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Subjectivity in education in the sense of personalization

Abstract

Although the inclusion of the subjectivity of the individual seems to be the principle of education today, the term „subjectivity” is understood in different ways, which gives rise to contradictory models of education. It happens so in the case of influential and contrary models of subjectivity, presented by the widely understood antipedagogy and Catholic personalism, which ascribe a strong connotation to it. The analysis of this problem in this article will determine the reflection on the understanding of subjectivity and the characteristics of postmodernity in this context. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that personalism not only protects the subjectivity of the pupil but also does not give up education as it happens in antipedagogy. The role of personalistic education is, in no case, to underestimate the subjectivity of young people but to support the process of preferences and to affirm their proper hierarchy of values, without which their fullness of humanity will not materialize.

Keywords

Models of education, personalism, postmodernity.

1. Introduction

Over half a century ago, in a completely different socio-political context, H. Arendt wrote about a crisis of education reflected in, e.g. a decline of authority

figures, particularly parents and educators.¹ The reflection on the sense of discussing the education crisis calls for a separate discussion and is not related to the problem stated in the title of the present article. However, it is difficult not to discern that postmodernity brings about phenomena that seem to have a disturbing influence over our existence also in this area. The aspect that must be indicated, first and foremost, is the multifaceted crisis of: man, thinking, morality and finally what may be described as the educational process. All these problems may constitute the subject of a very interesting intellectual analysis, and, from the perspective of philosophy of education, consideration of understanding of subjectivity of pupils as determined by postmodernity, is also an interesting proposition. On the one hand, taking the subjectivity of an individual into account appears as an unquestionable principle, even one of the factors constituting political correctness. On the other hand, however, it is difficult to disregard the symptoms of the depreciation of this subjectivity on numerous levels. This contradiction is related to the ambiguity of the term “subjectivity” but also to the dichotomy of the declarative and real world in many areas.

Regardless of the fact whether the crisis of education of the beginning of the 21st century is diagnosed, or the transformations occurring within it are concerned, which may be evaluated in manifold ways, also positively, the correlation between the educational situation and the subjectivity of persons creating it, is established beyond doubt. It is difficult to find a serious voice in the public discourse that would deny the relevance of subjectivity in education and opt for, e.g. returning to the traditional educational authoritarianism. Even a cursory analysis of this subject area leads to a conclusion that this subjectivity may be interpreted in completely different ways, and even subtle divergences give rise to entirely discrepant models of education. It is true in the case of the prominent but opposing models of subjectivity, presented by the broadly-defined antipedagogy and Catholic personalism, both ascribing a strong connotation to it. The analysis of this problem undertaken in this article will determine the reflection on the understanding of subjectivity and the characteristics of postmodernity, particularly personalism, in this context. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that personalism not only protects the subjectivity of the pupil but also does not abandon education, as it is in the case of antipedagogy.

¹ Cf. H. Arendt, *La crise de la culture*, Paris 1972, pp. 223-252.

2. Existential context

Each epoch brings specific existential determinants, which not only dictate the way of thinking of people but also greatly influence the vision of man, the world and life in this world. The synergic interdependence of these factors should provoke to reflecting on this issue, also with regard to challenges that present-day man has to face. In spite of the fact that, particularly in the pedagogical context, the problem seems to lie in inadequate empirical research that would be well-correlated with the educational pragmatics, still, from the point of view of a theoretician, modern humanity, which is rather inclined to resign from thinking, needs to build foundations, which can be provided by the philosophical consideration.

