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Chapter 9
Hermeneutics in the Non-affirmative Theory of Education

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Abstract This chapter explores how the general theory of hermeneutics may help us to clarify how education and the process of Bildung relate. To this end, the chapter consists of two sections. The first section outlines why we need different notions of *subjectivity* and *intersubjectivity* for talking about the premises of pedagogical interaction and, in addition, about the results of Bildung. Three pairs of subjectivity and intersubjectivity are identified: as anthropological preconditions; as notions emanating from socialisation into a life-world; and finally, as self-reflexive categories. This first section views non-affirmative pedagogical intervention and Bildsamkeit as mediating between three pairs of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The second section deepens the above reasoning by exploring how *hermeneutics* can function as a complementary approach for clarifying non-affirmative pedagogy. More precisely, how are the central questions of hermeneutics constitutive of and present in a theory of non-affirmative education?

Keywords Hermeneutics · Intersubjectivity · Bildsamkeit

Introduction

As an institutional form of education, *teaching* invites the learner to engage in reflective interpretation of cultural norms and contents. In making the world accessible from various perspectives, teaching itself features unique forms of mediating interpretative activity and understanding.

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This chapter explores how general theory of hermeneutics may help us to clarify how education and the process of Bildung relate. To this end, the chapter consists of two sections. The first section outlines why we need different notions of *subjectivity* and *intersubjectivity* for talking about the premises of pedagogical interaction and, in addition, about the results of Bildung. This first section views non-affirmative pedagogical intervention and Bildsamkeit as mediating between three different forms of subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

The second section deepens the above reasoning by exploring how *hermeneutics* can function as a complementary approach for clarifying non-affirmative pedagogy. More precisely, how are the central questions of hermeneutics constitutive of and present in a theory of non-affirmative education (Benner, 1995)?

Education and Bildung vs. Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity

In any education theory, there is an obvious need to explain what a pedagogical intervention is and how it contributes to the individual's establishment and development of personal identity and, in this process, how the individual comes to share the world with others. However, in order for education to be possible in practice, we typically assume that teaching relies on the existence of an already existing or shared life-world or some other form of mutuality (symmetry) between self and other. How else would it be possible to reach out to the other in her or his otherness, if we did not share the world in some fundamental sense? Yet, at the same time, we think that the very process itself is necessary for establishing such a shared world. This indicates a paradox: as a premise, we need to assume the existence of something (a shared world) that only comes into being through the process itself. A way to solve this paradox is to make a distinction between a shared world existing at the beginning of the pedagogical process and a different shared world, as the consequence of the process.

A similar paradox seems to be present when discussing subjectivity. In viewing teaching as the summoning of the learner's self-activity, it seems we need to assume the existence of an Other, or a subject, being addressed. However, at the same time, it is only by addressing the other that the subject develops into a cultural being, i.e., becomes somebody. Again, the constellation is paradoxical: as a premise, education seem to assume the existence of something that only results from education itself. In this case, too, there seems to be a need to make a distinction between some version of subjectivity at the beginning of the education process, and a different subjectivity at its end.

The above reasoning indicates that we need to accept some form of *symmetry* or radical intersubjectivity as well as some form of *asymmetry* or radical subjectivity, not only as a starting point for a theory of education but also as something education aims at or results in. In other words, at the beginning of the educational process, we share the world to some extent, but not totally, as we all are different from each other. At the end of the educational process, we find ourselves again as subjects that

differ from others in new ways but also find us as subjects that have come to share the world in new ways. To conclude, at the beginning of the educational process, we are the same, yet we are also different from each other. But, at the same time, even if it is through the process of education that we *become* the same, we also become different from each other. Sometimes this is expressed by saying that enculturation and individuation are two sides of the same process, or parallel. In this light, education is about *being* and *becoming* the same (intersubjectivity) and different (subjectivity). Expressed a little cryptically, the paradox of education is that we are what we become, and that we become what we are – namely the same and different.

