. The authors argued that the *indigènes* from Africa showed great bravery and could form large military formations. They referred to the project of Adolphe Messimy, a member of the budget committee of the Chamber of Deputies and later the Minister of War (1911–1912), who in 1908 called for the introduction of conscription of recruits from *indigènes* in Algeria as it was a cheaper method for creating military forces than contract service. In 1916, the ‘high recognition’ of the *indigènes’* organizational skills and their military prowess was understandable for other reasons. At that time, the French Army was beginning to experience a shortage of soldiers from the metropole at the front. It was necessary to mobilize soldiers from colonies and protectorates (Lunn, 1999, p. 523; Bourdarie, 1916, pp. 13–15, 20–21; Recham, 1966, p. 17).

The politics of assimilationism was pursued by the French authorities in North Africa. Algeria was incorporated into France as an integral part, divided into departments and covered by French legislation (Augustin, 1926, pp. XIII–XIV; Vatin, 2015, pp. 27–28; Frémeaux, 2016). In 1881 and 1904, Tunisia and Morocco, respectively, became the protectorates of France (Augustin, 1926, p. XVIII). France’s policy in North Africa was to plant French people there and gain the trust of the *indigènes*. It meant double assimilation: the French from Algeria should look like the French from France, and the *indigènes* should look like the Europeans. The sénatus-consulte from 1865 was to serve this purpose. It made it

possible for *indigènes* to obtain the rights of a French citizen, but the condition was to give up the personal status of being Muslim (Hamel, 1880, p. 6). From 1901 onwards, a new native policy had been officially introduced, entitled the “policy of association” aimed at the “advancement of Muslims within their civilization.” It meant the French authorities’ admission to the assimilation policy’s failure and, consequently, the strict separation of the French from the Algerians (Ageron, 1991, pp. 63, 73–74 ; Betts, 2005, pp. 106–133). This new policy, however, did not change the precondition for naturalization with full political rights. It was cultural assimilation, as demonstrated by the discussion in 1915 about granting French citizenship to Muslim soldiers.

On 20 November 1914, Alexandre Millerand, the Minister of War, sent a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in which he expressed the view that the war and the participation of Algerian soldiers in it had created a new situation in the matter of naturalization. The Minister proposed to create formal and legal possibilities for Algerian soldiers to choose between their current personal status and the naturalization and acceptance of French citizenship (*la nationalité française*) as “compensation for their loyalty to us” (AMAE, 20 November 1914).

The Millerand initiative was met with immediate criticism from all sides. The Ministry of Colonies noted that the possibility of naturalization had not yet attracted Muslims’ attention because, for many, it was associated with apostasy and a departure from Muslim personal status (AMAE, *séance* 3, 31 December 1914). The proposal was also criticized by the Algerian *assimilationistes* who found it too restrictive, as it provided for the possibility of naturalization only for those soldiers who directly participated in the fighting on the front (AMAE, 15 January 1915).

The French administration in North Africa presented the strongest arguments against the project. On 19 January 1915, Gabriel Alapetite, the French Resident-General in Tunisia, expressed that the Interministerial Commission’s proposal on naturalization applied in Algeria, where there was a distinction between those who had French citizenship rights and those who did not have these rights. However, this was not the case in Tunisia. The purpose of France’s policy in this country was to improve the living conditions of its inhabitants, not to change their citizenship. He explained that a Muslim who was a naturalized French citizen was treated as an apostate in his country. The active exercise of French civil rights conflicted with Muslim family law and personal status, specifically concerning polygamy and the unequal position of women in the inheritance of property under Muslim law (AMAE, 19 January 1915).

The Resident also did not believe in the effect of cultural diffusion, i.e., the settling of Tunisia by French colonials and the assimilation of Muslims to the European concepts of civil and family law. Those *indigènes* who knew how French society worked and were aware of the rights and obligations arising from French citizenship would not apply for it; those who did apply for it were ignorant of the rights and obligations attached to French citizenship at the time of their applications, and most of them were soldiers urged to apply for citizenship by their French commanders. "Those who had received higher education in France and were well acquainted with French society believed that our civil rights were unacceptable to them because they threatened their traditions, intellectual heritage, their ethical and aesthetic views, as well as their understanding of what human dignity and family were." It meant a complete failure of the policy of assimilation of Muslims, as evidenced by, according to the Resident, only two cases known to him of Tunisians adopting a French lifestyle (AMAE, 16 May 1915).

The French Resident in Tunisia believed that facilitating naturalization by simplifying procedures would only improve statistics but would not indicate that *indigènes* had accepted republican values that form the core of French citizenship. "The problem of reconciling these values with the personal status of a Muslim will not automatically disappear with the act of naturalization but will be hidden under the guise of formal acceptance of obligations imposed on a naturalized person as a French citizen. One should not turn a blind eye that the conflict will not exist under the skin - tensions between the naturalized person and the French state and between the French state and the naturalized person's family will be constant," wrote the Resident (AMAE, 16 May 1915). According to the Resident, the source of these tensions was a gradual change of habits, customs, and values, and the consequences of these tensions would be felt primarily by the family. The new situation would also include the wife of a naturalized soldier who would acquire new rights and adapt to the new social role determined by these rights and obligations. Acceptance of French citizenship by a person who was brought up in a Muslim environment and functioned within Muslim personal status did not mean immediate assimilation, but acculturation following naturalization was inevitable (AMAE, 16 May 1915).

The discussion showed how vital procedural issues were and how different interpretations could be made of the text. The Commission's proposal was very general and expressed more political intentions related to the environment and the needs of the Ministry of War than legal solutions. The Governor-General was more detailed in his project and placed his project in the context of imperial policy

and saw it in line with other legal acts that were in force at the time, indicating possible legal and political complications if adopted.

Citizenship and *la mission civilisatrice*

On 27 January 1915, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies (*Commission des Affaires Extérieures de Chambre des Députés*) presented a resolution on the treatment of Muslim soldiers on an equal footing with “their comrades, the French and Israelites.” Its chairman, deputy Albin Rozet from the district of la Haute-Marne, stated that “for the sake of equality and justice, it should be that people who are equal before death are also equal before the law” (AMAE, 29 January 1915).

General Hubert Lyautey, the Resident-General in Morocco, was a strong opponent of the equality bill. In a telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 4 February 1915, he stated that the naturalization of Moroccan soldiers for their merits on the battlefield is not favourable from the point of view of France’s political interests, as it would weaken the authority of the Sultan in the eyes of his subjects (AMAE, 4 February 1915). Thus, the colonial administration took the view that state authorities should not give up control over the naturalization process, as this could harm the colonies’ functioning and France’s position in the colonies. On 5 March 1915, the Minister of Colonies relayed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs his position on the project of the Interministerial Commission. It expressed complete agreement with the position of Alapetite and Lyautey, who considered that the Commission’s proposal was underdeveloped and needed significant changes. (AMAE, 11 March 1915).

On 1 April 1915, the Chamber of Deputies heard a new draft law on the facilitation of naturalization of Muslim soldiers from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The draft was submitted by four deputies – Albin Rozet, Georges Leygues, Louis Doizy, and Lucien Millevoye – known for their liberal views on the rights of the colonial population. “Everyone, no doubt, will agree that this lasting loyalty deserves immediate compensation from the sovereign nation,” we read in a speech by deputies (AMAE, 1 April 1915). Consequently, the first Article of the new law would refer to Muslim soldiers from Algeria and give them the right to receive the rights of a French citizen (*la qualité de citoyen français*) by a simple declaration of the acquisition of those rights after reaching the age of 21 and at any time. The draft was more of a political declaration than a law taking into account the existing legal system. Its authors did not ask any naturalized French citizens to give up their native culture in favour of French culture. The authors of the draft law

were convinced that the new law would significantly impact the future of France's relations with the indigenous population, as it would be a step in overcoming mutual prejudices. They were more politically than culturally conditioned, for the Muslim faith alone determined these relations to a lesser extent than the activities of religious brotherhoods and political groups. The authors were concerned with the ideas of Pan-Islamism, which increasingly influenced Muslims and turned them hostile to European civilization. According to the authors, France was losing Muslims and steps had to be taken to regain them. The law on the naturalization of soldiers would be such an action (AMAE, 1 April 1915).

The design and thinking of liberal deputies remained within the framework of *la mission civilisatrice*, but was ground-breaking in terms of politicians' perception of Muslim culture. Until now, it was believed that Muslim culture was incompatible with republican values. The authors of the project, 'allowing' naturalized soldiers to stick to their Muslim personal status, 'suggested that the coexistence of two cultures within one European civilization is possible.' A severe obstacle was polygamy, which was prohibited by French law, but liberal deputies saw this phenomenon as temporary, and history confirmed their suppositions (AMAE, 1 April 1915, 9 Jun 1915).

French citizenship and Islam

The draft of the four liberal deputies was sent on 3 April by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Resident-General in Morocco, who soon added his comments. Resident Lyautey gave it a brief assessment: it posed a threat to the French presence in North Africa, so it must be rejected in its entirety without even attempting to adapt it to any circumstances. It was necessary to find a different formula for expressing national recognition and appreciation of the Moroccan soldiers fighting on the front. The Resident's arguments for this stance were both political and legal. Political issues were about intending to grant citizenship to all soldiers who fought or would fight alongside France. According to the Resident, such generalization was too far-reaching, because in the case of Morocco, it marked the emergence of 'a military caste, enjoying a special statute, coming from classes that are neither the most respected layers in Moroccan society, nor would we like to support them for the security of our interests' (AMAE, 15 June 1915).

The legal argument against the project was polygamy. French law did not allow polygamous associations, while in Morocco, they were widespread. A naturalized soldier entering into a polygamous relationship would violate French law and face the consequences. Lyautey did not think polygamy was bad in Morocco. He

wrote: 'Only insufficient knowledge of Moroccan society can justify the belief that polygamy is proof of a fall and backwardness. For a long time, polygamy in Morocco formed the basis of family organization and proclaiming that monogamy is a state of superiority and that from a French point of view, it is the only regulator and the only acceptable norm will be a challenge for customs, social and religious traditions, and a real offence to the Sultan and the entire elite, as well as for the whole society. I claim that every Moroccan who decides to apply for naturalization will realize that he will have to agree to monogamy, which will be contrary to his habits and his tradition, and besides, isolate him from his environment and his race' (AMAE, 15 June 1915).

Return to the old policy

On July 31, 1915, a turning point took place in the discussions about the naturalization of indigenous soldiers as a form of moral compensation in return for fighting in wars for France. On that day, the *Direction des Affaires administratives et techniques* at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a note for the Political and Commercial Affairs Department – the second most important department at the Ministry – giving an opinion of the Lagrosillière project on naturalization law. The authors of the note fully supported the position of the Governor-General of Algeria. They concluded that the project seriously compromised the nature of naturalization, which was still a favour that the state authorities could grant or refuse after assessing the person applying for naturalization. According to the proposal, this favour would be replaced by citizenship being acquired as a legal good because the acquisition of citizenship by certain persons was socially and therefore legally acceptable. The regime of acquiring citizenship as a legal good was approved by the Civil Code and applied to descendants of the French and sons of foreigners born in France. The basis for citizenship was their attachment to France, resulting either from having roots or their upbringing in the French community. However, the exercise of this right was subject to certain restrictions, and administrative authorities might refuse to register a declaration of acquisition of citizenship if the applicant was not worthy of it. "Now, according to the discussed project, these restrictions will be lifted against *indigènes*", the authors of the note concluded (AMAE, 31 July 1915).

This conclusion was crucial for the future. It led to widespread reflection on the nature of naturalization, especially the place of possible adopted law in the French legal system. Moreover, it practically ended the possibility of a fast legislative path for the decree on the naturalization of indigenous soldiers. Later, until the end of

the war, state administration institution documents only confirmed the validity of the assessments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs formulated in July 1915.

Conclusion

The initiative of Minister Millerand of November 1914 granting French civil rights to indigenous soldiers as a reward for their loyalty and bravery resulted in heated discussion among the political elite of France regarding the naturalization of *indigènes*. The discussion revealed a deep polarization of views on the desirability of adopting a new naturalization decree. A group of liberal deputies in the parliament and colony deputies proposed the naturalization of soldiers and all *indigènes*, which meant significant changes in the electoral law, tax system, and the way of administering the empire. Their projects were criticized by the French administration in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco as premature due how civilized the colonies were perceived to be and therefore dangerous to the interests of France. The Interministerial Commission then submitted a project in which it tried to reconcile the war-related need to increase the number of volunteers from North Africa to serve in the French Army with the need to stabilize the imperial system.

An crucial element in these political discussions was that of culture, and specifically the personal status of Muslims. According to opponents of the naturalization of soldiers, Muslim personal status was incompatible with the French concept of civil rights, in particular with regards to polygamy and the unequal position of a woman when inheriting property. Consequently, an *indigène* had to give up Muslim personal status if he wanted to practice French citizenship. In other words, if he wanted to become French, he had to stop being a Muslim. Liberal deputies did not set such a condition – a naturalized *indigène* could keep his native status. However, in this case, too, it was ultimately about assimilation. The difference was in the order of events: in the first, case assimilation was to precede naturalization; in the second, it was its consequence. In the political sphere, in both cases, it was about preserving the empire. Even Albin Rozet, the strongest supporter of the indigenous case, did not go so far as to demand the abolition of indigenous disciplinary authority. Discussions on the project included prospects of rapprochement with Muslims based on the French concept of citizenship. The Resident-General of France in Tunisia expressed such a position among others. He agreed with the authors of the projects on those parts that stated “if an indigenous soldier devotedly serves in the French Army and if he is attracted by living conditions in France, while at the same time knowing French

law, and valuing it more than that which now regulates life and is aware of French civic obligations, the person's declaration should be positively received without any obstacles or delays." However, the Resident doubted whether such persons were in the French Army (AMAE, 16 May 1915, 17 May 1915).

Concerning the relationship between citizenship, politics, and culture, the 1915 discussion on the naturalization of people belonging to a different culture allows for some important conclusions to be drawn. The concept of citizenship is closely related to culture, and cultural citizenship is an essential complement to civic, political, and social citizenship. To understand a given citizenship concept, the historical context of its formation is critical. In the case of the Muslim soldiers in the French army, the context was the empire and imperial ideas about the attitude of the metropole to the subordinate people. Some of these ideas were marked by resentment and a sense of superiority towards the *indigènes* as an inferior race. Citizenship was closely linked with the colonial idea of *la mission civilisatrice* and thus had an educational aspect. The act of granting citizenship was a final stage of the adoption by *indigènes* of the customs and legal norms of higher culture, in which the idea of citizenship emerged. One can agree with Delanty, who points out that in the relationship with citizenship, culture is more than pluralism and citizenship in the relationship with culture grows beyond the institutional dimension focused on rights and participation (Delanty, 2007, 65–66). Culture and citizenship relate to a learning process as they express the experiences of everyday life in specific historical circumstances and socio-political settings.