The philosophical analysis of aspects constituting the existential background of man at the beginning of the third millennium, while remaining complex, is not unambiguous and frequently assesses the same phenomena differently. These problems are exacerbated with the growing conviction that we exist in a “fluid” reality,² where we may observe an emergence of perspectives, the consequences of which cannot be fully verified. The changes, which are perceived by some opinion leaders with hope, are seen by others as manifestations of a serious crisis, both on the individual and social plane. The amount of data that is available to everyone nowadays is characterized by such variety and complexity that it is possible to take advantage of it in order to give credence to extreme visions of reality. The postmodern man is driven by so many motives and affections that they cannot fully grasp, let alone be subject to any real or stricter control.³

The dispute over the assessment of the often-revolutionary transformations in the broadly-conceived morality must be regarded as the particularly clear

² Cf. K. Kiciński, *Orientacje moralne społeczeństwa polskiego*, in: *Kondycja moralna społeczeństwa polskiego*, ed. J. Mariański, Kraków 2002, p. 375.

³ Cf. R. Tarnas, *Dzieje umysłowości zachodniej. Idee, które ukształtowały nasz światopogląd*, (trans.) M. Filipczuk, J. Roszkowski, Poznań 2002, p. 466, 478; J. Stala, E. Osewska, *Anders erziehen in Polen. Der Erziehungs- und Bildungsbegriff im Kontext eines sich ständig verändernden Europas des XXI. Jahrhunderts*, Tarnów 2009, Polihymnia; *Wychowanie a wyzwania ponowoczesności*, ed. E. Osewska, Warszawa 2011, UKSW; *Rodzina i edukacja w zmaganiu o przyszłość Europy*, ed. E. Osewska, Tarnów 2016; J. Stala, *W kierunku integralnej edukacji religijnej w rodzinie. Próba refleksji nad nauczaniem Jana Pawła II w kontekście polskich uwarunkowań*, Tarnów 2010, Polihymnia; *Religious Education / Catechesis in the Family. A European Perspective*, eds. E. Osewska, J. Stala, Warszawa 2010, UKSW.

and strong influence on man's individual and social way of existing. Numerous authors, especially those inspired by the Catholic doctrine, seem to be convinced that humanity is afflicted with a deep moral crisis, not indifferent towards the formulated educational concepts and understanding of subjectivity of individuals. The factors "responsible" for this crisis include, e.g. dominance of materialistic anthropology negating spirituality;⁴ increasing consumerism, stimulated by the media and even science; normative chaos; and, finally, an almost complete rejection of what morally "should be done", related to the decline of authority figures.⁵ By radically opposing theses on the moral crisis, thinkers of the postmodernist trend seem to be of the opinion that a new, better age of morality is approaching, since it is founded on the independence and responsibility of the individual. In their view, in the face of the increasing pluralism, the ethical universalism, postulated by e.g. Christianity, loses its *raison d'être*.⁶ Even if such claims were to be dismissed, it is, in fact, difficult not to admit that in the broadly-defined social pragmatics, these individuals become the sole creators of their life, also the moral one.

The rapidly changing new models of social life, which determine the understanding of subjectivity by affecting the form of relations of an individual towards other individuals and communities, are closely associated with transformations in the moral sphere. The phenomena typical for the turn of the second and third millennium: anomie of social ties and resignation from the social ordering of the world, do not create favorable conditions for building stronger social ties without which it is pointless to refer to subjectivity.⁷

In search of the cause of the modern "fixation" on the autonomy of an individual and their independence, we must firstly point out the popularity of social models that opt for liberal individualism, characterized by an array of implications of varying importance. Thus, an individual is not perceived as a co-participant and co-creator of social life, responsible for the good of their own as well as others', but rather as an autotelic and completely perfect being that may actually do without others and be oriented around one's own good.⁸ While

⁴ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Pamięć i tożsamość*, Kraków 2005, p. 19.

⁵ Cf. A. Szołtysek, *Filozofia wychowania moralnego*, Kraków 2009, p. 127.

⁶ Cf. J. Mariański, *Socjologia moralności*, Lublin 2006, p. 45.

⁷ Cf. Z. Bauman, *Spółczesność w stanie obłąkania*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 17-18.