Yet, for analytical reasons, the chapter keeps up the distinction between Bildung as primary socialisation and Bildung as secondary socialisation. Bildung as primary socialisation refers to growing into a culture through participatory activity in its ordinary practises and habits. Bildung as secondary socialisation refers to pedagogical reflection, intentionally making the taken-for-granted life-world experiences an object for reflection with the help of general knowledge or others' experiences. For these reasons, there is a need for different versions of both subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Second, the dynamics between these different versions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity can partly be explained by pedagogical concepts: 'recognition', *Bildsamkeit*, 'summoning to self-activity'.

What Comes First, Subjectivity or Intersubjectivity?

Historically, the previous reasoning refer to the debate of how to relate subjectivity and intersubjectivity, partly originated in J. G. Fichte's critique of Kant's transcendental philosophical idealism (Williams, 1997; Uljens, 2001). Fichte's contribution was to see the individual's empirical *consciousness of freedom* as intersubjectively mediated by the Other. The self, he explained, becomes an object for itself, or aware of itself as free, only by being recognised as such by another. Kant had argued that although humans live under the influence of the external world, they are not determined by it. The human being always has a choice. But how should these choices be made? Kant assumed the existence of the moral law of which humans are aware a priori, i.e., before experience. He then assumed that the individual may choose to follow or not follow, the moral law. According to the moral law and its *categorical imperative,* an individual should never treat other human beings only as means to one's own ends. Further, the individual should only act according to principles that deserve the status of being universal laws. In any case, given her freedom, the individual can make her own choices, such as whether to act against these principles. For Fichte, the critical point was the reference to an a priori *awareness* of the moral law, that is, an awareness of these laws before empirical experience (Fichte, 2000). In doing this, Fichte argued, Kant thereby, in fact, included a reference to a shared and experiential, intersubjective, life-world. After all, the moral law said something about how individuals' were to relate to each other. Thus, awareness of the principles of the moral law was not given *before* experience but was instead constituted

intersubjectively. By herself, Fichte argued, the subject cannot become aware of herself *as* free. Instead, the individual develops awareness of herself as being free, and as having a will by being recognised and treated *as* free, while also recognising others as free. If the individual's awareness of herself as free and as a reasoning subject is dependent on the other's recognition and related education, the conclusion is that nobody has the *right* to act in ways that make the Other's freedom impossible.

Not only is it implied, in Fichte's reasoning, that this right of the Other is to be *recognised*, but also that the Other should be *summoned* to exercise her freedom. Educating the *will* means thus to summon the Other's potentiality to develop awareness of herself as being free and to reflect on one's freedom in relation to Others' freedom. Regardless of how the subject responds to summons, she becomes aware of herself as an individual having a will and acting out from a will, which means to make choices and act according to them.

From an education point of view, the above reasoning is central, as the dilemma with transcendental idealism (radical freedom philosophy) is educationally problematic. If the subject were able to constitute herself as an object *for* herself *by* herself, this would resemble contemporary radical constructivism, which, in principle, leaves very little, if any, room for pedagogical influences. In fact, in a radical constructivist philosophy of mind, education is neither possible nor necessary.

Today, we can broadly identify at least two different but complementary subject-philosophical positions in the philosophy of mind. According to a so-called *egological* or phenomenological conception, 'the Other' is constituted by the experiencing subject (Uljens, 2002). This is the traditional subject-philosophical position (Crossley, 1996). A kind of reversed position, though still subject-centered, is recognition-oriented philosophy of mind, as represented by Hegel (Frank, 1991, 459f; Williams, 1997). Here, the self *as recognised by the other,* is of primordial significance. In this case, it seems, the Other's recognition of the self, subordinates the subjects coming into being to the Other's recognising act, so that the Self is partly constituted by the Other's experience. In this reading, the Self would be dependent on the Other (Honneth, 1996).

