

EDUCATION AS A SPACE FOR THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL SUBJECTIVITY: A SOCIAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This article provides a socio-philosophical analysis of education as a key space for constructing social subjectivity. Overcoming the reproductive paradigm, in which education is viewed merely as the transmission of norms and knowledge, the author substantiates the ontological status of education as an emancipatory practice that forms an active, reflective, and responsible social agent. Based on dialogic, intersubjective , and critical-pedagogical concepts (M. Bakhtin, L. Vygotsky, P. Freire , G. Giroux), the mechanisms of subjectivity formation through interiorization, encounter with the "Other," and overcoming alienation are revealed. Particular attention is paid to the challenges of the digital age, the algorithmization of social interactions, and the risk of individual atomization. It is concluded that the preservation of genuine social subjectivity requires a transition from the paradigm of adaptation to the paradigm of critical reflection, meaning generation , and intersubjective solidarity.

Key words

social subjectivity, education, agency , intersubjectivity , critical pedagogy, socialization, digital environment, dialogism, emancipation.

The current stage of societal development is characterized by unprecedented complexity of social structures, the erosion of traditional institutions, and the accelerating pace of cultural transformation. Under these conditions, the education system faces a fundamental question: what is its true purpose? While the classical model viewed education primarily as a tool for socialization—the transmission of accumulated experience, norms, and skills necessary for integrating an individual into the existing social structure—modern social philosophy insists on a different understanding. Education today should act not as a factory for adaptation, but as a space for the formation of social subjectivity—the individual's capacity for independent action, critical reflection, moral choice, and the construction of social relations.

The relevance of this study stems from the profound contradiction between society's objective need for active, responsible, and emancipated subjects and the

persistent tendency of educational systems toward standardization, instrumentalization, and the transformation of students into passive objects of pedagogical influence. Moreover, the expansion of digital technologies and algorithmic behavioral management systems creates new threats to genuine human agency, replacing subjectivity with reactive patterns of information consumption.

The problem of subjectivity and its formation lies at the intersection of philosophy, sociology, and pedagogy. The fundamental foundations of the dialogic nature of the subject are laid in the works of M.M. Bakhtin, L.S. Vygotsky, and J.G. Mead. The institutional mechanisms of constructing the subject through power and discourse have been studied by M. Foucault and P. Bourdieu. The emancipatory potential of education is revealed in the concepts of critical pedagogy (P. Freire, G. Giroux, M. Apple). However, a comprehensive socio-philosophical analysis of education as a space (topos) for the development of social subjectivity in the context of post-non-classical reality requires further conceptualization.

The purpose of the article is to identify the ontological, epistemological and axiological foundations of the educational space as a mechanism for constructing social subjectivity, as well as to determine strategies for preserving human agency in the context of digital transformation.

The concept of "subjectivity" in classical philosophy (from R. Descartes to I. Kant) was associated primarily with individual consciousness, autonomy of will, and the capacity for rational self-determination. However, socio-philosophical analysis shows that subjectivity is not an initial, inherent given; it is constituted within the space of social relations. As J. G. Mead noted, the social "Self" is formed only through the internalization of the views of the "generalized other" and constant interaction with the social environment [1].

In this context, education appears not as an external superstructure over the biological individual, but as an ontological condition for the development of man as a social subject. L.S. Vygotsky, substantiating his cultural-historical theory, demonstrated that higher mental functions and social subjectivity are formed through the process of interiorization – the translation of external social interactions into the internal plane of consciousness [2]. Consequently, the educational space is that very "zone of proximal development" where the individual, interacting with cultural signs, meanings, and others, overcomes their biological immediacy and acquires the status of a subject of culture and history.

The dialogic paradigm developed by M.M. Bakhtin plays a special role in the development of subjectivity. According to Bakhtin, "to be means to communicate dialogically" [3]. A subject cannot know itself and establish itself in the world without a relationship to another subject. Education, therefore, must be organized as a space for genuine dialogue, where knowledge is not imposed as a monological truth, but is generated through intersubjective interaction. In this dialogic space, the learner not only assimilates information, but also takes a specific "position" – moral, intellectual, and civic.

It is important to distinguish between the concepts of "object of socialization" and "subject of social action." The object of socialization passively absorbs social norms, becoming a convenient element of a functional system. The social subject, in contrast, possesses agency – the ability to initiate action, critically evaluate existing norms, assume responsibility, and transform social reality. Philosophical anthropology (M. Scheler, H. Plessner, A. Gehlen) emphasizes that humans are inherently "deficient" and incomplete; education should compensate for this deficiency not through rigid adaptation, but through the development of the capacity for self-determination and meaning-making.

Thus, social subjectivity in the context of education is not simply the presence of knowledge and skills, but an existential-moral position expressed in the ability to reflect, empathy, moral choice and solidarity.

The educational space has a dual nature. On the one hand, it is an institution of social reproduction, and on the other, a space for emancipation and the critical overcoming of existing limitations.

The French sociologist P. Bourdieu showed that the educational system is a powerful tool for the formation of "habitus" – a system of dispositions that determine the perception, thinking and actions of an individual in the social world [4]. Through the hidden curriculum (hidden curriculum) - implicit norms, rituals, methods of assessment and communication - school and university construct a certain type of subject that corresponds to the logic of the dominant social order.