⁸ Cf. P. Skrzydlewski, *Błąd antropologiczny w teoriach społecznych*, in: *Błąd antropologiczny*, (eds.) A. Maryniarczyk, K. Stępień, Lublin 2003, pp. 245-246.

being critical of this way of building inter-community relations of individuals, it must be mentioned that an alternative solution are often totalitarian systems of diverse provenance, which were dramatically “tested” in the 20th century, and are characterized by subordinating the good of an individual to society. These systems, disregarding an individual and often depriving them of their legitimate rights, in practice, do not function without violence. Under such circumstances, any kind of good contributed to a community by an individual is extorted from this individual by their community, or rather its authorities. There is no room here for dialogue or participation, characteristic for personal communities, but there emerge other aspects that practically destroy subjectivity: evasion and conformism.⁹

3. The phenomenon of subjectivity

While searching for their own identification, people have, for a long time, found it primarily in their reason. Ancient and medieval philosophers saw man, first and foremost, as a being who is, owing to their reason, capable of introspection and determination of the irrational world. Whereas the elements that seems to define the contemporary man, in great part, is not their rationality, but rather their volitional sphere, or even emotionality, although this issue may be a subject of a separate discussion. In the light of the above considerations, substantial appreciation of freedom becomes not only a consequence of exhibiting the inherent property of man, which is beyond any doubt, but also acknowledging it as a defining element of man. Modern philosophy of subject favors idealization of opposites: freedom – nature, spontaneity – necessity, authenticity – objectivity, and, in fact, it has abstracted freedom from the real human existence.¹⁰ “Re-evaluation” of freedom, perceived as being in opposition to reason and regarded as a factor that overly objectifies man, is ascribed numerous consequences for the social, political and, finally, moral life. The present-day man, who greatly values their freedom, is reluctant to “compromises”, which appear to violate this freedom to some extent. While in the contexts that may be defined as economic, man is sometimes capable of maintaining this freedom, in terms of social relations, however, particularly with regard to morality, man seems to watch over it care-

⁹ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1969, pp. 355-357.

¹⁰ Cf. A. Wierzbicki, *W ręku rady Jego*, „Resovia Sacra” 1 (1994), p. 203.

fully, frequently fetishizing it. The same remarks may be directed at education, which is a very delicate sphere of human life and which may be perceived as an end or, at the very least, a threat to freedom.¹¹

The term “subjectivity” present in the title of this article may, today, be regarded as a correlate or even a synonym of human freedom. In the area of education, as it is the case in issues related to politics or the social or religious life, subjectivity is becoming a quintessence of freedom of the individual. In the cultural area, the role of an individual in the social life is undoubtedly on the rise, what is more, awareness of one’s rights is growing even we had to concede the point that it frequently happens on the declarative level. The fact of subjectivity of: the school in relation to the country, the family to the school or the pupil to the factors determining the social space, is no longer, and rightly so, a matter of disputes. The concern for maintaining subjectivity, not always understood integrally, is, however, becoming something more: an axiom or a dogma, which is beyond any, even substantive, discussion.

The growing significance of subjectivity, also in this area, is influenced by a considerable area of underspecification and insolvability, which increases the need for human initiative and independence.¹² Even though it is connected with some amount of discomfort, modern man is required to be creative and not to concede his right to make decisions to others. Under these circumstances, acknowledging the subjectivity of young people is becoming the foundation of education, a competence without which they will lose their place in the fluctuating reality.

Having indicated today’s explicit and common acceptance of the role of subjectivity in the process of education, it must be noted that there are serious problems with regard to formulating its definition in a way to make it as universal and acceptable as possible. It seems, however, that the subjective man, by regulating his relations with the environment, ought to reject inertia and take advantage of their most fundamental attributes: reason and freedom. The possibility of affecting the broadly-defined surroundings must, thus, be regarded as a condition for the education acknowledging subjectivity of each individual making up the educational situation. The evaluation “criteria” for the subjectivity

¹¹ Cf. J. Stala, *Der Mensch als Person: Die bestimmende Grundlage für Johannes Paul II. in seinem Bild von der Familie*, „The Person and the Challenges” 2 (2012) Nr 2, pp. 41-59; J. Stala, *Die personalistische Grundlage für Erziehung und Bildung in der katholischen Schule*, „Angelicum” 88 (2011), pp. 997-1007.