Philosophers like Merleau-Ponty, Buber, Bakhtin, Mead, and Taylor have all challenged the subject-centered, individualistic, or rationalistic approach (Uljens & Kullenberg, 2021). Social philosophy in general has witnessed a growth in interest in intersubjectivity (Varga & Gallagher, 2012). Such *intersubjective* positions have in common the fact that before subjectivity, there is something fundamental that is shared. This can be language, norms, practices, or culture. This seems a very reasonable point of departure as long as we talk about encultured subjects like children attending school, who already are in possession of e.g., language. The strength of an intersubjective point of departure becomes obvious precisely in relation to language. If we separate between the individual's acts and the meaning of these acts, in ways that resemble the distinction between matter and meaning in didactics, then the *meaning* of the individual's acts is partly dependent on somebody else's interpretation. Taking part in such interpretations then helps the subject identify herself differently. In this view, the intersubjective relation becomes a condition for

subjectivity. However, this explanation assumes that participating subjects *already* share a common language or culture for this interaction to be possible. To the extent we already share something, we cannot, by pedagogical means or otherwise, move into this shared world; we are already there. To the extent that we already share the world, education appears obsolete.

However, intersubjectivity does not need to be limited to sharing cultural practices, languages, or the like. Even for Husserl, there existed two versions of intersubjectivity. On the one hand, there was a taken-for granted everyday world where we operate and where we are in a 'natural attitude', and, on the other, transcendental intersubjectivity, in the form of general knowledge (Uljens & Kullenberg, 2021; Bengtsson, 2001; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Yet Husserl, in the end, accepts a transcendentally founded epistemology based on an unconditional ego.

In contrast, following Merleau-Ponty (1962), perception as such may be considered intersubjective. Perception "as an opening to another that functions as a pre-reflexive, pre-objective, and pre-egological level, the solipsist idea is challenged about private perceptual worlds" (1996, 29). In this light, intersubjectivity is not reducible to a result of a process of Bildung, but is rather a constitutive aspect of human experience that is given and cannot be thought away.

The conclusion from the previous reasoning is that, rather than taking *either* subjectivity or intersubjectivity as its point of departure, we may, in non-affirmative theory of education, argue in favor of an educational approach that distinguishes between different forms of subjectivity and intersubjectivity (see Fig. 9.1). As argued in more detail elsewhere (Uljens, 2001; Uljens & Kullenberg, 2021), we may discern between pre-linguistic subjectivity, cultural subjectivity (identity, Me) and (self-)reflexive subjectivity. Corresponding to this, we may discern between corporeally constituted (pre-linguistic) intersubjectivity, linguistic or experiential life-world intersubjectivity, and (self)-reflexive intersubjectivity (Uljens, 2001; also
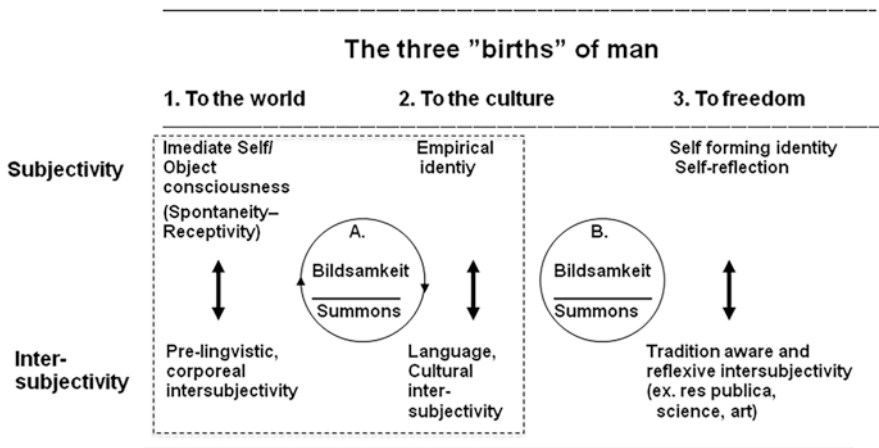

Fig. 9.1 Bildsamkeit and summons as mediating practices as related to various forms of subjectivity and intersubjectivity (following Uljens, 2008)

in Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). While the first two forms are given by birth, the following forms are experientially and historically established and developed.