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Pedagogika i (nie)istnienie - egzystencjalna refleksja o edukacji i pokoju

Konrad Rejman¹ 



Abstrakt

W artykule podejmuję rozważania nad ideą pokoju i edukacją dla pokoju, zastanawiając się, jak poprzez działania edukacyjne budować trwały pokój. Przywołanie filozoficznych kategorii istnienia i nieistnienia, pozwala mi przy tym poszerzyć rozumienie idei pokoju. Definiuję go zatem nie tylko jako brak wojny, ale jako opanowanie określonych umiejętności. Za jedną z takich umiejętności uznaję etyczne przybliżanie. Łącząc refleksję pedagogiczną z etyczną, rozważam zagadnienia etyki bliskości i dystansu, traktując edukację jako praktykę przybliżania, czyli niwelowania dystansów, w tym dystansu moralnego. Uznaję etyczne przybliżanie za – współcześnie – istotne zadanie edukacyjne i ważną pokojową kompetencję. Edukacja, która przybliża, to równocześnie przestrzeń spotkania i dialogu, ponieważ to dialog stwarza możliwość przełamania przemocy, przymusu i dystansu, które są przeszkodami w budowaniu kultury pokojowego współistnienia.

Słowa kluczowe

edukacja dla pokoju, wojna, etyka bliskości, etyka dystansu, obserwator, przybliżanie, istnienie, nieistnienie, pokój, dialog

Pedagogy and (Non) Existence - Existential Reflection on Education and Peace

Abstract

In this article, I consider the idea of peace and education for peace, considering how to build lasting peace through educational activities. Recalling the

¹ Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa, Poland, konradrejman@wp.pl,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1531-4806>

philosophical categories of existence and non-existence allows me to broaden my understanding of the idea of peace. Therefore, I define it not only as the absence of war, but as the mastery of certain skills. I consider ethical approximation to be one of these skills. Combining pedagogical and ethical reflection, I consider the issues of the ethics of closeness and distance, treating education as a practice of approximation, i.e. eliminating distances, including moral distance. I consider ethical approximation to be - nowadays - an important educational task and an important non-violent competence. Education that brings closer is at the same time a space for meeting and dialogue, because it is dialogue that makes it possible to overcome violence, coercion and distance, which are obstacles to building a culture of peaceful coexistence.

Key words

education for peace, war, ethics of proximity, ethics of distance, observer, approximation, existence, non-existence, peace, dialogue

Pokój jawi się jako wartość nietrwała, mimo że dla większości Europejczyków do niedawna wydawał się oczywisty. Jednak w różnych częściach świata pokój jest naruszany, a prawo do życia w pokoju lekceważone. Może to świadczyć o niestabilności pokojowych deklaracji, które można zawiesić, jeśli pokój przestaje się sprawdzać jako strategia polityczna i kiedy przestaje przynosić korzyści. Owa niestałość i niestabilność pokoju skłania do tego, aby tę kategorię wciąż przemyśliwać i poszukiwać warunków do zaistnienia trwałego pokoju.

Pokój należy uznać przy tym za kategorię polisemantyczną. Oznacza to, że obok siebie mogą występować treści zupełnie ze sobą niezgodne (por. Galtung, 1969; Leek, 2018). Pokój można więc potraktować jako puste znaczące – odwołując się do nomenklatury zaproponowanej przez Ernesto Laclaua – czyli jako ideę, która jest „stale niemożliwa do przedstawienia” (Laclau, 2007, s. 94). Nie ma więc jednej wiążącej definicji pokoju. Zatem podejmując się refleksji nad tą ideą, należy sformułować definicję, która koncentrować się będzie na tych aspektach wspomnianej idei, które dany autor uzna za najistotniejsze.

Skutkiem tego w moich rozważaniach pokój postrzegam jako taki stan rzeczywistości i relacji międzyludzkich, w którym człowiek może skupić się przede wszystkim na realizowaniu twórczego potencjału, ponieważ nikt nie zagraża ciągłości jego podmiotowości i tożsamości, a groźba nieistnienia nie stanowi narzędzia do realizacji politycznych celów i wymuszania posłuszeństwa tak, jak dzieje się to chociażby w trakcie wojny. Natomiast kiedy współtworzyć możemy społeczną i polityczną rzeczywistość, opierając się na współpracy i dialogu, a nie na przemocy i przymusie, wówczas możemy mówić o pokoju.

W czasie – tak rozumianego – pokoju przemoc zostaje zastąpiona działaniami o charakterze twórczym, a nie destrukcyjnym. Za jedno z takich działań uznaję dialog. Konflikty, antagonizmy oraz napięcia społeczne i polityczne, mogą być rozwiązywane na drodze spotkania i dialogu, gdzie spotkanie będzie oznaczało samą możliwość podjęcia rozmowy z Innym. Zatem spotkanie będzie warunkiem koniecznym dla zaistnienia dialogu, ponieważ będzie stwarzało możliwość zagadnięcia pytaniem i uzyskania odpowiedzi. Przemoc to przecież nie tylko bezpośrednie stosowanie siły, ale też „terror interpretacji, swoista tyrania własnego punktu widzenia” (Sipiński, 2020, s. 88). Tym samym pokój będzie oznaczał też możliwość autentycznej rozmowy, podczas której zależy nam na poznaniu drugiego człowieka, na przełamaniu obcości – która może stać się kiedyś zarzewiem wojny – na poszukiwaniu rozwiązań, które będą korzystne dla wszystkich zaangażowanych stron. Zatem dialog to też umiejętność rezygnowania, wycofania się, akceptacji innych poglądów i zdolność do kompromisów. Jak wyjaśnia to Martin Buber:

Prawdziwa rozmowa, a tym samym każde aktualne spełnienie relacji między ludźmi, oznacza akceptację inności [...] Nie tylko przyjmuje się wtedy do wiadomości surowość i głębię ludzkiej indywidualizacji, zasadniczą inność partnera jako konieczny punkt wyjścia, lecz także potwierdza się je przez poszczególne istoty. Chęć oddziaływania nie oznacza wtedy dążenia do uczynienia innego kimś innym, do zaszczepiania mu własnej „słuszności” [...] Tu człowiek nie tylko doświadcza siebie jako ograniczonego, skazanego na własną skończoność, niezupełność, lecz jego stosunek do prawdy zostaje podniesiony przez odmienny [...] stosunek, którego przeznaczeniem jest kielkować i rozwijać się odmiennie (Buber, 1992, s. 135).

Mówiąc o pokoju, równocześnie mówimy o jakimś wyobrażeniu na temat świata. Deklarujemy w ten sposób określoną wizję przyszłości, dla której zaistnienia istotne jest opanowanie różnorodnych umiejętności. Z tej perspektywy – badając wciąż zakres definicyjny „pokoju” – byłby on pewnym zadaniem, wyzwaniem, czy też pracą do wykonania, związaną z nabywaniem wspomnianych kompetencji. Spośród nich Agnieszka Piejka wymienia: umiejętność krytycznego myślenia, kompetencje etyczne zorientowane na przyszłość, rozwijanie postaw obywatelskich, otwartość na Innego, rozwijanie postaw twórczych (por. Piejka, 2014, s. 71-72)¹. Oznacza to, że pokój wymaga stałego namysłu, refleksji nad tym,

¹ Chciałbym do tej listy dodać „przybliżanie” jako kompetencję etyczną, który to wątek będę rozwijał w ramach tego artykułu.

co mu zagraża, a co jest gwarancją jego trwałości. Edukacja stwarza możliwość podejmowania wielowątkowej refleksji nad omawianą ideą. Odwołując się do pojęcia „edukacja” mam na myśli różnorakie jej formy. Chodzi mi zarówno o edukację formalną, mającą zazwyczaj charakter instytucjonalny, którą cechuje planowość, świadomość celów, metod, jak i treści (zob. Muszyński, 2014, s. 79), ale również samokształcenie, które może mieć charakter bardziej spontaniczny, wewnątrzsterowny, często też nieformalny – będzie to zatem indywidualny wysiłek zdobywania wiedzy o świecie. Jednak zarówno proces formalny, jak i nieformalny prowadzą w moim przekonaniu do wzrostu samoświadomości oraz refleksyjności, do rozwijania sfery emocjonalnej i poznawczej, a także pomagają kształtować postawy obywatelskie, zachęcając do brania odpowiedzialności za kształt i dojrzałość demokracji (zob. Cervinkova, 2014; Gawlicz et al., 2014; Kwiecieński, 2017; Mendel i Wiatr, 2018; Segiet, 2021; Śliwerski, 2020).

Warto dodatkowo spojrzeć na edukację jako na przestrzeń doświadczania drugiego człowieka, tym samym zaś przestrzeń egzystencjalną, której częścią są też kryzysy i tragedie. To właśnie doświadczanie (które rozumiem tutaj jako zatroskanie losem drugiego człowieka, towarzyszenie mu w różnych momentach jego życia, uczenie się funkcjonowania z nim, otwartości na jego inność, jego ode mnie odmienność) stanowi tło dla edukacyjnych wyzwań.

Sądzę zatem, że to właśnie egzystencjalne trudności i zmaganie ze światem nadają wszystkim edukacyjnym formom i praktykom znaczenie dramatyczne, ponieważ każda nasza decyzja może mieć wpływ na los innych istnień. Chciałbym w tym miejscu podkreślić, że chodzi mi właśnie o dramatyczność, a nie tragiczność ludzkiego losu. Dramatyczność oznaczać bowiem będzie, że wciąż można dokonywać wyborów, wskazuje zatem na sprawstwo, a więc przekonanie, że mogę swoimi wyborami i działaniami kształtować rzeczywistość, że mam na nią realny wpływ.

Pokój i jego brak, to napięcie pomiędzy istnieniem a nieistnieniem. Brak pokoju wiąże się bowiem bezpośrednio z zagrożeniem dla naszego trwania w świecie. To zagrożenie może mieć wymiar indywidualny, ale również globalny i gatunkowy, i nie musi mieć związku z wojną. Dlatego też, w dalszej części artykułu chciałbym poświęcić więcej uwagi obu tym kategoriom: istnieniu i nieistnieniu. Kategorię nieistnienia będę przy tym interpretował w szerokim kontekście. Nie oznacza ona tylko śmierci, ale radykalną redukcję sprawstwa i sensu życia drugiego człowieka. Z nieistnieniem wiązać się zatem będą kategorie dehumanizacji i przemocy.

Co znaczy istnieć?

Problem „istnienia” jest podejmowany przede wszystkim na gruncie filozofii, gdzie ta – bardzo ogólna – kategoria jest problematyzowana na rozmaite sposoby, na drodze do uzyskania odpowiedzi, czym to istnienie jest i jak je zdefiniować, co to znaczy istnieć, co możemy w ogóle powiedzieć o istnieniu (jeżeli cokolwiek powiedzieć możemy) i jak odróżnić istnienie od nieistnienia? (zob. Chmielecki, 2002; Labenz, 2001; Wojtysiak, 2017). Problemy związane z interpretowaniem kategorii „istnienia” skłaniają raczej do zawężania jej rozumienia. Wydaje się zatem nieuniknione, abym i ja na takie zawężenie się zdecydował. Przede wszystkim, kiedy mówię o „istnieniu”, mam na myśli istoty żywe, nie zaś materię nieożywioną. Na uwadze mam zatem to, co istnieje w sposób fundamentalny i podstawowy (por. Krajewski, 2002). Nie zastanawiam się więc nad tym, co znaczy, że „coś” istnieje, ale nad tym, co dla istoty żywej oznacza, że „istnieje”?

Dokonuję przy tym rozróżnienia pomiędzy „istnieniem” a „życiem”. „Życie” traktuję tutaj jako fakt biologiczny. Żyję, ponieważ zachodzą w moim ciele procesy fizjologiczne i chemiczne. Oddycham, serce pompuje krew, dostarczam ciału substancji odżywczych. „Istnienie” jest zaś faktem pozabiologicznym, substancjalnym i egzystencjalnym. Istnieję, ponieważ zajmuję określoną pozycję bytową w świecie, przeznaczoną tylko dla mnie. Jestem ontologicznie obecny. Nie chodzi mi tym samym o istnienie jako zasadę, czyli szukanie odpowiedzi na pytanie dlaczego zajmuję tę określoną pozycję w bycie (por. Piwowarczyk, 2017). Mówiąc o istnieniu mam równocześnie na myśli istotność mojego bytu (zaś nieistnienie będę rozpatrywał łącznie z nieistotnością). Istnieję zatem jako byt istotny, już przez sam fakt istnienia. Ta istotność ma wymiar autoooreintacyjny – jestem bytem istotnym dla samego siebie, jak również wymiar obiektywny – jestem bytem znaczącym społecznie. Tak więc kategorii „życie” będę używał tu w odniesieniu do istnienia (wraz z jego istotnością) nie zaś do faktu biologicznego.

Zdaniem Andrzeja Chmieleckiego, tym, co wyróżnia byt realny (istotny), jest to, że „zarazem może on oddziaływać, jak i być przedmiotem oddziaływania, tj. czymś, co może zostać zmienione w wyniku jakiegoś działania” (Chmielecki, 2002, s. 19). Sprawczość i relacja miałyby zatem decydować o realności istnienia. Istnieć to jednocześnie wyodrębnić się i zakorzenić. Wyodrębniam się jako niepowtarzalność, ktoś, kto pojawia się w rzeczywistości (i zajmuje w niej miejsce) na swój unikatowy sposób. Równocześnie istnieć to również „być częścią”, „być w relacji” z innym istnieniem.

Istnieję, ponieważ o moim istnieniu decyduje także pewna samoistność. Samoistność – o której tu mowa – oznacza, że jestem podmiotem swojego

własnego życia i tym życiem mogę sam kierować. Oznacza to, że nikt nie decyduje za mnie, ani nikt nie próbuje zdominować mojego życia grożąc mi nieistnieniem, czy też redukując jego znaczenie i ograniczając moje sprawstwo. Przede wszystkim „istnieć” nosi tutaj znamiona pozytywne i afirmatywne. Istnienie jest zatem czymś pożądanym, intencją i pragnieniem, kiedy mojemu istnieniu nikt nie zagraża i mogę w pełni czuć się podmiotem, a więc mieć wpływ na rzeczywistość, realizować swoje plany i swój pomysł na życie.

Nieistnienie z kolei nosiłoby w tym ujęciu znamiona negacji. Istnieć pragniemy, nieistnienie, jak też radykalne ograniczenie jakości i sensu naszego istnienia, wzbudza w nas lęk i niepokój. Możemy również wyobrazić sobie sytuacje, kiedy nieistnienie zyskuje pewną wartość (zob. Różyńska, 2011, 2013, 2014). Nie na tym jednak chcę się skupić, interesują mnie jedynie wybrane konteksty relacji istnienia z nieistnieniem, których zrozumienie przyczynić się może do rozpoznania warunków trwałego pokoju. Chciałbym jednak zaznaczyć, że mówiąc o nieistnieniu, mam na myśli zagrożenie jakie spotkać mnie może ze strony drugiego człowieka, który mój byt traktuje instrumentalnie i reifikująco. Nie mam zatem na myśli sytuacji tychicznych, za sprawą których ciągłość mojego istnienia może zostać przerwana, a na które to sytuacje wpływu nie mam.

Prawo do istnienia – choć wydaje się niezbywalne – wielokrotnie w historii było i wciąż bywa negowane. Ktoś neguje moje istnienie, definiując podmioty, które *żyć swoim życiem* nie mogą, które na *życie swoim życiem* nie zasługują. Ktoś może również zanegować moje istnienie, twierdząc, że nie mam prawa do przeżycia własnego życia, kiedy w modelach reifikujących i instrumentalizujących jestem tylko narzędziem, a nieistnienie staje się umyślnym i bezalternatywnym zagrożeniem².