¹² Cf. M. Szymański, *Edukacyjne problemy współczesności*, Kraków 2014, pp. 98-99.

of the individual are: possessing and creatively modifying the conception of the world, justifying one's role in it, as well as making choices in accordance with a defined value-system.¹³

In the strictly philosophical context, the implicative account of the term "subject" (*hipokeimenon*) must be one by Aristotle, who perceives it as something that is at the base of something, as the foundation for the occurrence of things and phenomena.¹⁴ What follows from that definition is recognizing subjectivity as an elemental factor constituting the person and being the foundation for others. Every action negating one's subjectivity by other persons or social institutions is to be regarded as an action depreciating the person and their inherent value.¹⁵

While addressing the issue of subjectivity of the individual, it must be mentioned that at the turn of the 20th and 21st century it was particularly emphasized by the supporters of antipedagogy, who have had significant influence over the functioning models of education. This trend enhances the status of participation in shaping the subjectivity of a child, based on partnership and solicitude, and deeply respecting that child's autonomy. As a consequence of making the focal point of its assumptions such as elements as self-determination, freedom, one's responsibility only for oneself, the purpose-oriented education is seen as a threat to the subjectivity of children and youth, or rather of all those that would be subjected to a more or less formalized education. By granting each man, regardless of his age, i.e. also children, the same rights as those for adults, it is assumed that every educational process characterized by a purpose does not, on principle, guarantee equal relations between pupils and educators, but, in fact, questions these rights. A pupil cannot be regarded as a being resembling a puppet, which the educator attempts to orient in the chosen direction, but an autonomous subject making his own choices. In the light of the above

¹³ Cf. A. Warchoł, *Podmiot w sferze społecznej*, in: *Podmiot, osoba, tożsamość*, E. Pietrzak, A. Warchoł, Ł. Zaorski-Sikora, Łódź 2007, p. 37; E. Osewska, *The Current Situation of Education and Continuing Professional Development of RE Teachers in Poland in the Context of the Social Challenges*, "The Person and the Challenges" 2 (2012) Nr 2, pp. 123-131; E. Osewska, *The Catholic School in the Context of Growing Migration into Europe*, "The Person and the Challenges" 5 (2015) Nr 2, pp. 79-90; E. Osewska, *Religious Education as Accompanying: from Superficiality to Spirituality to Personal Acquaintance with God Incarnate*, "The Person and the Challenges" 6 (2016) Nr 2, pp. 21-34; E. Osewska, *Memories of Adults Regarding Relations with Parents in Childhood*, "The Person and the Challenges" 7 (2017) Nr 1, pp. 149-158.

¹⁴ Cf. K. Leśniak, *Arystoteles*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 75-76.

¹⁵ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1969, pp. 122-127.

assumptions, only a complete resignation from the purposeful influence creates conditions for the true acceptance of the subjectivity of a pupil. Each educational situation appears to be a meeting of two inauthentic subjects, which, by creating an ostensible world, conceal their true feelings and thoughts from each other.¹⁶ While antipedagogy has to be given credit for exhibiting the pupil's subjectivity, which was considered a violation of pedagogical principles, it is difficult to accept that its followers perceive the purpose-oriented education as a deception aiming at gaining dominance over pupils, their indoctrination, in order to achieve different goals, even the noble ones.¹⁷ Despite the fact that the influence of antipedagogy is presently decreasing, the importance of subjectivity, propagated by its supporters, still remains attractive and relevant. It has found its new place and perspectives primarily within personalism, which, by attaching significance to the subjectivity of pupils in the educational process, does not only acknowledge its purposeful character but regards it as something of paramount importance.