What Schleiermacher then calls *spontaneity* and *receptivity* are here interpreted as fundamental assumptions about what it means to be a human being (philosophical anthropology). The individual is experientially and experimentally oriented towards the world, simultaneously experiencing it and trying to make sense of it. This chapter reminds of and refers to Merleau-Ponty's idea that the human pre-linguistic being in the world constitutively involves a fundamental interpersonal or intersubjective dimension. This is a corporeally constituted pre-linguistic intersubjectivity. The corporeal relation between the mother and child, broken by birth, continues between the child and rests on an experiential level of sharing the world. As the newborn child recognises the mother's voice better than other voices, in this sense, the subject also shares something experientially constituted.

The first forms of rudimentary spontaneity that the child demonstrates are directed by reflex, not will. Today, we know from empirical research that how the newborn is stimulated (or summoned) also affects the biological development of the brain. However, the child's existence itself, in front of the parents, is a challenge or moral call to care, which as such establishes a shared world. Care and love, as a response to the existence of the child, contribute to creating an experiential, intersubjective world. This original summons on the child's part is of course not intentional or aware, but it still raises a moral challenge for the caretaker – how to live up to this moral responsibility? On the other hand, for sound self-esteem to develop, affirmative recognition (love) of the child is crucial.

Very much of the caretaker's way of relating to the child is obviously an example of recognition based and tactful summoning. Just by calling the child by a name or treating the child *as if* it had a will, *as if* it would be capable of what she might become capable of (Benner, this volume), the child develops a sense of herself.

At the left side of Fig. 9.1, there is a distinction between spontaneity, receptivity, and *Bildsamkeit*. This is a reminder that *Bildsamkeit* sometimes in philosophical anthropology refers to what constitutes a human being's existence in the world. It also refers to an activity that is a response to pedagogical summons. In the first meaning, Bildsamkeit would be something that the pedagogue recognises as a condition, i.e., reminding of Schleiermacher's spontaneity and receptivity. In its second meaning, Bildsamkeit is a relational notion that binds the summoning and the learner's activity together. In this respect, a pedagogical space is co-constructed around a topic, matter, or problem – something pointed at.

Figure 9.1 reminds us that summoning and Bildsamkeit leading to the child's ability to say *Me* and to share the world by e.g., participation as a linguistic subject, are examples of the double-sided process of Bildung, establishing a sense of Me and We. For analytical reasons only, subjectivity and intersubjectivity are distinct from each other.

From this follows that pedagogically addressing the *newborn* and the *encultured subject*, first, by *recognising* the Other's potentiality to self-activity, and second, by pedagogical summons of the Other's self-activity, is in principle the same (A and B in the figure), but, again, for *analytical* reasons kept apart. Some might like to call

the left side of the figure for socialisation into shared practices, while the right side of the figure would indicate the pedagogical work in public education aiming at, new forms of reflective subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

Following the Finnish philosopher Johan Vilhelm Snellman's pedagogical analyses (Snellman, 1861), education of the home is represented as a normative, primary socialisation to prevailing praxis and normative systems. This would be an example of affirmative pedagogy. By contrast, the school's task was, according to Snellman, to help the learner move into the *world of shared or general knowledge,* through which existing normative systems may become objects for reflection. This would be a question of secondary socialisation, which transcends the education of the home. Although this distinction is valuable, it would be a simplification to say that the home nurtures and school teaches, so that all educational activity in the home is affirming, while all activities in the school would be non-affirming. On the contrary, it is easy to identify non-affirmative practices in any home. The same is true for school. Numerous studies show how schools contribute to the unreflectively passing on of normative patterns of practice. Consequently, the distinction between affirmative and non-affirmative pedagogical activity becomes an analytic tool for discussing both caretakers' and teachers' pedagogical activity.

On the right side of the figure, we find non-affirmative pedagogy, accepting emancipatory pedagogy, while aiming at a self-determined subject that is aware of her identity, but now in a reflexive or self-formational sense, understanding and respecting others. On the collective, intersubjective side, Figure 9.1 reminds us that formal education expands beyond enculturing subjects into cultural practices. It is about learning the value of conceptual knowledge, art, political life, etc. as various forms of collaborative self-reflexive activities. As the individual's self-image depends on social interaction and the ability to engage in the discerning and critical reflection necessary for autonomous thinking, these are considered individual rights, then education is a response to the moral demand that arises from accepting these rights (Fichte, 2000).