Jak wspominałem wcześniej, nieistnienie kojarzyć się może ze śmiercią, mimo to, nie trzeba zabijać, żeby niszczyć człowieczeństwo, odbierać człowiekowi godności, pozbawić jego życie sensu. Nieistnienie – w prezentowanym tu przeze mnie szerokim rozumieniu – będzie powiązane z procesami dehumanizacji i przemocy. Dawid Winclaw wymienia wiele spośród takich procesów: animalizacja, demonizacja, biologizacja, mechanizacja i in. (zob. Winclaw, 2016, s. 96 i n.). Oprócz tego wciąż doświadczamy bezpośrednio lub obserwujemy sytuacje, w których ktoś mierzy z karabinu do drugiego człowieka, zrzuca bomby na jego domostwo, rozrywa nożem integralność innego ciała, czy to własnym ciałem zagraża jego nienaruszalności. Te akty również wiążą z kategorią nieistnienia.

² Kontekst instrumentalizacji i urzeczowienia człowieka będę rozwijał w dalszej części artykułu, odwołując się do rozważań o przemocy Michaela Wieviorki.

Moja istotność – czyli wartość i jakość mojego życia – zostaje również zanegowana, kiedy zmuszony jestem zabijać, a dochodzi do tego chociażby w czasie wojny. Można powiedzieć bowiem, że na wojnie to właśnie nieistnienie zostaje dowartościowane. Istnienie i chęć do jego zachowania nakazuje się wtedy lekceważyć, aby znaleźć w sobie „odwagę do nieistnienia” i do unicestwiania istnień.

Zostaję wtedy postawiony w sytuacji naznaczonej fatalizmem, z której nie ma wyjścia. Żeby ocalić swoje istnienie, muszę jednocześnie narazić swoje człowieczeństwo w akcie zabijania. Rozważam tu akt zabijania jako zagrożenie dla osobowościowej i tożsamościowej ciągłości, dostrzegając jednak złożoność okoliczności, w jakich do zabijania może dojść. Człowiek jest w ten akt uwikłany podwójnie: zabijając człowieka i negując swoje człowieczeństwo (określam to uwikłanie jako nieuchronność – w sensie ontologicznym). Spod tej nieuchronności nie mogę się oswobodzić, akty zabijania stają się tym samym nieuniknione, ale dopuszczam się ich często, aby bronić swojego domostwa, rodziny, narodu. Jest to nieodmiennie najtrudniejszy moment w refleksji o nieistnieniu, zabijaniu i wojnie. Mowa tu bowiem o akceptacji nieuniknionej przemocy, o konieczności zabijania, aby zabijanie powstrzymać. Mamy do czynienia z dramatem ludzkiej egzystencji, gdzie zabijania nie możemy potępić jako zła, ale powinniśmy dostrzec jego moralną złożoność, kiedy jest dopuszczone jako forma powstrzymania dziającego się zła. Zabijając agresora, być może powstrzymuję zło większe, niż to, którego sam się dopuszczam. Wówczas zabijanie powiązane będzie z aktami supererogacyjnymi (zob. Kaniowski, 1999) i bohaterskimi, ponieważ swoje człowieczeństwo poświęcam dla innych.

Nie w tym kierunku prowadzę jednak moją refleksję. Pisząc wcześniej o pewnym wyobrażeniu świata, poszukuję takiej jego wizji, gdzie wojna nie będzie możliwa. Zatem pytania, jakie w tym momencie należy zadać, brzmią: Czy możliwy jest taki stan rzeczywistości, w którym nie będę postawiony w sytuacji konieczności zabijania?, Jakie warunki należałoby spełnić, aby taka wizja świata była możliwa, nawet jeżeli w tej chwili możliwą nie jest? Zanim jednak przedstawię – istotne z mojego punktu widzenia – warunki pokoju, chciałbym rozważyć kolejne aspekty nieistnienia, aby pokazać w jaki sposób przemoc, dehumanizacja czy też wojna mogą wpływać na człowieka, w jaki sposób sprowadzają na niego groźbę nieistnienia. Jeśli już przywołana została wojna, to człowiek może być w nią uwikłany przede wszystkim jako sprawca, obserwator i ofiara. Chciałbym się przyjrzeć sprawcy i obserwatorowi, ponieważ groźba sprowadzenia nieistnienia na drugą istotę, dotyczy przede wszystkim ich.

Co znaczy nie istnieć?

Przyglądając się sprawcy, pozwolę sobie na odwołanie i interpretację przykładu literackiego, który dzięki swojej sugestywności pozwoli mi zobrazować, jak zabijanie może wpłynąć na osobowość i percepcję człowieka. Alfa Ndiaye – bohater powieści Davida Diopa *Bratnia dusza* – osuwa się w nieistnienie, redukując swoją egzystencję do pragnienia zemsty. Pragnie pomścić swojego przyjaciela, który zginął na wojnie, a Alfa nie mógł wypełnić ostatniego życzenia umierającego i nie ukrócić jego mąk. Od tego momentu Alfa Ndiaye zakłada „nieładzką” maskę i pod osłoną nocy poluje na swoich wrogów:

Kiedy wychodzę z brzucha ziemi, jestem z wyboru nieładzki. Nie dlatego, że tak mi rozkazał kapitan, ale dlatego, że to przemyślałem i właśnie tego chcę. Gdy wrzeszcząc, wyłaniam się z macicy ziemi, nie zamierzam zabijać wielu wrogów z naprzeciwka, ale zabić jednego, na mój własny sposób, spokojnie, rozważnie, powoli. Kiedy wychodzę z ziemi, z karabinem w lewej i maczetą w prawej dłoni, nie przejmuję się zbyt swoimi kolegami. Już ich nie znam. Padają wokół mnie, twarzą do ziemi, jeden po drugim, a ja biegnę, strzelam i rucam się na ziemię. Biegnę, strzelam i pełzam pod zasiekami (Diop, 2021, s. 20-21).

Alfa zabija inaczej niż jego kompani. Zabija w sposób bardziej intymny, patrząc w oczy wrogowi. Jest z nim w tragicznej bliskości, kiedy nawet własne ciało nie stanowi bariery, bo można ją łatwo naruszyć przebijając je i rozcinając. Wróg jest blisko, ale jednocześnie w całkowitym etycznym oddaleniu. Moralnie – zabijani wrogowie – dla Alfego nie istnieją. Alfego nie wystarczy „tylko” zabijanie. Nie tylko przecież zabili jego przyjaciela, ale przede wszystkim zagarnęli coś, co do nich nie należało. Przywłaszczyli sobie krew i życie Mademby Diopa. I dlatego Alfa Ndiaye również musi odebrać wrogowi coś, co przynależy tylko do niego. Alfa odcina wrogom dłonie:

Posiadacz czwartej dłoni z mojej kolekcji nie zrobił nic złego, jak mi się wydaje [...] Wyczytałem w jego oczach, że to dobry chłopak, dobry syn [...] I oto musiałem natrafić właśnie na niego, jak nieszczęście i śmierć spadają na niewinność. Tak właśnie wygląda wojna (Diop, 2021, s. 62).

Bohater *Bratniej duszy* przechodzi transformację, w sposób, w jaki tylko przemoc może człowieka przekształcać. Dokonując aktów przemocy, nie wykonuje już tylko poleceń. Przemoc, której się dopuszcza, nie jest to już przemoc o charakterze biurokratycznym, ślepe wypełnianie rozkazów. Alfa nie jest już tylko

małym trybikiem w maszynie, w której nikt nie musi brać odpowiedzialności za swoje działania (por. Wieviorka, 2009, s. 153). Staje się odrętwiałym odkupicielem, powiernikiem zawłaszczanej krwi, ataktycznym zabójcą. Ale nie jest jedynie sprawcą przemocy. Jest również ofiarą wojny – przechodzi przez proces podwójnej wiktyimizacji, która przekształca jego świadomość, która odcina go od świata i od więzi z innymi:

Kiedy człowiek zbyt długo jest konfrontowany ze śmiercią, staje w przedsionku śmierci. Śmierć w nim zamieszkuje. Jego ciało się zamyka. Odcina się od świata. Ciało jest samo pośród ludzi. Straciło więzi z bliskimi, których najpierw zamieniono w zwierzęta, a potem zabito (Tochman, 2010, w. 46).

Wojna wdarła się w Alfę. Odarła go z człowieczeństwa, stając się fundamentem jego „nowego życia”. Alfa dopuszcza się przemocy, która – według nomenklatury Michaela Wieviorki – charakterystyczna jest dla anty-podmiotu (*anti-subject*). Nie jest to przemoc: „zdeterminowana społecznie, ponieważ nie odwołują się do niej żadne stosunki społeczne, a nawet stosunki społeczne już nieistniejące, ani też nie jest zdeterminowana kulturowo, gdyż nie można jej tłumaczyć w kategoriach związanych z kulturą jakiejś grupy lub podgrupy [tł. własne – K.R.]” (Wieviorka, 2009, s. 154). Jest to zatem przemoc wybrana przez sprawcę, „osobisty atrybut danej osoby” (Wieviorka, 2009, s. 154). Każdy kolejny, zabity wróg redukuje egzystencję Alfę jedynie do aktów zemsty i zniszczenia: „Moje siedem dłoni to była furia, to była zemsta, to było szaleństwo wojny. Nie chciałem już widzieć furii i szaleństwa wojny” (Diop, 2021, s. 117-118). Apologeta nieistnienia uświadamia sobie nagle – oderwany od frontu, od przymusu zabijania – że zabijanie nie było potrzebne, ale jednak w fatalistyczny sposób nieuchronne. Alfa znalazł się w położeniu setek tysięcy żołnierzy, którzy zbyt długo doświadczały śmierci i brutalności. Alfa Ndiaye staje się „mścicielem krwi”. W jego umyśle zamieszkała wojna. Być może stan jego umysłu trafnie oddają poetyckie słowa Baby Tahera, wędrownego derwisza, urodzonego na początku XI wieku:

W mojej pamięci prócz smutku nic już nie rośnie,
w moim ogrodzie prócz rozpacz nic nie rośnie.
Moje puste serce jest niczym jałowa pustynia,
na którym nawet ziele beznadziei nie rośnie
(Baba Taher, 2013, s. 110).

Niezwykle istotną kategorię „mściciela krwi” Rafał Włodarczyk wprowadza w obszar rozważań pedagogicznych, uczulając nas na niebezpieczeństwo

wiecznie odradzających się i powracających mścicieli: „dopóki krążą mściele krwi, a krążą, bo stale dochodzi do powolnych i niewidzialnych morderstw, niewidzialnych również na skutek socjalizacji w przyjętej za zwyczajną przemoc, jesteśmy oskarżeni” (Włodarczyk, 2021, s. 250-251). Włodarczyk zwraca uwagę, że przemoc (można również powiedzieć, że zdolność i gotowość do wojny) nie ma charakteru atawistycznego, instynktownego, jest raczej efektem socjalizacji w przemoc i dlatego wciąż „grozi nam błędne koło nieumyślnych morderców i mścicieli krwi” (Włodarczyk, 2021, s. 255). Ważne w refleksji Włodarczyka jest to, że my sami oczekujemy, że ktoś rolę odkupiciela na siebie przyjmie, pragniemy, żeby ktoś dokonał zemsty w naszym imieniu. „Mściciel krwi” jest po prostu kolejną rolą społeczną, umieszczoną w sferze obowiązku względem wspólnoty, którą trzeba podjąć tak, jak bohater *Bratniej duszy*. Mściciel to ktoś, w kim miejsce wiedzy zostało już zajęte. Zajęte przez wojnę, chęć zemsty i nienawiść. Podobny stan Edmond Jabès opisuje następująco:

Aby zmiażdżyć naszą twarz, mają twarz stwardniałą od nienawiści.
Aby zatopić nasze oczy, mają oczy zalane nienawiścią.
Aby zatkać nasze usta, mają usta wypełnione nienawiścią.
Aby zdławić naszą pierś, mają pierś wezbraną nienawiścią.
Aby zgiąć nasze kolana, mają kolana naoliwione nienawiścią;
gdyż tylko człowiecze ciało może zniszczyć harmonijne ciało innego
człowieka, z wszystkimi możliwościami i tajemnicami jego mięśni i skóry
(Jabès, 2004, s. 124).

Jednak „mściciel krwi” wierzy też w ważność i zasadność swojej misji. Wierzy w to, że krew zawłaszczona, musi zostać odzyskana. „Mściciel krwi” dopuszcza się zabijania, wierząc, że powstrzyma większe zło, zapobiegnie większej zbrodni. W wielu przypadkach taka interpretacja będzie zasadna, choćby w kontekście wojny obronnej. Obrońca stosuje przemoc fundamentalną wynikającą z konieczności, a nie z destrukcyjnych popędów, czy też przyjemności sprawiania innym bólu – w odróżnieniu od tej sadystycznej. Jest to przemoc „kogoś, kto czuje się zagrożony w swojej istocie” (por. Wieviorka, 2009, s. 155-156). Michael Wieviorka wyjaśnia przemoc fundamentalną w sposób następujący:

Ta przemoc i odpowiadający jej wymiar podmiotu nie ma więc nic wspólnego z agresją czy sadyzmem. Pojawia się, gdy jednostka czuje, słusznie lub niesłusznie (nie ma to znaczenia), że znajduje się w sytuacji zagrożenia egzystencjalnego lub wielkiego niebezpieczeństwa [...] Fundamentalna przemoc jest wyrazem niezgody na zmiażdżenie lub zanegowanie wyłaniającego się ja. Przemoc ta odpowiada podmiotowi, który nie jest

jeszcze zdolny do bycia aktorem, a nie podmiotowi zdefiniowanemu przez utracone lub dopiero wyłonięte znaczenie. To podmiot, który musi, w jakiś elementarnym sensie, po prostu zachować swoją zdolność do bycia. Przemoc fundamentalna jest pierwotnym wyrazem podmiotu, który nie potrzebuje nauki zawodu, socjalizacji ani wpisania w jakąś kulturę, zanim się wyłoni [tł. własne – K.R.] (Wieviorka, 2009, s. 157).

Zagrożeniem, jakie wynika z obcowania ze śmiercią i z zabijaniem, jest ryzyko przejścia od przemocy fundamentalnej, czyli tej najbardziej podstawowej, która służy nam do obrony własnego życia i życia naszych bliskich, do przemocy instrumentalnej, sadystycznej, która neguje nasze człowieczeństwo.

„Przygnębiony obserwator”

Nie każdy z nas przyjmie jednak rolę „mściciela krwi”. Przyglądamy się bowiem zabijaniu, w relacjach „na żywo” jako „przygnębieni obserwatorzy”, którzy żadnego wpływu na umasowioną brutalność nie mają. „Przygnębieni obserwatorzy” często stają się świadkami wydarzeń, które z istnienia czynią zdarzenie błahe. Brutalność i wojny, które obserwujemy, zajmują stałe miejsce w naszej codzienności. Żeby jednak przygnębienie poczuć, wojna i groźba nieistnienia musiały się urzeczywistnić niebezpiecznie blisko, bo przecież zawsze miały miejsce, jednak można powiedzieć, że w bezpiecznym (geograficznym, psychicznym i etycznym) dystansie.