4. Understanding man in the context of the assumptions of personalism

The starting point for personalism, which is a complex philosophical-theological school of thought, characterized by strong pedagogical implications, is the phenomenon of the person through which the entire reality is interpreted.¹⁸ While analyzing the nature of the person, and not relinquishing the possibility to fathom it, personalism indicates mystery as its strong element. Following C. Bartnik, we may see the person as a complex being since it combines two aspects: on the one hand, it is "someone existing", and, on the other hand, uniqueness "existing as someone". The person is a real being that is most deserving of existence, which is concentrated on the self, i.e. that it is "someone".¹⁹ Also

¹⁶ Cf. B. Śliwerski, *Antypedagogika*, in: *Wyzwania pedagogii krytycznej i antypedagogiki*, eds. B. Śliwerski, T. Szukdlarek, Kraków 1991, p. 124.

¹⁷ Cf. S. Gałkowski, *Założenia, implikacje i konsekwencje antypedagogiki*, in: *W świecie dziecka*, eds. B. Lachowska, M. Rygielski, Lublin 1999, p. 26.

¹⁸ Cf. K. Bochenek, *Bezpieczeństwo osoby a demokracja w kontekście personalizmu Jana Pawła II*, in: *Prawo i państwo. Wybrane zagadnienia*, eds. D. Stasi, M. Bosak, Rzeszów 2014, p. 162.

¹⁹ Cf. C.S. Bartnik, *Szkice do systemu personalizmu*, Lublin 2006, pp. 22-23.

K. Wojtyła, formulating his personalistic norm, differentiates between its two aspects. In its negative part, in a way, parallel to Kant, the person is the kind of good which cannot be treated as an object of use, and thus, as such the means to an end. In its positive form, however, going further than Kant's formalism, the personalistic norm indicates that the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.²⁰

The core of personalism is defined by integral anthropology, which takes into account all aspects of human nature.²¹ Owing to the physical body, man is seen here as an individual, and a specimen of the human species, and identified as a person thanks to the internal, spiritual "I", the internal parameter that absolutely dissociates itself from accounts disregarding any aspect of human corporeality. By not formulating a systematic and uniform ideology, personalism regards the person as the fundamental human reality, preceding economic, social and political structures. Furthermore, this reality is sensitive to high values and capable of autonomy from things.²² At the core of the social, personalistic philosophy lies a reference to the common good, which includes and reflects the good of each and every person. The correlation of freedom and responsibility implies a significant need to limit it; the border, however, is defined by the good of other persons, gifted the same dignity.²³

Every person's dignity is perceived by personalism as an innate and natural hallmark that assigns the person a special place in the hierarchy of beings. Personalism demands affirmation and protection of dignity, free of exclusivism.²⁴ The consequence of dignity and the autotelic quality of the human person is ac-

²⁰ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, Kraków 1986, p. 42.

²¹ Cf. J. Stala, *Den Jungen Menschen auf den Etappen Seines Lebenswegs Begleiten. Wesentliche Elemente der Jugendkatechese Johannes Pauls II.*, „Angelicum“ 90 (2013), pp. 945-960; J. Stala, *Die Freiheit – das besondere Kennzeichen einer modernen Jugendernziehung*, „The Person and the Challenges“ 3 (2013) Nr 2, pp. 193-207; J. Stala, *Der gesellschaftlich-kulturelle Kontext der aktuellen Gefährdungen für die religiöse Erziehung und Bildung in der Familie*, „The Person and the Challenges“ 3 (2013) Nr 1, pp. 251-266; J. Stala, *Implikationen für Pädagogik und Katechese im Hinblick auf die Unterstützung christlicher Eltern bei der Erfüllung ihrer Aufgaben im Kontext der aktuellen Bedrohungen und Herausforderungen der Familie*, „Theologica“ 48 (2013) 1, pp. 129-142.

²² Cf. J. Maritain, *Pisma filozoficzne*, Kraków 1988, p. 139; S. Kowalczyk, *Polski personalizm współczesny*, in: *Personalizm polski*, ed. M. Rusecki, Lublin 2008, p. 315.