In this first section, we pointed at various notions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, valuable for identifying premises and consequences of education, as well as how pedagogical interventions in the form of non-affirmative summoning and the process of Bildung operate as mediating processes between these forms. The next section deepens the analysis by opening up hermeneutic dimensions of the premises, the process, and the aims of Bildung and education.

Hermeneutics in Education as Summoning of Self-Activity and Bildung

As the tradition of hermeneutic pedagogy is extensive, it is hardly surprising that the approaches to understanding of *understanding* differs radically from one philosopher to another (e.g. the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher to Gadamer, or further to

poststructuralist hermeneutics as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Jean-Francois Lyotard). This chapter does not rely on only one representative of the tradition; still, our considerations are mostly based on classical hermeneutics (e.g., Schleiermacher, Nohl, Bollnow), but also on critical hermeneutics as developed by Klaus Mollenhauer.

We begin by looking at how interpretation and understanding, as aspects of pedagogical activity, mediate between individuals and society and how they are constitutive of the educational relationship between teacher and learner. As a kind of conclusion, we claim that understanding is not only a part of the process but also one of the *aims* of *educational activity* – in many different ways.

Bildung as an Intepretative Process

A first point of departure is to perceive Bildung as the subject's dynamic relation to the world, to others, and to him/herself. It includes an experiential (*Erlebnis/das Erleben*), a reflexive and a communicative dimension. Following Dilthey's theory of pedagogical hermeneutics, 'experience' enables access to the world and to others, including emotion, perception, judgement, and will (Uhle, 1981, 9). 'Experience' is a basic category describing how the subject is or exists in the world and in relation to it. The *process* of Bildung is a change in one's experience or identity, or more generally, a modification in the way we see the world around us as well as ourselves within it.

Second, Bildung involves the subject's *interpretative activity*. We can only interpret and understand phenomena *expressed* by other subjects. In this respect, the core of pedagogical hermeneutics is the notion of *text* (or an expression, a sign, etc.) (e.g., Rittelmeyer & Parmentier, 2001, 1). Thus, an important point of interpretation is that language is the medium.[1] Both parties of the pedagogical relationship live reciprocally in the medium of language. Already the first part of the word *interpretation* reveals the relationality of Bildung and the reciprocity of the process. Drawing on Gadamer's understanding of understanding, Kerdemann (1998, 264) concludes that "to understand, rather, is to participate in an event of time and tradition in which common meaning comes to be realized in the to-and-fro" of language and dialogue. The efforts to make sense of our own experiences of the world, of others, and ourselves include *learning to express* one's experiences in language so they may be communicated and shared with others. In this respect, others contribute to establishing the meaning of our experiences. The possibility of education lies in this communicative process.

Third, the professional teacher's role cover interpretation and understanding on *behalf* of the learner in relation to external interests as codified in a curriculum. In

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[1] Humboldt especially emphasized the linguistic aspect of Bildung. Also, philosophers like Herder emphasized the role of language in the process of Bildung (e.g., Benner, & Brüggen, 2004, 193).

this, cultural mediation is at the core of the intergenerational and cultural-historically situated education processes. In this respect, teachers do not only interpret the world for themselves as subjects but also operate as professional interpreters and mediators between culture and the learners. Techers reflect on how to open up or make relevant parts of the culture accessible for the learners and also how to engage students in processes of Bildung. Klaus Mollenhauer description of *representation* in "Forgotten Connections" (Mollenhauer, 1983) demonstrates, how education in general, but the school as an institution in particular, 'simplify' the complexity of the world. It represents elements of the reality 'packed' in the curriculum.

As observed in the first section, in education, for pedagogical communication to be possible, it presupposes initial intersubjectivity and subjectivity. As observed, reaching shared 'understanding' is both a central *aim*, and is parallel to the learners own individuation. Understanding is also a part of the pedagogical *process* itself, both on the behalf of teachers and students. In carrying out such mediation, the teacher pay attention not only to the learner's present experiences, but also the learner's future.