In his studies of discourse and power, M. Foucault demonstrated how institutional spaces (including schools) produce "docile bodies" and controlled minds through practices of surveillance, examination, and classification [5]. In this dimension, education acts as a mechanism for suppressing authentic subjectivity, replacing it with role-based behavior and conformity. A critical analysis of these mechanisms is necessary to prevent educational practice from becoming an instrument of social control.

The reproductive model is opposed by the concept of critical pedagogy, founded by the Brazilian thinker P. Freire. In his famous "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," Freire criticizes the "banking" model of education, where the teacher "invests" knowledge in the passive student, similar to depositing money in a bank [6]. This model, according to Freire, kills subjectivity, turning the individual into an object of manipulation.

Freire proposes an alternative: "problematizing education," based on dialogue and a shared search for truth. In this space, the learner and teacher act as co-subjects of cognitive and social action. Education becomes an act of creativity and liberation, in which the individual recognizes themselves not as passive victims of circumstances, but as active transformers of the world.

American philosopher G. Giroux develops this line, arguing that schools should be "democratic public spheres" where young people learn not only to earn a living but also to understand their place in society, develop critical literacy, and the

ability to resist ideological manipulation [7]. Education as a space of subjectivity is a space where doubt is encouraged, where error is seen not as a reason for punishment but as a point of growth, and where knowledge is inextricably linked with ethical responsibility.

The formation of social subjectivity is impossible without an ethical dimension. The philosophy of dialogue (M. Buber, E. Levinas) points out that the subject is born at the moment of "encounter" with the Other. Education should be organized to cultivate the capacity for listening, recognizing the value of the Other, and assuming responsibility for them. Social subjectivity deprived of an ethical core degenerates into instrumental egoism and social Darwinism. The true subject is not one who dominates, but one who is capable of solidarity and shared action.

The current stage of civilization's development, characterized by ubiquitous digitalization, calls into question traditional mechanisms for shaping social agency. The digital environment is radically transforming the educational space, creating both new opportunities and existential threats.

In the context of digitalization, education increasingly relies on algorithmic systems, adaptive platforms, and artificial intelligence. On the one hand, this enables personalized learning. On the other, the phenomenon of "algorithmic control" is emerging, where developmental trajectories, information selection, and even social interactions are predetermined by machine algorithms.

As S. Zuboff notes, we are entering an era of "surveillance capitalism," where human experience is extracted as raw material for predicting and modifying behavior [8]. In such an environment, the individual's social agency is replaced by reactive patterns embedded in digital architecture. People lose the ability to make autonomous choices, their "self" is fragmented into multiple digital avatars, and social responsibility is eroded by the anonymity of online interactions.

The digital educational environment, despite its global connectivity, paradoxically promotes atomization. Screen-based learning, clip-based information acquisition, and the replacement of live dialogue with asynchronous communication lead to the erosion of intersubjectivity. Subjectivity, as demonstrated above, requires encounter with the Other, empathy, and shared experience. The virtual environment often reduces the Other to a set of symbols or functions, which hinders the development of deep social and moral responsibility.

Moreover, the digital environment gives rise to the phenomenon of "post-truth" and information overload. In these conditions, a social subject cannot develop without developing critical media literacy – the ability to filter information, recognize manipulative discourses, and distinguish fact from simulacrum (according to Jean Baudrillard).

3.3. Strategies for maintaining subjectivity

In order for education to continue to fulfill its ontological function of shaping social subjectivity, it is necessary to implement a number of strategies:

Shifting focus from knowledge transmission to developing reflection. In a world where any information is accessible at the click of a button, the primary goal of education is no longer the accumulation of data, but rather the development of the ability to understand, synthesize, and ethically evaluate it.

Cultivating dialogic practices. Despite digitalization, live seminars, debates, and project-based activities that require collaborative effort and empathic interaction must remain the core of education.

Developing digital ethics. Education should foster an understanding that technological progress does not negate moral responsibility. Digital actors must be aware of the consequences of their virtual actions in real society.

A space for "slow thinking." In contrast to the culture of instant content consumption, education must create zones of "cognitive resistance"—spaces for deep reading, sustained reflection, and contemplation, where the inner core of the individual is formed.

The socio-philosophical analysis conducted allows us to draw the following conclusions: education is not a neutral channel for transmitting information. It is an ontological space in which individuals transcend their biological and social immediacy, acquiring the status of a free, reflective, and responsible social subject.

The development of subjectivity is dialogic and intersubjective . It is impossible without an encounter with the Other, without cultural dialogue, and without the practice of ethical responsibility. The reproductive, monologic model of education suppresses agency , while the emancipatory , problematizing model (in line with critical pedagogy) promotes its flourishing.

In the context of digital transformation, the development of social agency faces unprecedented challenges. Algorithmization, atomization, and clip-based learning threaten to turn people into passive objects of information influence. Overcoming these threats requires the targeted development of an educational environment as a space for critical reflection, vibrant dialogue, and meaning-making .

Thus, education as a space for the formation of social subjectivity is a space of freedom and risk, where individuals learn not only to exist in the world but also to take responsibility for its transformation. In an era of total instrumentalization and technological determinism, preserving this space is not just a pedagogical task but also a condition for the survival of human civilization itself.

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