Obserwujemy zdarzenia, w których życia wykorzystuje się jedynie jako narzędzia polityczne, w rękach niszczycieli. Niszczyciela, który zdaje się kategorią antropologicznie i filozoficznie nieobecna³, można określić jako tego, który mając dostęp do władzy – nieważne w jakim jej wymiarze – i narzędzi destrukcji wykorzystuje je do czysto instrumentalnych celów – tak jak anty-podmiot Wieviorki – głównie zaś po to, aby podkreślić swoją dominację nad innymi. Przyglądamy się wojnom i czystkom, którym początek dają często decyzje niszczycieli.

Natomiast bycie obserwatorem, to też bycie uczestnikiem i sprawcą. Wiele badań wskazuje na problematyczność i niejednoznaczność roli obserwatora (zob. Jakimowicz, 2021; Janicka, 2018; Kowalska-Leder, 2020; Sendyka, 2018, 2019; Szczepan, 2020). Raul Hilberg wprowadzając do badań nad Zagładą kategorię *bystandera*, widział w nim współwinnego, który biernie przygląda się tragedii, nie podejmując żadnych działań powstrzymujących (zob. Hilberg, 2007).

³ Zwrócenie uwagi na tę kategorię sam zawdzięczam dr. Michałowi Paluchowi.

Określenie *bystander* było zatem oskarżycielskie. Justyna Kowalska-Leder zwraca uwagę, że: „W polu semantycznym słowa *bystander*, przetłumaczonego na polski jako »świadek«, mieszczą się znaczenia wskazujące na brak zaangażowania, na usytuowanie obok wydarzeń przemocowych, niejasną wiedzę o ich przebiegu” (Kowalska-Leder, 2020, s. 794). Roma Sendyka zauważa z kolei, że podmiot skopiczny może występować w różnych rolach: obserwator, patrzący, widz, gap (zob. Sendyka, 2018). Jednak tylko rola obserwatora wiąże się z autonomią i pełnią władz poznawczych:

Obserwator podejmuje czynność uważnego, wnikliwego postrzegania. Definicje ujmują go jako postać zdystansowaną, racjonalną, nastawioną badawczo, analitycznie: naukowiec badającego w zaplanowany sposób dane zjawisko, cierpliwie, systematycznie i długo. Obserwator rejestruje zmiany, próbuje interpretować zbierane dane. Z tą pozycją łączy się więc najwyższy [...] stopień upodmiotowienia: obserwator jest sprawczy, jego kompetencje poznawcze są najwyższe, jest godny zaufania. Jego scjentystyczne nastawienie wyklucza afektywne zaangażowanie. Wtedy więc, gdy określamy postronnych Zagłady jej obserwatorami, mamy na myśli tych, którzy widzieli, rozumieli to, co widzą, potrafili rejestrować i interpretować wydarzenia, za cenę jednak dystansowania się od obiektów obserwacji i wychładzania możliwych odruchów empatii (Sendyka, 2018, s. 128).

Dysponując umiejętnością interpretowania wydarzeń, obserwator może się wycofać, ułatwia mu to dystans pomiędzy nim a obserwowanym istnieniem. Dave Grossman zauważa, że nie chodzi tylko o dystans fizyczny, który wydaje się tym najbardziej oczywistym (zob. Grossman, 2010, s. 234 i n.). Dystans fizyczny, rozumiany też w perspektywie geograficznej, przynosi obserwatorowi ulgę, czuje się on zwolniony z odpowiedzialności za to, co dzieje się w innej części świata, a jemu samemu nie zagraża. Jednak oprócz oddzielających nas granic fizycznych, istnieją również i inne. Inny status ekonomiczny, inne systemy wartości i moralności, inna kultura i jej przekazy, inna religia. Wszystkie te dystanse dostarczają ulgi obserwatorowi, są jak progi i drzwi, przez które żadna tragedia nie przejdzie. Dzięki ich istnieniu możemy oddzielić świat wewnętrzny (nasz najbliższy, przeżywany bezpośrednio w bliskości miejsc i istnień) od zewnętrznego (ten zdystansowany, intelektualnie i emocjonalnie odległy). Dystans pozwala nam porzucić etyczne zobowiązanie.

Jednakże Alain Badiou zdaje się sugerować, że dystans nie jest wystarczający, aby nie podjąć działania. Francuski filozof zwraca uwagę na istotny aspekt samego aktu obserwacji, który pozwala zniwelować dystans. Sama obserwacja

jest już bowiem pewną formą uczestnictwa w zdarzeniu. Zdarzenie, ponieważ jest obserwowane: „zostaje przez sam oznaczający je gest sprowadzone do wspólnego losu” (Badiou, 2010, s. 212). Można zatem powiedzieć, że tak rozumiana obserwacja jest aktem etycznym, ponieważ jeżeli sprowadzona jest do wspólnego losu i jako taka interpretowana, to wymaga dochowania wierności. Podmiot obserwujący jest w zasadzie podmiotem aktywnym, który obserwowane zdarzenie uprawomocnia, dokonuje jego interpretacji i na tej podstawie podejmuje działania. Badiou pokazuje, że akt obserwacji jest początkiem działania etycznego, w którego trakcie podmiot musi rozpoznać cierpienie, a „rozpoznając cierpienie, rozumie, że należy skrócić je przy użyciu wszelkich dostępnych środków” (Badiou, 2009, s. 27).

Oznaczałoby to, że dystans między obserwującym a obserwowanym nie ma znaczenia, w rozumieniu, że można go zniwelować. Jednak pojawić się mogą wątpliwości, ponieważ już sama etyka bliskości (a więc troska o istnienia, z którymi łączy nas taka, czy inna forma bliskości) wydaje się działaniem dla człowieka trudnym⁴. Przyjrzyjmy się zatem jakich warunków wymaga bliskość, aby mogła być podstawą działania etycznego. Bliskość będzie oznaczać działanie umiejscowione w etycznym „tu-oto”, co wymaga z kolei bliskości imienia. Józef Tischner zauważa:

Akt przedstawienia siebie, jeśli jest dokonany swobodnie i bez zakłamania (a takim się tu zajmujemy), jest integralnym składnikiem dialogu z drugim i tak właśnie winien być również teoretycznie potraktowany. Wyłania się on „ze mnie” jako propozycja zaadresowana wprost do drugiego. Propozycja ta ma charakter propozycji rozumiejącej: mówię drugiemu, jak rozumiem siebie i oczekuję, że drugi będzie mnie rozumiał tak samo. Zakładam, że wiem, kim jestem. Zakładam, że drugi o tym nie wie, lecz pragnie wiedzieć. Przedstawiając się, odpowiadam na jego oczekiwanie. Podaję mu w tym celu moje imię i dodaję, kim jestem: „jestem nauczycielem”, „jestem lekarzem”, „jestem studentem”. To, kim jestem, stwarza szczególną płaszczyznę obcowania między mną a drugim: jestem nauczycielem, lekarzem, studentem dla drugiego i wobec drugiego. Nie sam siebie uczyniłem tym, kim jestem, lecz dokonało się to dzięki obecności drugich. Przedstawiając się oczekuję, że drugi uzna we mnie to, „kim jestem”, jak również uwierzy, że i ja jestem gotów uznać w nim to, kim jest. Relacja wzajemnego uznania stwarza możliwość wzajemnego zrozumienia (Tischner, 1977, s. 71).

⁴ Używając określeń etyka bliskości i etyka dystansu, nie chodzi mi o tworzenie żadnych nowych etyk, lecz o podkreślenie kontekstu, w jakim przychodzi nam podejmować akty etyczne.

Podanie swojego imienia jest akceptacją i oczekiwaniem akceptacji. Podaję swoje imię, ponieważ chcę skrócić dystans pomiędzy mną a Innym. Podanie imienia jest jak otwarcie drzwi – nic już nas nie rozdziela. Kiedy się przedstawiam (i Inny mi się przedstawia) nie ma już między nami anonimowości. Przedstawienie się samo w sobie jest stawianiem oporu, wyrażeniem niezgody. Dzieląc się imieniem, sprzeciwiam się anonimowości i otwieram się na bliskość. Podział na wewnętrzne i zewnętrzne staje się utrudniony (choć wcióż jest możliwy). Już nie mogę powiedzieć, że los drugiego mnie nie obchodzi, ponieważ znam jego imię, a zatem jego krzywda jest teraz krzywdą wyrządzaną konkretnemu istnieniu, którego ja sam jestem świadomy. Podanie imienia stwarza możliwość do zaistnienia etycznego zobowiązania, ponieważ kiedy wzajemnie się sobie przedstawiamy, łączy nas szczególny rodzaj relacji, jaką jest relacja „wobec”:

Słowo „wobec” jest podstawowym określeniem stosunku człowieka do człowieka, a szerzej rzecz ujmując stosunku bytu świadomego do bytu świadomego. Być „wobec” to nie znaczy być „obok” ani być „w pobliżu”. Drzewo rośnie *obok* drzewa, ale nie jest „wobec” drzewa. Znaczenie słowa „wobec” domaga się wzajemności: patrzę i jestem widziany, troszczę się i jestem przedmiotem troski, myślę o kimś i ktoś o mnie myśli. Nie muszą to być akty widzenia, zatroskania i myślenia *pleno sensu*. Aby „być wobec”, wystarczy jakaś forma przytomności. Jestem „przytomny” temu, że drugi jest, chociaż aktualnie zajmuję się czymś innym. Słowo „wobec” wskazuje zarazem na jakąś przestrzeń: być „wobec” znaczy być dostatecznie blisko, by nie zgubić drugiego z pola widzenia, ale zarazem być na tyle daleko, by go nie zatracić w bezpośrednim „używaniu” (*jouissance* E. Levinasa). Wnosi to ze sobą wymiar czasowy: być „wobec” znaczy być obecnym w teraźniejszości, która może się jednak rozciągnąć w wieczność (Tischner, 1977, s. 78).

Ważne jest, aby rozróżnić pomiędzy byciem „obok”, byciem „w pobliżu”, a byciem „wobec”. Obok staje obserwator, ten emocjonalnie wycofany, który nie musi się w Innego angażować i w zasadzie nie czuje się zobowiązany do zachowania wierności. Obok jestem, kiedy niczego nie obiecuję i nie jestem związany żadną obietnicą, a chodzi tu o obietnicę opieki, troski, obecności i wierności właśnie. Będąc „obok”, wciąż mogę krzywdzić, ranić i zabijać. Nie jest to bowiem typ relacji, który powstrzymywałby mnie od przemocy. Będąc „w pobliżu”, mogę pozostać anonimowy, skupiony na sobie. Byłem „w pobliżu” jakichś wydarzeń, czyli w zasadzie nie byłem w nie zaangażowany, nie przekroczyłem siebie, nie wyszedłem poza drzwi i próg swojej wsobności. Byłem w pobliżu ciebie, czyli nie w bliskości, a w stanie, w którym twoją bliskość mogę zawiesić i zignorować.

Bycie „wobec” jest postawą odmienną. Wymaga bliskości i bezpośredniości, czyli sytuacji, w której dystans moralny może zostać zniwelowany.

Bliskość bywa trudna, a akt etyczny z niej wynikający może być zbyt dużym obciążeniem emocjonalnym i psychicznym. Nie znosi to jednak pytania o to, co z tymi, którzy cierpią – i ich cierpienia jestem świadomy – jednak dzieli nas nie jeden dystans, ale wiele różnych dystansów? Czy powinienem objąć troską ich istnienie? Czy dystans, który nas dzieli, znosi moją odpowiedzialność, skoro można go zniwelować?

Czy tragedia na drugim końcu świata, jest mniej istotna niż ta, którą obserwuję tuż obok? Jeśli rozpoznaję w sobie zobowiązanie, aby troszczyć się o każde cierpiące istnienie, czy nie przekracza to moich etycznych zdolności, nie powodując, że każdy akt etyczny staje się niemożliwy, a zatem jedynie wybiórcza odpowiedzialność stwarza przestrzeń do realnej troski o inne istnienia, które rzeczywiście mogą swoją troską objąć? Czy etyczna wybiórczość jest zaprzeczeniem etyczności, czy raczej etyczną koniecznością?

Edukacja bez progów i drzwi

Powróćmy do edukacji, której przychodzi funkcjonować w kontekście rozmaitych zagrożeń, w kontekście toczących się na świecie wojen i konfliktów, jak również w kontekście moralnego dystansu i bliskości. Wspomniany kontekst zawiera w sobie aspekt unieważniania istotności życia, gdzie w sferze obowiązku pozostaje gotowość do zabijania i ponoszenia ostatecznej ofiary, uznając jednak moralną złożoność takich aktów. Równocześnie w kodeksach nie znajdujemy prawa do niezabijania ani żadnej, niezbywalnej gwarancji istnienia.

Kiedy grozi nam nieistnienie, a w zasadzie, kiedy to zagrożenie jest wystarczająco blisko, abyśmy zaczęli się go obawiać, kiedy wojna nie jest tylko odległym wspomnieniem, tylko realnym scenariuszem – nie jedynie dla wybranych rejonów globu, ale dla całego świata – pojawiają się argumenty o naszym nieprzygotowaniu na zagrożenia, w tym też o niepraktyczności edukacji. Argumenty, które sugerują, że zaniedbana jest edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa, że jest realizowana w lekceważeniu realnych przeciw zagrożeń. Justyna Martuszevska stwierdza: „Zbyt mało uwagi poświęca się [...] przygotowaniu praktycznemu na lekcjach edukacji dla bezpieczeństwa. Zachowania dotyczące ćwiczeń obrony cywilnej (ćwiczenia schronowe) można realizować już na podstawowym poziomie kształcenia w klasach ósmych” (Martuszevska, 2021, s. 24). Spośród wielu propozycji na poprawę efektywności edukacji – w perspektywie odporności społeczeństwa na zagrożenia – autorka wymienia: umiejętność robienie filtrów

do wody, lokalizacji schronów przeciwlotniczych, czy też podstawową obsługę broni palnej i ćwiczenia ze strzelania (por. Martuszevska, 2021, s. 30). Trudno podważyć przydatność pewnych umiejętności jak: rozpalenie ogniska, filtrowanie wody, udzielanie pierwszej pomocy. Wydaje się jednak, że są to umiejętności cenione, kiedy zagrożenie już się urzeczywistniło i które mają pomóc to zagrożenie przetrwać.

Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa jest jednak zagadnieniem odmiennym od edukacji dla pokoju. Edukację dla pokoju postrzegam nie tylko jako przestrzeń reagowania na zagrożenia i przygotowania się na nie, co oznaczałoby pewną nieuchronność ich nadejścia. Jest to przestrzeń, która daje – chociażby nikłą – nadzieję na inny świat, w którym część zagrożeń da się zniwelować, budując zaplecze intelektualne i egzystencjalne, które opierać się będzie na współczuciu, poczuciu jedności, łagodności, powstrzymywaniu cierpienia. Zatem na tych aspektach funkcjonowania w świecie, które stanowić powinny istotne składniki pokojowego współistnienia, niepozbawionego jednak społecznych i politycznych napięć.

Edukację traktuję tym samym jako przestrzeń spotkania i dialogu – to właśnie umiejętność bycia razem poprzez dialogiczną relację, uznaję za jeden z podstawowych atrybutów pokoju – w której może dojść do prawdziwej rozmowy. Jej warunkiem jest to, aby:

każdy uważał swego partnera za tego, właśnie tego człowieka. Postrzegam go, postrzegam, że jest on inny, istotowo inny niż ja, w ten określony sposób, jemu tylko właściwy i niepowtarzalny [...] i akceptuję człowieka, którego postrzegam, tak że mogę z całą powagą skierować do niego, właśnie do niego, moje słowa (Buber, 1992, s. 145).