²³ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1969, pp. 355-357.

²⁴ Cf. J. Galarowicz, *Być ziarnem pszenicznym. Nowa książeczka o człowieku*, Kęty 2006, p. 148.

knowledging that it cannot be treated as a means but only as an end before any other person, including God. In the case of God, this situation, even though such philosophers as Sartre put independence from God at the core of their doctrine, seems impossible since He exists as Love, which rules out dominance or enslavement.²⁵ Thus, G. Marcel rejects the opinion that philosophy ought to be characterized as being impervious to any form of supernaturalism,²⁶ and V. Frankl points out that in order to fully explain the essence of man, it is indispensable to refer to anthropology, which, by challenging nihilism, leaves the door open for transcendence.²⁷ According to this philosopher, the essence of this nihilism lies in its reductionistic, disregarding relations of the human person with God, view of the reality and, consequently, in discounting these dimensions of existence that conceal its greatest wealth.²⁸ Having rejected the thesis that the relation of man and God deprives man of subjectivity, Maritain writes that only when God sets out the perspective of looking at the whole reality can man know that “my person has no meaning and, at the same time, my fate is the most important of them all – to know one thing without falling into hubris, to know the other without revealing our uniqueness.”²⁹ The same argumentation and thoughts are exhibited by J. Życiński, who postulates replacing the ostensible opposition between God and Man with a harmonious symphony between them, leading towards Beauty and a Sense of humanity.³⁰ This striving after synergy between human nature and that which results from transcendence constitutes the factor which shapes, in great part, the personalistic model of education.

5. Education as a process of personalization

Personalization, proposed by the presented model of understanding man, does not mean a person's withdrawal into oneself, but it entails going beyond oneself towards a community, being with others and for others, building interpersonal

²⁵ Cf. T. Klein, *Jana Pawła II odczytanie biblijnego przesłania o Bożym miłosierdziu*, Pelplin 2008, p. 161.

²⁶ Cf. G. Marcel, *Homo viator*, Warszawa 1959, p. 271.

²⁷ Cf. V. Frankl, *Homo patiens*, Warszawa 1971, p. 94.

²⁸ Cf. V. Frankl, *Homo patiens*, Warszawa 1971, pp. 9–10, 107.

²⁹ Cf. J. Maritain, *Bóg i nauka*, in: *Pisma filozoficzne*, Kraków 1988, p. 91.

³⁰ Cf. J. Życiński, *Medytacje sokratejskie*, Lublin 1991, p. 161.

relations.³¹ In spite of the fact that every person remains a closed-up unity, there occurs a parallel, dynamic process of fulfilling its potentiality. Thus, an absolute condition for “becoming” a person is the participation of other persons, opening to them and, as a result, to education. The human person, while remaining an autonomous and creative subject, which ultimately determines itself, cannot develop in isolation from other persons since achieving one’s complete humanity occurs only by being with others. The process of “personalization” can never violate the individuality and subjectivity of the educated person since its goal is to develop this individuality and subjectivity. Following the classical Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy, personalism equates education of a pupil with their “enhancement” so that they can finally take responsibility for the process of development of their potentialities. The consequence of acknowledging the uniqueness of every person is granting them the right to select their own separate way of personal development and enhancement. A person is educated, whereas an animal may only be trained.³² The dynamic structure of self-determination means that a person is gifted and assigned to oneself, belongs to oneself and is responsible for oneself.³³ The responsibility for self-determination transforms into the obligation to striving towards the full personal life, with the entire wealth of factors constituting it.

The personalistic vision of education, focused primarily on the development of the human person, obliges them to gifting humanity to each other, as well as to a dialog between free persons, premised on their subjectivity and including their mentality.³⁴ A condition for the effectiveness of this process is the personal maturity of the educator, who, oneself aiming at self-enhancement, will be able to choose appropriate values together with their pupil.³⁵ The recognition of values by young people cannot be achieved without the model example of the educator, who remains their undisputed, but not imposed, *a priori* master.³⁶ The power of this respect, besides the acquired knowledge and pedagogical compe-

³¹ Cf. J. Bielski, *Wychowanie i edukacja w personalizmie*, in: *Dylematy współczesnej edukacji*, ed. K. Dziurzyński, Józefów 2012, p. 33.