Education as Mediation Between Individual and Society

Hermeneutical pedagogy features dialectic thinking between different poles. It is by operating in the tension between these poles, like the individual and society, that offers the possibility to enable growth of personality. Expressed in Wilhelm von Humboldt's words, to strive for the "highest and most proportional Bildung of his capabilities (Kräfte) to a whole".

In this mediation between the individual and society, the school operates as "middle sphere" having an educational role between family and "a real world" in preparing the younger generation. In this work, the teacher is forced to continuously balance between the various ideals, requirements and expectations of the homes, the society, and individual needs and aspirations.

To operate in this "middle sphere" is challenging. Just to give some examples. Should the teacher give his pupil a good grade in order to encourage him, or should the teacher prepare his pupil to face a hard life outside of the school by giving the student a lower grade? (see Dörpinghaus et al., 2006, 86). Another example, pointed out by O.F. Bollnow (1952), is that in the pedagogical relation, *patience* plays an important role. The educator has sometimes to "waste time" in waiting for the child to carry out a certain action. Pedagogical patience reflects tactfulness and sensitivity towards the learner's activities, but is often weighted against how it pays off in the future perspective. Schleiermacher also reminds that in education we sometimes have "to sacrifice the moment for the future" (orig. Schleiermacher, 1820/21, KGA II/13, S. 394). Thus, to work in this "middle sphere", i.e., in the tensions between different expectations, ambitions, evaluations, requirements, and limitations, may be frustrating for the teacher. This imperfection is very familiar to teachers, who understand that the all aims of the curriculum cannot be reached within given

frames, caused by a number of different reasons other than their own ambitions: problems in classroom management, too little time, inadequate learning materials, problems of learning, or something else (Danner, 2006, 226). These examples demonstrate that mediation is not a technical thing but requires continuous discerning thought and moral positioning, weighing interests and ambitions. It is not about just affirming things. Rather, the openness that follows from the human being indeterminate (Bildsamkeit) points to a hope for the future. Yet, what the learner may reach, we cannot know.

Understanding: The Dialectics Between Being, Thinking, and Knowing

As a concept in hermeneutical pedagogy, *understanding* is defined quite differently. In what follows, we provide some insights into pedagogical understanding in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics and theory of education.

We can hardly properly understand Schleiermacher's hermeneutics without *dialectics*. For him, *dialectics* encompasses his entire philosophical system and is obviously part of his epistemology. The main feature of this dialectic is the polarity between 'being' (Sein) and 'thinking' as well as 'knowledge' (Wissen). Dialectics is based on two manifestations of the *absolute*, whereby 'being' corresponds to 'nature' and 'thinking' and 'knowing' correspond to 'reason' (Fischer, 2001, 75). From this, one might conclude that 'being' is found in nature, and 'reason' is what forms thoughts and knowledge. However, Schleiermacher did not share this idea. Rather, what *is* or exists is only "as (far as it has) been thought of". On the other hand, thinking or knowing are possible through "being". The fact that *being* and *knowing* are immediately or inherently connected also establishes intersubjectivity, since *thinking* is possible only in the medium of language. Schleiermacher also describes dialectics as an "art of conversation" ("Kunst des Gedankenwechselns").

The anthropological basis for *knowledge* is the natural and rational human being and her ability to *think* (Lehnerer, 1985, 21). From this anthropological position, Schleiermacher seeks to determine the nature of proper thinking. The main question is: How does one move from the relativity of thinking to the certainty of knowing? Since all thinking (which means every "taken something out of spatial-temporal reality") is relative, a final all-encompassing unity of thinking is required for knowledge to take place (Nealeigh, 1988, 180). Therefore, the general and metaphysical goal of Schleiermacher is to describe the presupposition of a transcendent basis for knowing. What, then, distinguishes true knowledge from mere thinking? Schleiermacher provides two criteria. First, *knowing* is thinking, which "is conceived in such a way that it could be produced in the same way by everyone possessing the ability to think". Second, true knowing is thinking, which "is conceived as corresponding to the being that is the object of thought" (ibid. 183). In short, Schleiermacher tries to validate the definition of knowledge as a *consensus between*

subjects as well as in terms of the connection between thinking and being, as a correspondence between thought and its object outside of us. Communication between individuals demands that knowledge is "real"; knowledge is always the result of a communicative process. However, analyzing thinking alone is not enough to explain how one moves from the relativity of thinking to the certainty of knowledge. This is why Schleiermacher gives us a transcendental basis for knowledge. He maintains that this basis between thinking and being can be found in the principle of absolute unity and identifies this absolute unity as God (Nealeigh, 1988, 187).