Taką przestrzeń tworzyć mogą różne instytucje, placówki, organizacje, w tym edukacyjne. Tischner stwierdza, że: „Przestrzeń jest tutaj przeciwieństwem chaosu, pierwotną zasadą ładu i harmonii współistnienia” (Tischner, 1977, s. 76).

Refleksje Tischnera i Bubera można zinterpretować w ten sposób, że przestrzeń spotkania pozwala nam się poznać, zrozumieć swoje motywacje, swoje pochodzenie i swoje kultury; zniwelować moralny, kulturowy i każdy inny rodzaj dystansu, który nas dzieli. Chodzi zatem też o rozpoznanie mechanizmów powstawania dystansów. Bo warto pamiętać, że: „Rzeczywistość nie tworzy całości ani jedności, jest w niej wielość” (Skarga, 1992, s. 48). Podobnie zresztą uważał Tischner: „Prawdziwa wspólnota osób nie polega na przekreślaniu różnic, lecz na ich uznawaniu. Kto pyta, pozwala być. Kto odpowiada, uznaje wartość tego, kto go zapytał” (Tischner, 2004, s. 152). Doświadczenie nie ma zatem formy

skończonej, nie jest totalnością, ale różnicą i różnorodnością, oznacza to, że mamy do czynienia z procesem, w który nieustannie jesteśmy zaangażowani. Edukacja właśnie daje nam możliwości otwierania się na różnice. Umożliwia związkiwanie i mieszania się ze sobą rozmaitych zdarzeń, doświadczeń, dziedzin, dyscyplin, głosów i idei. Zatem edukacja – tak, jak ją tu przedstawiam wraz z procesem samokształcenia – oznacza przybliżanie, niwelowanie dystansów, w tym dystansu moralnego. Można powiedzieć, że chodzi o przybliżanie świata i istnień, które w nim odnajdujemy. Z pełną świadomością ograniczeń i obciążeń, z jakimi wiąże się taka praktyka.

Przybliżanie to umiejętność *znajdowania-w-sobie*, ale również zdolność do *znajdowanie-siebie-poza-sobą*. Mogę *znajdować-siebie-poza-sobą* w przestrzeni fizycznej, w miejscu, które znam, albo w którym czuję się sobą. W miejscu, o którym mogę mówić, że jest moje, „czując się w nim jak autochton, u siebie” (Skarga, 1992, s. 49). Mogę też *znajdować-siebie-poza-sobą* w innym istnieniu. W uzmysłowieniu sobie, że ludzkie struktury świadomościowe i intelektualne, emocjonalne i etyczne są do siebie zbliżone⁵. *Znajdowanie-siebie-poza-sobą* to w zasadzie nakaz, radykalna negacja nieistnienia, nakaz oporu przeciwko nieistnieniu zadawanemu intencjonalnie i z premedytacją. Dlatego też *znajdować-siebie-poza-sobą*, to czuć się umniejszanym, czuć się nieistotnym wtedy, kiedy poniża się innych, umniejsza się ich znaczenie, kiedy się ich uciska i traktuje, jakby byli gorsi (zob. Tutu, 1999, s. 31). Maciej Karpiński podkreśla zaś, że:

każda rzecz (cokolwiek istnieje) jest w swoim istnieniu, z konieczności, zwrócona ku czemuś (resp. komuś), wobec czego się ujawnia i z czym nawiązuje kontakt. Innymi słowy, byt niejako domaga się adresata, bez którego istnienie nie jest strukturalnie możliwe. Gdyby miało być inaczej, potrafilibyśmy zbudować pojęcie rzeczy bezwzględnie niejawnej (zakrytej, izolowanej) (Karpiński, 2011, s. 15).

Można przy tym stwierdzić, że samotny byt wciąż pozostaje istnieniem wartościowym. Erich Fromm uważał nawet, że „umiejętność przebywania samotnie jest warunkiem zdolności kochania” (Fromm, 2012, s. 113), a miłość własna „jest nierozzerwalnie związana z miłością każdego innego człowieka” (Fromm, 2012, s. 66). Adresatem istnienia dla samotnego bytu jest on sam – w procesie autoodniesienia – ale jego samotność może być doświadczeniem

⁵ Pewnym zaskoczeniem jest dla mnie to, że *znajdowanie-siebie-poza-sobą* to również *znajdowanie poza człowiekiem*, w istnieniu nie-ludzkim. Tego wątku nie będę w ramach niniejszego tekstu szerzej omawiał.

wartościowym również dla innych. Tym samym – kierując się intuicją Fromma – może powiedzieć, że samotność jest też zdefiniowaniem relacji z Innym, a zatem jej adresatem jest nie tylko Ja, ale również inne istnienie. Karpiński wydaje się zatem mieć w tym kontekście rację. Każde istnienie, każda jego forma, jest z konieczności zwrócona ku komuś. Tischner stwierdza też, że każde bycie jest z kimś związane, lecz aby owo związanie sobie uświadomić, czasami potrzebne jest pośrednictwo:

Być z kimś i być bez kogoś znaczy: być z kimś „związanym” za pośrednictwem czynnika trzeciego, wiążącego. Czynnikiem tym może być nadjeżdżający pociąg, może być utwór muzyczny. Zasadą wiązania jest tutaj uczestnictwo. Formy uczestnictwa mogą być rozmaite: stałe lub chwilowe, przypadkowe lub konieczne, mniej lub bardziej powierzchowne (Tischner, s. 1977, s. 79).

Tym czynnikiem wiążącym, może być – i w moim przekonaniu powinna być – edukacja, która daje możliwość obcowania z różnicą, zakłada obecność innych i prowadzenie z nimi dialogu, a więc pozostawanie w relacji, bo towarzyszy jej także świadomość tego, jakim niebezpieczeństwem może być tej relacji zerwanie. Mowa tu o edukacji bez symbolicznych progów i drzwi, bez dzielenia na zewnętrzne i wewnętrzne, na swojość i obcość. Chodzi o edukację, która będzie działaniem przeciw antagonizowaniu relacji społecznych i wartościowaniu życia, której istotną treścią będzie troska o inne istnienia.

Troska ta może mieć różne wymiary i różne oblicza, nie wymaga bezpośredniej bliskości, chociaż ta z pewnością ułatwia podjęcie zobowiązania etycznego. Jeśli jednak Grossman pisze o różnych rodzajach dystansu, to być może warto w ten sam sposób potraktować samą bliskość? Jeśli bliskości fizycznej nie ma, to warto poszukać bliskości społecznej, moralnej, intelektualnej i potraktować je jako podstawę do podjęcia etycznego zobowiązania. Dystans zatem nie wystarczy, aby porzucić odpowiedzialność za cierpiącą istotę, ponieważ dysponujemy kompetencjami, umożliwiającymi jego zniesienie. Jak twierdzi Maria Reut: „mamy oto podjąć pewne ryzyko związane z *naruszeniem naszego spokoju*, z zakłóceniem naszego bezpiecznego oddalenia, z zakwestionowaniem oczywistości przedmiotowo-podmiotowej relacji” (Reut, 2021, s. 35). John Silk twierdzi, że można podejmować etyczne działania „na odległość”, obejmować ich zasięgiem większą ilość zbiorowości. Będą to działania, które mogą dać początek nowym instytucjom i nowym rodzajom relacji (por. Silk, 1998). Ma to zastosowanie również w odniesieniu do dialogu. Małgorzata Przanowska twierdzi, że „wszystko co jest, rozmawia ze sobą, uczestnicząc w sieci relacji, wzajemnych powiązań,

których celem jest działanie i odpowiedź na nie, akcja i reakcja, bycie w łączności, relacji dialogicznej” (Przanowska, 2018, s. 148). Dostrzeżenie cierpiącej istoty można potraktować jako formę reakcji, odpowiedzi na zagadnięcie, gdzie pytaniem byłoby samo cierpienie i często bezradność cierpiącego. Zatem relacja dialogiczna to relacja, w której występuje „działanie i odpowiedź na nie”, a odpowiedź może mieć miejsce nawet w przypadku istnienia dystansu, nie wymaga bowiem słów (por. Buber, 1992, s. 209).

Przypomnijmy raz jeszcze figurę „przygnębitego obserwatora”, któremu przypisuję autonomię poznawczą. Wciąż może on zrezygnować, skapitulować i nie podjąć zobowiązania etycznego, tym samym tylko obserwować zniszczenie, ale może też podjąć działanie, dokonać aktu etycznego. Jak twierdzi Andrei Pleśu: „Akt etyczny to wyraz działania człowieka w doraźnym stanie świata, jest to zatem jakiś rodzaj moralnej ofensywy” (Pleśu, 2019, s. 140). „Moralna ofensywa” to w mojej interpretacji praktyka przybliżania, realizowana w codzienności, dlatego wiązać się musi z pewną czujnością, uważnością. Włodarczyk twierdzi: „Trzeba porównywać, ważyć, myśleć, być czujnym, bo jest się odpowiedzialnym za bliskich i dalekich, w tym nieumyślne morderstwa, stąd za sprawiedliwość wobec widm ofiar i mścicieli” (Włodarczyk, 2021, s. 251). Zarówno Pleśu, jak i Włodarczyk zachęcają do samodzielnego interpretowania świata.

Wyobrażenia moralna

Podsumowując dotychczasowe rozważania, należy stwierdzić, że jedną z kluczowych umiejętności pokojowych jest niwelowanie dystansów – przybliżanie. Praktykę przybliżania traktuję tutaj jako działanie etyczne. Oznacza ona branie odpowiedzialności za bliskich i dalekich. Jak zatem taką postawę w sobie rozwijać, czy też inicjować? Wymaga ona nie tylko znajomości kodeksów moralnych, ale oznacza także zdolność i potrzebę samodzielnego interpretowania rzeczywistości. Andrei Pleśu podkreśla, że praktykowanie cnót wymaga uzdolnień. Jeżeli w taki sposób potraktujemy etykę, będzie to oznaczało, że postawy etyczne można w sobie rozwijać. Jest zatem etyczność jednocześnie pewną umiejętnością, czy jak twierdzi Pleśu – rozwijając ten wątek – talentem:

Talent moralny to zdolność do przekształcenia zakazu etycznego w postępowanie wolne, ale stosowne. Jest to przejście od ścisłej negatywności dekalogu (nie zrobisz tego!) do afirmatywnego aktu etycznego, przystosowanego do określonych okoliczności. Talent moralny to zręczność, polegająca na stosowaniu „norm neutralnych” w nieskończenie zmiennym kontekście codziennych moralnych rozważań. Mieć talent moralny to tyle,

co mieć intuicję *konkretu etycznego*, różnego od *ogólnej* ważności praw; to, ewentualnie, zdradzać literę prawa, by pozostać wiernym jego duchowi (Pleśu, 2019, s. 78-79).

Rumuński filozof zwraca uwagę, że wybory etyczne muszą być dostosowane do zmiennych okoliczności – co zauważył już Arystoteles w *Etyce Nikomachejskiej*. Dlatego wiązać się powinny ze stałym namysłem i swobodą, która nie będzie oznaczała dowolności, ale samodzielność i zaufanie do własnych decyzji. Będzie to równocześnie powiązane z ciężarem ponoszenia konsekwencji. Uczenie będzie się tu realizowało poprzez umiejętność przywoływania swoich doświadczeń i zdobytej wiedzy, aby dokonać wyboru i podjąć zobowiązanie etyczne, a czasami zdradzić właśnie „literę prawa”. Takie nastawienie Pleśu nazywa „subtelnością wiedzy”:

subtelna wiedza polegająca na umieszczaniu na pierwszym planie, gdy zajdzie taka potrzeba, jakiegoś obszaru etyczności, a spychaniu na drugi plan innego, po to, by następnie, w innym kontekście i przed inną publicznością, na pierwszy plan wysuwając to, co zostało zepchnięte na drugi, i odwrotnie – wszystko to może być czymś więcej niż tylko niekonsekwencją czy też oportunizmem etycznym (Pleśu, 2019, s. 79).

Widzimy zatem, że postępowanie etyczne wymaga pewnej zręczności, która wiązać się będzie z umiejętnością przekształcanie zakazów w akty afirmatywne. Jeśli rozpatrujemy działanie etyczne w kontekście dystansu i bliskości, to owa zręczność będzie oznaczała zdolność dostrzegania mechanizmów tworzenia dystansów moralnych i umiejętność ich niwelowanie. Co pomaga rozwijać takie umiejętności? Wydaje się, że potrzebna jest wyobraźnia, czy też fantazja moralna (zob. Górniewicz, 1988; Lederach, 2005; Read, 2021). Aby wyobrazić sobie dramatyczne, czy też tragiczne położenie Innego, muszą doświadczać jego istnienia, a w zasadzie doświadczać złożoności i wyjątkowości różnych istnień, aby: „Podjąć bliźniego dla samej jego obecności, w imię jego własnego istnienia, tylko za to, co reprezentuje” (Jabès, 2017, s. 19). Martin Buber mówi z kolei o „realnej fantazji”, kiedy to „wyobrażam sobie to, co myśli, przeżywa czy czuje inny człowiek, i to nie jako oderwaną treść, lecz właśnie w rzeczywistości drugiego człowieka, to znaczy jako jego proces życiowy” (Buber, 1992, s. 136).

„Doświadczać istnienia drugiego człowieka” oznaczać będzie, że towarzyszę mu w jego życiu, biorę udział w jego życiu, jestem w nie zaangażowany w mniejszy czy większy sposób, moje działania mają na Innego wpływ, ale również jego wybory oddziałują na mnie, chociażby poprzez wzbudzanie we mnie pewnych reakcji poznawczych i emocjonalnych. Fantazja moralna – jeśli jest rozwijana –

może zatem pomóc w zniwelowaniu dystansu – i to uznają za jej główną funkcję – który oddziela mnie od Innego. Maria Reut twierdzi w tym kontekście, że: „Bez wyobraźni [...] nie będę w stanie rozumieć sytuacji innego człowieka, rozumieć innej kultury, odmiennej postawy” (Reut, 2021, s. 41). Rolę wyobraźni moralnej można jeszcze mocniej podkreślić, zwracając uwagę na zawarte w niej zarówno poszerzanie (czyli zdolność wyobrażania sobie kogoś lub czegoś, w tym sytuacji etycznych), jak i ograniczanie (samokwestionowanie – jak nazywa to Reut – czyli dopuszczanie swojej omyłności, prawo do mylenia się):

Właśnie wyobraźnia chronić mnie może (choć nie jest to proces samoistny) przed nadużyciami pośpiesznego, upodabniającego rozumienia. Nigdy bowiem nie będę owym innym, nie będę dosłownie na jego miejscu, nie mogę więc za niego (nawet gdy go rozumiem) decydować. Ta ważna hermeneutyczna zasada, dotycząca rozumienia (nieprzypisywania sobie możliwości rozumienia innego lepiej niż on sam siebie rozumie), staje się nieodłączna od rozważania etycznego problemu podmiotowej wolności i odmienności (Reut, 2021, s. 41).