³² K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, Kraków 1986, p. 54.

³³ Cf. G. Grzybek, *Etyka rozwoju a pedagogika opiekuńcza*, Rzeszów 2013, p. 32.

³⁴ Cf. G. Puchalski, *Edukacja w kontekście nowej ewangelizacji w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, Olsztyn 2002, p. 151.

³⁵ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1969, p. 233.

³⁶ Cf. S. Kowalczyk, *Współczesny kryzys ideowo-aksjologiczny*, Lublin 2011, p. 41.

tences, can be measured only as something that can only be described as “love”. Following John Paul II, the genesis of this special kind of love is to be found in the essence of youth itself: “It is enough that you are young for me to love you.”³⁷ Only the deep, not superficial, affirmation of the educated young individuals creates conditions for revealing the vast perspectives of personal existence before them, and, at the same time, it genuinely respects their subjectivity. According to the Polish Pope, the dogmatic, but also hopeful parable of the prodigal son and loving father, who never, even for a moment, discounted his son’s dignity as a person, can be regarded as a summary of Christian pedagogy, which follows personalism. “The father of the prodigal son is faithful to his fatherhood, faithful to his love that he bestowed upon his son... The father is cognizant of the fact the principal good: good of humanity of his son, has been saved. Admittedly, the fortune has been wasted, but the humanity has survived.”³⁸ This concern for the core of humanity of the son does not stand in opposition to acknowledging his subjectivity. The son’s choice of values that are not cherished by his father, even if it was inappropriate in his view, does not sever the father-son bond. At the core of the father’s concern there is undying hope for his son’s return and re-adopting values that are important to the father.

Within personalism and education based on it, the factor that shapes the person tremendously, as well as being the central feature of social life, is the conveyance of values. Education founded on anti-values is, in itself, a logical and moral contradiction. On the other hand, education that refrains from any values, must, according to personalism, be regarded as simply in vain and unproductive. The role of personalistic education is not by any means to destroy subjectivity of young people but rather to support the process of preference and affirmation of the appropriate hierarchy of values by them, without which their fullness of humanity cannot come into being. The building of the axiosphere, within which an effective process of education would be shaped, ought to be based on factors defining the person: dignity, responsibility, reason, freedom, love, ability of transcendence. The process of education towards values is a meeting of the subject persons: child, adolescent, teacher, parent, who, driven by the similar axiological orientation, orient themselves on the genuine growth of the person.

³⁷ Jan Paweł II, *Letter Juvenum Patris on the centenary of death of St. John Bosco*, Vatican 1988, No. 4.

³⁸ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Dives in Misericordia Encyclical*, Vatican 1980, No. 6, 7.

6. Conclusion

Living on the border of two different worlds: natural and specifically human, man seems to be a being that is dramatically torn in search of his true identity.³⁹ At the same time, man can never abandon this quest, even if it seems like the mythical Sisyphean task. Man cannot withdraw from this path, even if he seems to be the only being that is never going to be given sufficient time to learn how to live. "An ant that hatches out knows all it can do and will never err; a bird leaving its nest is a mature bird; but an old man dies crying that he has never understood his true calling".⁴⁰ Comprehension of this calling, but, above all, fulfilling it, is the task of every person, who, in a way, permanently constitutes both the object and the subject of education.

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³⁹ Cf. R. Ingarden, *Książeczka o człowieku*, Kraków 1987, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁰ W. Stróżewski, *O stawianiu się człowiekiem (kilka myśli niedokończonych)*, in: *Człowiek – wychowanie – kultura*, ed. F. Adamski, Kraków 1993, p. 56.

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