Niezwykle istotne jest to, co Reut zauważa. Mianowicie, że wyobraźnia może chronić mnie przed nadużyciami, przed decydowaniem za Innego, przed podejmowaniem za niego wyborów, a tym samym pozbawiania go wolności. Jednak „nie jest to proces samoistny”. Wymaga praktyki, koncentracji i woli, a tym samym wymaga edukacji, w tym również samokształcenia.

Z punktu widzenia rozważań o pokoju, istotne jest, aby podkreślić, że praktyka przybliżania nie musi realizować się w sytuacjach wyjątkowych, nadzwyczajnych, czy też, kiedy zagrożenie już się urzeczywistniło. Zakładam bowiem, że niwelowanie dystansów utrudnia powstawanie konfliktów i zagrożeń. Zatem przybliżanie, to działanie, które praktykujemy na co dzień. Codziennność jest bowiem strukturą daną nam naocznie, do bezpośredniego doświadczenia. W świecie życia codziennego spotkać można Innego i to właśnie zaangażowanie w codzienność łączy uczestniczących w niej bezustannie ludzi.

To poprzez codzienne przestrzenie [...] – w domach, dzielnicach, kawiarniach, na spacerach po miejscowym parku, w lokalnych sklepach – to bardziej zniuansowane rozumienie różnicy i podobieństwa [...] jest wytwarzane. Te przyziemne przestrzenie umożliwiają i wymagają zmian w postrzeganiu Ja i Innych, pobudzając ustalone dyskursy o odmienności i antycypując nowe relacje społeczne: są to prozaiczne miejsca, w których ludzie odkrywają siebie nawzajem jako wieloaspektowych, złożonych i współzależnych (Askins, 2015, s. 476).

Przybliżanie będzie następować w domenach codzienności, w których działania spektakularne i heroiczne zdarzają się rzadko. To z codziennych sytuacji, drobnych życiowych konstelacji, małych, rutynowych wyborów powinniśmy stwarzać etycznie istotne zdarzenia:

Wysunięty przez „minimalizm” etyczny imperatyw zachowań, który mamy na względzie, nie obejmuje ogromnych wysiłków, które podejmuje się w kosmicznej skali dekalogu; chodzi raczej o etyczny detal, o stylistykę wręcz śmiesznego drobiazgu, wyborów niekoniecznie fundamentalnych, lecz znaczących. Chodzi o to, by z problematyki etycznej nie czynić tematu poruszanego od święta, przywoływanego jedynie pod presją wielkich dylematów, wielkich „okazji” etycznych, okazje takie mogą však nie pojawić się w ludzkim życiu. Problem polega więc na tym, by drobną, codzienną odpowiedzialność uczynić wielką okazją (Pleśu, 2019, s. 138).

Minimalizm, o którym wspomina Pleśu, wiąże się ze wspomnianą już tutaj czujnością i uważnością, ponieważ to właśnie codzienność stawia przed nami wyzwania i domaga się reakcji. Codzienność, którą często lekceważymy i przeoczamy. I być może to spotkanie i dialog, które odbywają się też w codzienności, stwarza możliwość zachowania czujności i dostrzeżenia krzywdy Innego, a ocalenie Innego przed cierpieniem i zaoferowanie mu schronienia jest negacją wojny, uniemożliwieniem jej urzeczywistnienia się.

Konkluzja

Rozważania zawarte w niniejszym artykule podjąłem przekonany o tym, że pokój jako stan rzeczywistości oraz społecznych i politycznych relacji wymaga nieustannej refleksji, ponieważ wiele czynników, tak lokalnych, jak i globalnych, stale mu zagraża. Kluczowym elementem tejże rzeczywistości jest także edukacja, która stwarza możliwość otwarcia się na różne formy istnienia i inności. Taką praktykę – określoną przeze mnie jako przybliżanie – uznaję zaś za praktykę pokojową. Edukacja dla pokoju oznaczać będzie nie tylko odpowiedzialność za siebie, ale coraz bardziej odpowiedzialność za świat – również ten od nas odległy geograficznie i moralnie. Tym samym istotnym zadaniem edukacji będzie niwelowanie etycznych dystansów – przybliżanie. Praktykę przybliżania uważam za istotną na drodze do trwałego pokoju, wydaje się bowiem, że trudniej będzie zadawać cierpienie i prowadzić wojnę z kimś, kto w ten czy inny sposób jest mi bliski, lecz i bliskość nie daje żadnych gwarancji. Nie jest to jednak jedyna forma pokojowego działania jaką możemy podjąć. Tę właśnie refleksję nad możliwościami pokojowego współistnienia traktuję jako jedno z kluczowych zadań dla edukacji,

filozofii i etyki, uważając, że badanie warunków możliwości trwałego pokoju powinno być kontynuowane w obszarze różnych dyscyplin naukowych.

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Essays, Polemics, Opinions, Interviews

Przyczynek do diagnozy potencjału edukacji dla pokoju w kraju przyfrontowym. Polemika z artykułem Konrada Rejmana „Pedagogika i (nie)istnienie - pokój jako wyzwanie dla edukacji”

Piotr Kowzan¹ 



Abstrakt

Celem tej polemiki z artykułem Konrada Rejmana jest odsłonięcie tych fragmentów jego wywodu, które widziane z perspektywy krytycznej prowadzą do innej edukacji dla pokoju. Takiej, która jest związana z aktywnością ruchów społecznych, prowadzi badania terenowe i nauczycielskie, eksperymentuje i dba o demokrację. I nie polega na dialogu jako na panaceum.

Słowa kluczowe

krytyczna edukacja dla pokoju, problem skali, badania dla pokoju, ruchy społeczne

A Contribution to the Examination of the Significance of Education for Peace in a Frontline Country. A Polemic with Konrad Rejman's Article "Pedagogy and (Non) Existence - Existential Reflection on Education and Peace"

Abstract

The purpose of this debate with Konrad Rejman's article is to expose those parts of his argument that, when viewed critically, lead to a different approach to peace

¹ Instytut Pedagogiki, Uniwersytet Gdański, Poland, piotr.kowzan@ug.edu.pl,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6506-8327>

education. One that is concerned with democracy, engages in field and teacher research, and is connected to social movement activity. Additionally, it does not view dialogue as a panacea.

Key words

critical peace education, scaling problem, peace research, social movements

Wstęp

Namysł nad kategorią pokoju jest nie tylko ważny, ale i pilny z polskiej perspektywy. Jako mieszkańcy kraju przyfrontowego jesteśmy świadkami skutków ekspansji pojęcia wojny: od wojny zimnej, przez hybrydową (Ochmann i Wojas, 2019), po wojnę informacyjną i poznawczą (*cognitive weapon/warfare*) (Aleksandrowicz, 2017). Bez przygotowania sobie pojęcia pokoju możemy nie mieć dokąd z tych wojen wrócić. Krytyczna refleksja nad pojęciami edukacji dla pokoju ma wymiar międzynarodowy. Na ogół refleksja podąża za zaangażowaną praktyką w miejscach dotkniętych konfliktem zbrojnym: Angola (Wessells, 2013), Bośnia i Hercegowina (Clarke-Habibi, 2005), Irlandia Północna (McGlynn et al., 2004), Palestyna-Izrael (Bekerman, 2007). Propozycja Konrada Rejmana (2022) jest cenna, bo w obecnych polskich warunkach dyskusja nad pojęciami w zasadzie poprzedza praktykę edukacji i wychowania dla pokoju. Jest to jednak propozycja w duchu humanistycznym, która indywidualizuje odpowiedzialność i sprawczość przez co ostatecznie powiela iluzje charakterystyczne dla edukacji szkolnej. Co więcej, sprowadza to, co aktywne w ludziach do aktywności wojskowej.

Nie chcę pozostawić tej drogi bez alternatywy. Pokażę, że edukacja dla pokoju ma sens, gdy jest osadzona w realiach społecznych i wprowadza dzieci i młodzież do działania w ruchach społecznych (*social movement-oriented citizenship*). Krytyczna perspektywa na edukację dla pokoju (Bajaj, 2014) domaga się diagnozy sytuacji wymagającej pokoju. A ostatecznie uaktywnienia w niej komponentu badawczego. Wcześniej jednak pokażę, że taki bardziej socjologiczny ogląd mieści się w definicjach wypracowywanych przez Rejmana, gdy uwzględni się ich meandry.

Pusty pokój, dwa pokoje i pojęcia pomocnicze

Rejman przyjął, że pokój funkcjonuje jako puste znaczące w rozumieniu filozofii politycznej Ernesto Laclaua. Rzeczywiście mobilizuje ludzi do wysiłków dla

dobra wspólnego. Ryzyko tej optyki polega na tym, że definiowanie pustych znaczących powoduje rozkład tej mobilizacji zbudowanej wokół nich. Z tego względu inne strategie radzenia sobie z wieloznacznością pojęcia pokoju, to analiza relacji między nim a innymi pojęciami ważnymi dla edukacji dla pokoju, czyli przemocą, edukacją, badaniami etc. Taki program realizuje m.in. Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (Gur-Ze'ev, 2001, 2014). Nasz lokalny, polski problem z pojęciem pokoju związany jest z kwestią zanikania kolektywnej i ucieleśnionej pamięci wojny, ponieważ odchodzą świadkowie II wojny światowej. Nasze instytucjonalne zasoby w zakresie edukacji dla pokoju – instytucja Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych, uniwersalne prawa człowieka i pierwsza fala edukacji dla pokoju (Suchodolski, 1983; Wesołowska, 1993) – powstawały jako biograficzna lekcja wyciągnięta z doświadczenia wojny. Druga fala zainteresowań pokojem wyrosła ze strachu przed bronią nuklearną. Choć jako państwo nie dysponowaliśmy takim arsenałem, to jako potencjalne miejsce realizacji takiego starcia mocarstw Polska aktywnie działała na rzecz pokoju światowego. W 1978 roku z inicjatywy Polski w ONZ uchwalono „Deklarację o wychowaniu społeczeństw w duchu pokoju” (Symonides, 1980). Trzecia fala korzystała z instytucjonalnego przygotowania społeczeństwa do dbałości o pokój i cechował ją rozkwit znaczenia masowych ruchów społecznych. Kluczowe znaczenie dla myślenia o pokoju miał ruch Solidarność i pokojowa transformacja ustrojowa w Polsce (Czaputowicz, 2017). Obecnie jesteśmy w okresie po spektakularnych porażkach światowej społeczności w powstrzymaniu wojen prowadzonych w ich imieniu przez mocarstwo i kraje zależne, w tym Polskę. Największy światowych rozmiarów protest antywojenny odbył się 15 lutego 2003 roku przeciwko wojnie w Iraku (Habermas i Derrida, 2003). Mobilizacja polegająca na koordynacji wydarzeń w ponad 600 miastach, z których część protestowała w skali nie mającej historycznego precedensu, została zignorowana przez pryncyplistów do wojny kompleks militarno-przemysłowy. W Polsce po transformacji mieliśmy już tylko edukację patriotyczną w miejsce pokojowej, więc nasze państwo wzięło udział w wojnie w Iraku w roli agresora przy symbolicznym oporze społeczeństwa. Udział w neokolonialnej eskapadzie nie spełnił pokładanych w niej nadziei na eksploatację ekonomiczną Iraku i to mimo politycznej reprezentacji we władzach okupacyjnych. Obecnie, jako mieszkańcy kraju przyfrontowego, dyskutujemy o edukacji dla pokoju mając znowu własną „skórę w grze” (Taleb, 2013). Robiąc ją także na własny użytek, mamy szansę robić ją wiarygodnie. Wcześniej wysyłaliśmy żołnierzy, czyli specjalistów, a obecnie na wojnie w Ukrainie giną ludzie podobni (etnicznie), przypadkowi (cywile), bliscy (ludzie odkrywają swoje zapomniane, ponadgraniczne więzi rodzinne),

a także polscy obywatele w legionie międzynarodowym. Wojna pochłonęła naszą kolektywną uwagę, indywidualne zasoby i odczuwamy jej emocjonalny i ekonomiczny ciężar.

W naszym kontekście ważnym pojęciem wobec, którego warto myśleć o pokoju, jest pojęcie usprawiedliwionej przemocy dla pokoju. Zarówno z perspektywy oczywistego obecnie wsparcia Ukrainy podczas wojny z Rosją, jak i z perspektywy środków stosowanych przez społeczeństwo obywatelskie w celu powstrzymania własnego państwa przed agresją lub utrzymania porządku demokratycznego. Natomiast definiowanie pokoju w taki sposób, żeby nie był zaledwie przeciwieństwem wojny, też jest interesujące, bo uwalnia edukację dla pokoju od przymusu śledzenia bieżących wydarzeń na świecie. Rejman definiuje pokój jako:

taki stan rzeczywistości i relacji międzyludzkich, w którym człowiek może skupić się przede wszystkim na realizowaniu twórczego potencjału, ponieważ nikt nie zagraża ciągłości jego podmiotowości i tożsamości, a groźba nieistnienia nie stanowi narzędzia do realizacji politycznych celów i wymuszania posłuszeństwa tak, jak dzieje się to chociażby w trakcie wojny.

Łatwo zauważyć, że takie warunki pokoju mogą nie zostać spełnione także w czasie nie-wojny. Mamy tu więc do czynienia z dwoma rodzajami pokoju, które można nazwać: pokojem społecznym oraz pokojem światowym. Pokój światowy to czas wolny od zabijania, a pokój społeczny to warunki umożliwiające ludziom realizację ich twórczego potencjału, jak chce Rejman lub brak strukturalnych napięć społecznych, jak chciałby (Galtung, 1969). Pedagodzy krytyczni zauważą, że taki pokój społeczny jest trudny do osiągnięcia w kapitalizmie. Pojedynczy ludzie potrafią jednak znaleźć sobie enklawy spokoju i potrafią realizować swój potencjał twórczy także w sytuacji zagrożenia. Emblematycznym przykładem niech będzie tu Czesław Miłosz tłumaczący Szekspira podczas wojny w okupowanej Warszawie (Romanowska, 2009). Bezpiecznie byłoby więc myśleć o pokoju jako wartości stopniowalnej. Pozwalając, tym samym, na radość z sukcesów, polegających na zapobieganiu konfliktom zbrojnym.

U Rejmana jednak pokój musi być pełen: wolność twórcza i wyłączenie z posłuszeństwa. W takim ujęciu edukacja dla pokoju stałaby się grą o wszystko, czyli zawsze o pełen pokój. Realizując ją w szkole trudno jest utrzymać takie ambicje. Raczej zadowolą nas jakiegokolwiek sukcesy na drodze do pokoju. Tak jak za ważne osiągnięcie ludzkości uznajemy przyjmowanie uchodźców. Nie wygasza to wojen. Nie daje też gwarancji uczynienia ich życia trwale istotnym społecznie,

by mogli „w pełni czuć się podmiotem, a więc mieć wpływ na rzeczywistość, realizować swoje plany i swój pomysł na życie”. Przyjmowanie uchodźców jest zaledwie aktem ratunku ich życia biologicznego. Rejman nie rozważa możliwości wycofania się, ucieczki ani eksodusu wobec zagrożenia. Za to przeprowadza nas przez zawiłości upodmiotowienia się w trakcie walki o pokój:

Moja istotność – czyli wartość i jakość mojego życia – zostaje również zanegowana, kiedy zmuszony jestem zabijać, a dochodzi do tego chociażby w czasie wojny. Można powiedzieć bowiem, że na wojnie to właśnie nieistnienie zostaje dowartościowane. Istnienie i chęć do jego zachowania nakazuje się wtedy lekceważyć, aby znaleźć w sobie „odwagę do nieistnienia” i do unicestwiania istnień.

I jest to moment, który wzbudził mój niepokój (*nomen omen*), jako początek zbyt uwodzicielskich ilustracji wywodu. Nie chcąc unikać odpowiedzialności za sytuacje nie-pokoju, Rejman zafundował czytelnikom perspektywę strzelanki pierwszoosobowej (ang. *first-person shooter*), czyli rodem z gier komputerowych. Ta fantazja o nisko-oprzyszczonych żołnierzach piechoty, którzy bez wielomiesięcznych szkoleń stają oko w oko z wrogiem, którego muszą zabić jest trudna do utrzymania poza środowiskiem gier. O tym, jak kuszące jest myślenie o pokoju posługujące się zmilitaryzowaną wyobraźnią wiem, bo jest to częścią mojej chłopackiej kultury.

Dla dalszych rozważań warto ujawnić zajmowaną pozycję w stosunku do tematu, bo spojrzenie na pokój i edukację zależy od kierunku, z którego zbliżamy się do nich. Moje zaangażowanie wynika z tego, że jestem ojcem trzech chłopców, których usiłuję ustrzec przed fascynacją wojną. Nie uczę w szkole, ale na uczelni prowadzę zajęcia z globalnej edukacji, której wychowanie dla pokoju jest ważną częścią. Oddaję świat w ręce kolejnego pokolenia, a co za tym idzie moje własne nieistnienie nie jest dla mnie najstraszniejszą perspektywą w obliczu wojny/nie-pokoju. Nie identyfikuję się z ruchami religijnymi, a taka identyfikacja jest częstą charakterystyką osób aktywnych na polu edukacji dla pokoju. Pochodzę z Polski Zachodniej i podzielam stereotypową dla tej części kraju zapobiegliwość, troskę o infrastrukturę i przygotowanie instytucjonalne. Jednocześnie wychowałem się w dzielnicy robotniczej, a wczesną dorosłość przeżywałem w burzliwych latach 90. XX wieku. Pozostały mi po tym: głęboka nieufność do instytucji państwowych, szczególnie przedstawicieli grup dyspozycyjnych oraz podejrzliwość w stosunku do deklarowanych celów edukacji. Edukacja dla pokoju pociąga mnie jako twór egzotyczny, bo niezaznany.

Wyobrażenia społeczna kontra wyobrażenia moralna

Jednym z fundamentalnych problemów edukacji dla pokoju jest to, że często usiłujemy naszą wizję pokoju „robić” innym (Wessells, 2013; Zembylas i Bekerman, 2013). Przeszczepiamy nasze wyobrażenia pokoju i dobrego życia w przestrzeni i w czasie. Robimy to w dobrej, oświeceniowej wierze, ale w określonych warunkach instytucjonalnych i politycznych. Dlatego kiedy Rejman stwierdza, że:

[i]stnieć pragniemy, nieistnienie, jak też radykalne ograniczenie jakości i sensu naszego istnienia, wzbudza w nas lęk i niepokój.

To wywołuje u mnie pragnienie krytycznej edukacji dla pokoju. To jego uniwersalizujące przerażenie własnym niebytem łatwo zaklasyfikować jako etnocentryzm. Ma też charakter klasowy w tym sensie, że w kontekście kumulacji strukturalnych upokorzeń, nieistnienie przeraża bardziej ludzi z perspektywami niż pozostałych. Mniejszy lęk nie przekłada się łatwo na gotowość posługiwania się przemocą. W końcu proces powstawania współczesnego państwa polskiego polegał na tym, żeby uczynić chłopów subiektywnie istotnymi dla całości społeczeństwa. Wcześniej nie widzieli sensu w zabijaniu i zobiektywizowany w rozważaniach Rejmana przymus niewiele zmieniał. Dlatego pragnienie istnienia i rzekome lęki przed nieistnieniem mogą też okazać się nietrwałe w czasie. Ludzie bywają bohaterami zasłaniającymi nieznajomych własnym ciałem. A Polska to kraj z żywą tradycją samospalenia z intencją wspólnego dobra (Żuk i Żuk, 2018).

Przede wszystkim jednak myślenie o uniwersalnym człowieku zamiast o różnych ludziach uniemożliwia identyfikację ludzi kochających wojnę. Kochają ją ze względu na interesy, pomysł na życie jako walkę, profesję, misję lub przyzwyczajenie. Nie są to tylko jacyś odlegli i wynaturzeni w swoim sadyzmie „oni”. Zasadniczo dyskurs naukowego oglądu wojen postawi Polskę w roli beneficjenta wojny w Ukrainie niezależnie od naszego, społecznego zainteresowania pokojem tam. Identyfikacji korzyści jesteśmy uczeni w szkole, analizując wydarzenia historyczne. Polska zyskała demograficznie (Wolski i Drabiński, 2022), zyskała na politycznym znaczeniu oraz na ograniczeniu finansowania rosyjskich agentów wpływu. A jej infrastruktura została podporządkowana logistyce zaopatrzenia frontu, co w jakimś stopniu uniezależni gospodarkę od ekonomii (w szczególności od wahań nastrojów konsumentów), jakkolwiek egzotycznie by to brzmiało w świetle dominującej tu przez lata doktryny neoliberalnej.

Trudno więc nie podzielać intuicji Rejmana, że osobiste doświadczenie lub pełne empatii wyobrażenie może być fundamentem pokoju, skoro jako kraj czerpiemy strategicznie korzyści z degradacji Rosji. Rozszerzanie oglądu,

nazywane przez Rejmana w tej pierwszoosobowej optyce dystansem, oddala od nas odpowiedzialność za stan świata. Co ciekawe, wydaje się, że Rejman eksploruje myśl zawartą w „Deklaracji o wychowaniu społeczeństw w duchu pokoju”, która została dopisana do propozycji zgłaszanej przez polską delegację: *„wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”*¹ (United Nations, 1978). Symonides bagatelizuje tę myśl jako przepisaną z konstytucji UNESCO i po prostu ładną (Symonides, 1980, s. 64), ale ona wyraża istotę humanistycznego podejścia do edukacji dla pokoju i uzasadnia wychowawczą dbałość o to, co Suchodolski nazywał ładem w ludziach (Suchodolski, 1983, s. 12-14).

Problem skalowalności w edukacji dla pokoju

Skalowalność edukacji na życie społeczne była zawsze problemem. Nie wiadomo jak szkolny sukces edukacji dla pokoju miałby przełożyć się na pokój – światowy czy społeczny. Prowadzona jedynie w szkole, w oderwaniu od edukacji dorosłych i aktywności ruchów społecznych będzie boleśnie utopijna ze względu na indywidualizowanie odpowiedzialności za stan świata przy aspiracjach wymagających długofalowego, powszechnego wysiłku. Ale jak pisze Rejman:

Mówiąc o pokoju, równocześnie mówimy o jakimś wyobrażeniu na temat świata. Deklarujemy w ten sposób określoną wizję przyszłości, dla której zaistnienia istotne jest opanowanie różnorodnych umiejętności.

Te pozornie różnorakie umiejętności są dla mnie chodzeniem wydeptanymi ścieżkami i sprowadzają ambitne w polu edukacji wyzwanie osiągnięcia i dbania o pokój do ulubionego przez filozofów dialogu. Jak pisze Rejman:

Edukację traktuję tym samym jako przestrzeń spotkania i dialogu – to właśnie umiejętność bycia razem poprzez dialogiczną relację, uznając za jeden z podstawowych atrybutów pokoju – w której może dojść do prawdziwej rozmowy.

Niezależnie od tego, czy edukację dla pokoju realizujemy w modelu bezpośrednim (mówiąc o pokoju otwarcie) czy pośrednim (wyposażając w kompetencje, o których myślimy, że sprzyjają pokojowi) (Bar-Tal i Rosen, 2009),

¹ Przytaczam po angielsku ze względu na niezamierzone wówczas wskazanie mężczyzn jako odpowiedzialnych za wojnę, co koresponduje z wyzywającym tonem tej męskiej rozmowy o pokoju oraz feministyczną perspektywą tamtego czasu (Boulding, 1986).

to nie ma modelu przejścia między tym, co indywidualne a ustanowieniem lub utrwalaniem pokoju światowego w sensie doprowadzenia do zaniku konfliktu zbrojnego. Jednak w humanistycznym podejściu do edukacji dla pokoju zakłada się, że każda interakcja ma znaczenie, licząc na to, że wytworzy się kultura pokoju, która zapobiegnie eskalacji konfliktów. Ważnym kontekstem dla tego popularnego w Stanach Zjednoczonych podejścia jest poziom przemocy szkolnej, który na kontynencie amerykańskim potrafi eskalować do poziomu szkolnych strzelanin. W Europie przemoc szkolna ma na ogół jakościowo inny charakter niż konflikt zbrojny. Za to mamy bogate doświadczenia konfliktów zbrojnych. Lecz dla większości ludzi były to i są doświadczenia bycia pionkiem, czyli umownie osobą niedecyzyjną w sprawie tego, czy wojna wokół niej jest, czy nie. Z perspektywy nie-żołnierza, nie-polityka, ale pionka właśnie, kształtowanie umiejętności prowadzenia dialogu pod hasłem edukacji dla pokoju jest niebezpieczną iluzją.

Prowadzenie dialogu z myślą o pokoju jest umiejętnością przydatną elitom, bo od uczestników wymaga kurtuazji w maskowaniu ich władzy. Humanisci zwykle pomijają też ryzyko związane z prowadzeniem dialogu. Przede wszystkim, dialog, na który jesteśmy gotowi, esencjaliści uznają za jego pozór, bo oczekują, że zawiązanie się takiego spotkania zmienia ludzi w zakresie niemożliwym do przygotowania się do tego (por. liczne odniesienia do Józefa Tischnera i Martina Bubera w tekście Rejmana). W rezultacie dialogu uczestnicy nie zawsze mają do kogo wracać. Parafrazując słowa znanej pieśni oporu, niezależnie od tego czy mury padają lub rosną, zaangażowany w dialog humanista zawsze już będzie sam.

Nie zmienia to faktu, że powszechnie umiejętności prowadzenia dialogu pełnią ważną w edukacji funkcję indywidualizującą. W edukacji dla pokoju, szczególnie w obszarze troski o pokój społeczny, dialog może pełnić też ważną funkcję diagnostyczną. Mój sceptycyzm wobec niekrytycznych propozycji edukacji dla pokoju wynika z tego, że dialogu uczyłem się właśnie w szkole i po szkole na pytaniach typu: „Chcesz wpierdol?”. Takie zaczepki zewnętrzny obserwator-humanista może oczywiście zbyć, jako przykład groźby. Jednak zwalczanie postaw dominacji dialogiem ma sens tylko wtedy, gdy takie postawy występują. W warunkach względnie trwałego nie-pokoju społecznego, osoba zagadnięta takim pytaniem zostaje wyprowadzona poza strefę własnego komfortu i takiego zaproszenia do dialogu łatwo nie może zbyć. Pozostaje więc traktować to jako spełnienie warunku koniecznego do dialogu. W końcu, za Rejmanem:

Konflikty, antagonizmy oraz napięcia społeczne i polityczne, mogą być rozwiązywane na drodze spotkania i dialogu, gdzie spotkanie będzie oznaczało samą możliwość podjęcia rozmowy z Innym.

Gdy pada pytanie „Chcesz wpierdol?”, to wiadomo, że było fakultatywne, w tym sensie, że paść nie musiało. Pytający mógł działać, polegając na własnej ocenie sytuacji bez zadawania pytania o pragnienia Innego. Budzi ono niepokój, lecz osobom nim wyróżnionym oferuje wcale nieoczywiste doświadczenie, przygodę. Sytuacja zainicjowana tym pytaniem spełnia Rejmanowskie kryterium pokoju, jako „możliwość autentycznej rozmowy, podczas której zależy nam na poznaniu drugiego człowieka, na przełamaniu obcości”. Takie spotkania często kończą się w dialogu. Co nie zmienia faktu, że są formą opresji.

Powyższy kontr-przykład dialogu, który nie mieści się w potocznym rozumieniu pokoju jako spokoju, pozwala zrozumieć dlaczego w praktyce zmniejszania przemocy szkolnej znaczący udział mają programy nie-dialogiczne. Skuteczność wykazują programy wykorzystujące najprostsze formy medytacji w klasie (Fisher, 2006). Można też odrzucić dialog na rzecz spójnego komunikowania przez dorosłych wspólnych wartości i oczekiwań, tak jak w programie Zero (Pyżalski i Roland, 2010; Roland i Midthassel, 2012). Typowe interwencje w oparciu o podejście dialogiczne koncentrują się na poznaniu Innego. Dociekają przyczyn, więc zaczynają się od pytania „Dlaczego go bijesz?” i brną w racjonalizacje produkowane przez sprawców. Mniej wyrafinowane intelektualnie, lecz skuteczne, jest automatyczne potępienie przemocy i wręcz odmowa słuchania tych racjonalizacji.

Problem sprawczości ludzi i nie-ludzkich aktorów w nas

Skrajnym przykładem nie-dialogicznego podejścia do problemu przemocy jest medykalizacja indywidualnej agresywności. W badaniach nad skutkami wybranych substancji psychoaktywnych (LSD i/lub grzyby zawierające psylocybinę) ustalono, że psychonauci-mężczyźni polegający na tych środkach są rzadziej sprawcami przemocy domowej (Thiessen et al., 2018). To jedno z wielu ciekawych odkryć w odradzającej się dziedzinie badań nad substancjami psychoaktywnymi, wskazujących na potencjalny udział nie-ludzkich aktorów w regulowaniu indywidualnych emocji i budowaniu pokoju społecznego. Trudno nie dostrzec potencjału skalowalności podejścia medycznego, zwłaszcza że współpraca z takimi nie-ludzkimi aktorami została już oswojona w kulturze. Po drodze do pokoju światowego to podejście – łączące medycynę, terapię i wychowanie przez transformatywne uczenie się – może byłoby w stanie choćby zmniejszyć liczbę osadzonych w zakładach karnych i systematycznie zmniejszać ilość takich zakładów w kraju. Zamykanie więzień przedstawiane jest czasem jako taki „mały sukces” edukacji dla pokoju. Tak zwana psychonautyka jest jednak w całkowitej

sprzeczności wobec doktryny wojny z narkotykami prowadzonej także w Polsce głównie przeciwko użytkownikom narkotyków, czyli przeciwko nieostrożnej młodzieży. Przemoc szkolna i domowa są traumatyczne i są sprawdzianem działania jednostek, publiczności i instytucji. Wojna z narkotykami oznacza alienację ludzi od instytucji, bo zasadniczo mamy w niej do czynienia z przemocą instytucjonalną, czyli z uzbrojonymi biurokratami, którzy „tylko wykonują swoje rozkazy” i tylko przestrzegają prawa. Przy czym warto pamiętać, że amerykańska panika moralna wokół narkotyków była formą represji wobec ruchu pokojowego. W wyniku polityki penalizacji narkotyków młodzi mężczyźni szybko uczą się, że dla władzy zawsze są podejrzani. Szkoła, nawet w czasach pokoju światowego, towarzyszy dzieciom i młodzieży w zdobywaniu doświadczeń (w tym obserwacji) przemocy szkolnej, domowej oraz tej wynikającej z kontaktów z policją.

Problem wprowadzania się do zabijania

Rzeczywista sprawczość, której fatalizm Rejman przybliży perspektywą zabijania podczas wojny, w świecie względnego pokoju społecznego jest ważnym kontekstem edukacji pozaformalnej. Myśląc o wojnie pisze on:

Zostaję wtedy postawiony w sytuacji naznaczonej fatalizmem, z której nie ma wyjścia. Żeby ocalić swoje istnienie, muszę jednocześnie narazić swoje człowieczeństwo w akcie zabijania.

oraz

Spod tej nieuchronności nie mogę się oswobodzić, akty zabijania stają się tym samym nieuniknione, ale dopuszczam się ich często, aby bronić swojego domostwa, rodziny, narodu.

W świecie równoległym do tej fikcji wyjątkowych okoliczności mamy rzeczywistą codzienność sytuacji, w których ludzie swoją aktywnością zwiększają ryzyko śmierci innych ludzi. Być może tego typu powyższe rozważania są lub powinny być charakterystyczne dla osób decydujących się na zdobycie i korzystanie z prawa jazdy. Technicznie zogniskowane kursy pozaformalnej edukacji przygotowujące do egzaminów pozostawały dotąd wolne od refleksji nad ich rolą w kształtowaniu liczby osób zabijanych i rannych w wypadkach samochodowych. A skala tego, co od lat odbywa się w Polsce, czyli powyżej 2 tysięcy zabitych i ponad 10 razy tyle rannych, mogłaby być porównywalna z konfliktem zbrojnym. I jeszcze przez lata będzie zapewne przekraczać swoim ogromem to, czego możemy doświadczyć jako skutki katastrofy klimatycznej.

Spójrzmy na problem zabijania jako na problem bezpieczeństwa, przed czym wzbrania się Rejman. W szczególności z perspektywy aktywnych przygotowań do walki, a nie statystycznych skutków codziennych walk. Wówczas również pozaformalna edukacja dorosłych da nam wgląd w skalę zainteresowania techniczną gotowością do konfrontacji fizycznej i pośrednio w poczucie bezpieczeństwa w społeczeństwie. Trzymając się stosunkowo blisko szkoły, warto zwrócić uwagę na to, że infrastruktura sportowa szkół wykorzystywana jest do trenowania sztuk walki i sportów walki. Rozbieżności co do skali popularności i zaangażowania społeczeństwa są znaczne, ale szacunki zaczynają się od kilkudziesięciu tysięcy osób zrzeszonych w samych tylko klubach sportowych. A przecież te przygotowania idą dalej. Następny krok przygotowań na zagrożenie jest związany ze specyficznymi ruchami społecznymi i politycznymi, bo dotyczy przygotowań do konfliktu zbrojnego. Paramilitarne szkolenia grupowe to obszar tradycyjnie związany z prawicowymi ruchami politycznymi. Jednak wieloletnie zaangażowanie państwa polskiego i szkolnictwa wraz ze wzrostem napięć w regionie spowodowały, nie tylko gwałtowny rozwój aktywności obywatelskiej w ramach organizacji paramilitarnych, ale też zmiany skali i wzorów zaangażowania kobiet w szeroko rozumianą obronność (Grzebalska, 2021).

Kreślę ten krajobraz, żeby pokazać to, że Rejmanowskie introspekcje w dylematy moralne figury człowieka wychodzącego naprzeciw drugiego człowieka są idealizacjami. Nie uwzględniają skutków socjalizacji, edukacji patriotycznej, treningów i szkoleń taktycznych, które składają się na wieloletnie formatowanie części społeczeństwa do walki i zabijania. Krajobraz ten zobaczymy jednak innym, gdy zajmiemy się ludźmi uciekającymi lub powracającymi z konfrontacji.

Robienie miejsca ocalałym, ustępowanie i głęboka adaptacja miejsc

Kiedy edukacja dla pokoju zajmuje się problemem przywracania pokoju, a nie problemem eskalacji konfliktów, zobaczymy inne zasoby. W polskim kontekście doświadczyliśmy tego przyjmując uciekinierów przed wojną w Ukrainie. Poziom spontanicznej organizacji pomocy był skutkiem zrozumienia dla potrzeb ludzi, którzy znaleźli się pod ostrzałem. Okazało się, że podstawowe znaczenie miało znalezienie miejsca dla ludzi, ustąpienie części swojego miejsca pod wspólnym dachem oraz fizyczny wysiłek ludzi w przyspieszonym tempie remontujących i adaptujących pomieszczenia do celów mieszkaniowych. Szczególne znaczenie miało otwarcie się szkół, w których spontanicznie dokonywano korekt sposobów nauczania. Co znamienne, te korekty uwzględniały także zmiany w sposobie

omawiania historii relacji polsko-ukraińskich. I nie polegały one na wszczynaniu dialogu z osobami, które potrzebowały emocjonalnego spokoju i nie miały językowych kompetencji (jak to rzeczywisty Inny). Zamiast na dialogu, polegały na wyciszaniu kontrowersji. Kwestią pierwszą okazało się zrobienie miejsca Innemu. Społeczny ruch solidarnościowy w dużej mierze polegał na przesunięciu się ze swoimi historiami i potrzebami, żeby bardzo dosłownie robić miejsce (por. Mendel, 2006; Zielińska, 2016). Ewentualny dialog pojawić się może daleko po tym, jak sobie ludzie wspólnie popłaczą, przygotują razem jedzenie i wzajemnie nauczą języków, czyli popraktykują to, co Krzysztof Czyżewski (2019) w kontekście pogranicza nazywa sztuką życia razem lub obcowaniem. Proces duchowego oswojenia się z katastrofą wojny jest przyspieszoną wersję głębokiej adaptacji (*deep adaptation*), w którą wchodzimy także w związku z katastrofą klimatyczną (Bendell, 2016).

Wschodnia granica Polski to także przypadek konfliktu, gdzie tego wymiernego gestu zrobienia miejsca nie wykonano. Na granicy z Białorusią władze państwa polskiego zabroniły ludności pogranicza wykonywania takich gestów, a na swoich funkcjonariuszach wymusiły łamanie prawa międzynarodowego. W takich warunkach podjęta przez ruchy społeczne edukacja dla pokoju przyjęła formę oporu (Czarnota et al., 2021). Przeciwno tej edukacji wykorzystano aparaty propagandowe państwa, łącznie z instytucją szkoły. Wraz z *ad hoc* przeprowadzoną kampanią medialną „Murem za polskim mundurem”, szkolnictwo stało się miejscem lokowania grup dyspozycyjnych, kanalizowania w ich kierunku akcji humanitarnych i legitymizowania inspirowanych militarnie analiz problemów społecznych (Fiałkowska, 2022; Halemba, 2022; Jachira, 2022). Bieżąca ocena wydarzeń na pograniczu może zależeć od tego, czy ma się bliskich służących w grupach dyspozycyjnych. Jednak eskalacja stała się jedyną perspektywą dla konfliktu granicznego, a represje wobec aktywistów ruchów społecznych przyczyniły się do utrwalania polaryzacji społecznej. Konflikt z Białorusią jest emblematyczny dla losów edukacji dla pokoju, jej rozdziału od edukacji patriotycznej i fantazji o zabijaniu w obronie własnej *à la* dociekania *first-shooter experience* Rejmana. Aktywiści mierzą się z realnym cierpieniem w czasie rzeczywistym i próbują ludziom w pułapce przedłużyć życie. Służby kalkulują życie tych ludzi wobec siebie tylko znanych danych wywiadowczych (czytaj: master-planu arcy-wroga) oraz możliwych scenariuszy przyszłości, w których dbać muszą o sprawność swoich instytucji na wypadek konfliktu. Nikt z nich wszystkich nie chce wojny, ale zużywają pokój na diametralnie odmienne sposoby.

Utopie i dystopie edukacji dla pokoju

Rejman swoje analizy umieszcza w szerszym pytaniu o utopię:

Czy możliwy jest taki stan rzeczywistości, w którym nie będę postawiony w sytuacji konieczności zabijania?

Niezależnie od naszego stosunku do utopii, będziemy starali się uczynić ten świat lepszym. Jednak, moim zdaniem, uwalnianie się od konieczności okazania zdolności posługiwania się przemocą polityczną zagraża demokracji. Moje zastrzeżenia budzi kolejność pracy wychowawczej dla pokoju, ponieważ obawiam się, że uwalnianie świata od przemocy zacznie się i skończy na ludziach najsłabszych. Edukacja dla pokoju nie może stać się narzędziem kastrowania społeczeństwa ze zdolności rozumienia, kontrolowania i posługiwania się przemocą. Przemoc pozostaje w dyspozycji nie tylko władzy, jako przemoc instrumentalna, lecz jako przemoc wykluczonych, czyli funkcjonuje w miejsce głosu krytyki, gdy zabraknie politycznego podmiotu, który ich reprezentuje (Wieviorka, 2003). Ucząc pokoju, nie możemy zaczynać od rozbrojenia najsłabszych, czyli zwłaszcza młodzieży wystawionej na działanie policyjnej przemocy, na profilowanie ze względu na wiek, płeć i rasę oraz zaangażowanie polityczne. W szerszym kontekście, groźba politycznej mobilizacji i przemocy wobec osób sprawujących władzę pozostaje ostatnim zaworem bezpieczeństwa porządku demokratycznego. Po przegranych wyborach ludzie ustępują ze stanowisk, zachowując życie. Gdy przestają wierzyć w ustąpienie jako drogę ratunku, to społeczeństwo musi być zdolne im o tym przypomnieć. Najlepiej bez konieczności realizowania zakomunikowanej groźby.

Patrząc z tej perspektywy, potrzebujemy czegoś, co pomoże młodzieży nie oślepnąć od gniewu na co dzień, lecz zachować zdolność mobilizacji. Pokojowy protest jest czymś, co zwraca uwagę władzy, gdy stoi za tym powściągliwość. Pokojowy protest traci na znaczeniu, gdy tylko w takiej formie społeczeństwo potrafi wyrażać swój sprzeciw. Potrzebujemy edukacji, która pozwoli ludziom doprowadzić do de-eskalacji konfliktu, gdy będą tego potrzebowali (por. Kowzan i Szczygieł, 2022). A będą tego potrzebowali, bo organizując się w ruchy społeczne, będą poddawani represjom, w tym także policyjnej przemocy, na którą wysoce kosztownie będzie im odpowiadać przemocą, jakkolwiek by ich ona nie upodmiotawiała politycznie (por. Wieviorka, 2003).

Na zabijanie można spojrzeć jako na ostatni sposób na utrzymanie własnej istotności, co Rejman pomija, a Wieviorka (2003) nazywa przemocą fundamentalną. Przemoc jest ostatnim narzędziem ludzi poniżonych. To jest mechanizm, który chroni ludzi przed tym, by osoby sprawujące władzę nie używały jej z całą mocą.

Zdolność posługiwania się przemocą przypomina ludziom władzy, że mają ciała. Oczywiście lepiej byłoby, gdybyśmy zamiast myśleć o zabijaniu przypominali sobie o tych naszych ciałach spotykając się wszyscy na publicznych basenach, poprzedzając wejście do wspólnej wody bezbronną nagością pod prysznicem. Tak jak robią to w Islandii. Lub spotykając się w saunach, jak robią Finowie. Lub wpadając na siebie na zatłoczonej Agorze, jak podobno robili starożytni Grecy. Bez odpowiednich rytuałów, które spłaszcząby nam hierarchię społeczną, dając względny pokój społeczny, namysł nad pełnym pokojem, światowym, rodzi się w Polsce zawsze wobec politycznego arcy-wroga. Najwcześniej byli to Krzyżacy (Symonides, 1980), a współcześnie USA, a obecnie Rosja. Bez doraźnych korzyści wynikających z zachowania zagrożonego życia być może nie wznosilibyśmy się po ideały edukacji dla pokoju. Jednak to, co będziemy rozumieli pod tym pojęciem, zależy od nas i siły dyskursu edukacyjnego. Warto pamiętać, że największe polskie osiągnięcie dyplomatyczne w tej dziedzinie, czyli „Deklaracja o wychowaniu społeczeństw w duchu pokoju” nie zawiera tych edukacyjnych odniesień, gdy jest odczytywana po angielsku jako „*Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace*”. Fundamentem edukacji dla pokoju pozostanie dychotomia między wojną a pokojem. Jednak zakres zainteresowań i ambicje wytwarzane w tej edukacji potrafią zależeć od drobnych przesunięć znaczeń i (nie)porozumień wśród propagatorów tego potrzebnego świata projektu.

Zamiast podsumowania głód badań

Twierdzenie, że droga do pokoju istnieje i wiedzie przez edukację wymaga dowodów lub choćby zrozumienia terenu, w którym będziemy ją wydeptywać. Dlatego ważna jest diagnoza obecnej sytuacji, w której znajdujemy się jako mieszkańcy Polski. To przestrzeń nie tylko możliwości, ale i ograniczeń, dlatego w ramach tej polemiki z Konradem Rejmanem starałem się wskazać kilka mniej oczywistych punktów zaczepienia dla pracy edukacyjnej. Nieco przy tym przesadnie eksponując różnice między nami jako reprezentantami humanistycznego i krytycznego podejścia do edukacji dla pokoju. Edukacja to robota przynosząca odległe owoce społeczeństwu, więc należy się spodziewać tego, że nasze bieżące próby radzenia sobie w naszej obecnej sytuacji będą wykorzystywane w przyszłości do zapobiegania innym wojnom i budowania pokoiów o innym być może wymiarze. I tak jak nam dzisiaj dawna „Deklaracja o wychowaniu społeczeństw w duchu pokoju” może wydawać się naiwna, tak i nasze współczesne pomysły skazane są na nieadekwatność w przyszłości. Wychwytywanie momentów zrywania się ugruntowanej wiedzy, utraty poczucia sensu antywojennych i/lub pro-pokojowych postaw, a także

wytracania skuteczności dotychczasowych umiejętności i kompetencji wydaje się ważnym zadaniem dla badań w obszarze edukacji dla pokoju.

Z kolei na lokalnym poziomie szkoły ważną rolę w kształtowaniu metod nauczania dla pokoju mogą odegrać nauczycielskie badania w działaniu. Badanie dynamiki relacji między edukacją dla pokoju a działalnością na rzecz pokoju jest kluczowym, ciekawym poznawczo i łatwo dostępnym obszarem nauczycielskich inspiracji. Za Tricią Niesz (2022) możemy przyjąć, że współczesna edukacja dla pokoju jest utrwalonym przez antywojenne ruchy społeczne sposobem w jaki dążą one do swoich celów. Jej treści mogą być celem oddziaływania ruchów społecznych, wymuszających dostosowanie jej do aktualnych wyzwań. Przygotowując społeczeństwo do pokoju możemy liczyć na to, że edukacja dla pokoju stanie się z czasem przestrzenią wylęgania się nowych idei i obywatelstwa zorientowanego na partycypację w takich ruchach. A to z kolei prowadzić będzie do nieprzewidywalnego w skutkach uczenia się w ruchach społecznych. Wydobywanie tych doświadczeń i transformowanie ich w program nauczania pozwoli na odtworzenie cennej oryginalności polskiego podejścia do kwestii pokoju.

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