Dialectics and hermeneutics, as a kind of meta-science consider the preconditions of language, while the existence of language is a condition for the relationship between an individual and society. In what follows, we attempt to provide some insights as to how the questions of language are connected to those of individuality, and therefore again to those of education.

Language, Dialogue, and Subjectivity

Recalling the distinction made in the first section of this chapter, a starting point of dialectics is the assumption of a radical *similarity* across all thinkers, but at the same time, there is a radical *difference* in individual thinking. One of the central thoughts of dialectics is the individuality of every single speaker, which can never revert to the "universal" or "general". Every individual is a unique "thinking being" (denkendes Sein) and "being thinking" (seiendes Denken). However, without contrasting positions, it would not be possible to seek uniqueness and identity.

During a discussion, individuals present their own unique ways of being and thinking. Yet, we have to assume that they have a common language that provides the medium for the dispute or dialogue in order to solve a point of contention. Linguistically, an agreement has to be reached both regarding the *contents* of the discussion and the *rules* concerning the dispute.

A fundamental dimension of understanding based on language, is the difference between the grammatical and psychological aspects of language. To describe these in short: grammatical, structural, and a relative constant usage of words make understanding in principle possible. Inside this structure, the individual has to find the tools to express herself. The grammatical dimension refers simply to the given logical or *grammatical meaning* (Bedeutung) or contents of the text. In other words," grammatical interpretation aims at the objective understanding of speech", as Parmentier (1989, 191) formulates it.

In the grammatical interpretation, a comparison will be done - the language used in a text will be compared with the sentences used in ordinary language. Every user of the language makes his own individual combination of the language. In this way, every speaker *reconstructs* language permanently. In speaking, one also manifests an "inner" meaning. The subject evokes the meaning (Sinn) of his own "inner world". Exactly what this "given inner meaning" is, is something that cannot be revealed in a hermeneutical process – we cannot delve inside each other's heads.

When understanding something grammatically, an individual is, in a way, a "tool of the language", because during the process of interpretation, attention is first turned to the language and not so much to the person who is speaking.

Besides the grammatical structure of language, Schleiermacher speaks about the psychological dimension of language and psychological understanding. In this dimension, the general objective is secondary, and language, in a certain way, serves the speaker. Whereas grammatical understanding is not interested in the speaker, psychological understanding pays attention to the sense given by the speaker himself. Psychological understanding tries to identify the "real" or intended meaning of the speaker or writer. The interpreter attempts to find out the actual idea of the writer's or speaker's utterances. In many cases, this sense is not clear even to the speaker himself. Therefore, asking the author himself only leads to iteration: the interpreter has to understand the explanation, the explanation of the explanation, etc. In addition, the motives are mostly unconscious and the interpreter should actually listen to what has *not* been said or what the speaker is *not* conscious of (Parmentier, 1989, 194). At least this is a point where the interpreter is on slippery ice and is forced to lean on the psychoanalytical theory of unconsciousness.

There are also some problems arising in the field when thinking about *understanding* and *individuality:* any time one tries to describe with words and concepts the thinking of others, one has crossed the border of individuality. One could even say that understanding revokes the possibility of individuality. On the other hand, it is logically impossible to insist that *understanding* could not exist or would be impossible since, to be an individual, one needs the general. There is just no subjectivity without objectivity, no singularity without the general.

Finally, let us come back to the idea that hermeneutics and pedagogy meet at their very core question – that of individuality.

Understanding plays its most central role in the process of Bildung. In fact, the individual can *understand* herself only in linguistically transmitted reality. Even if the "birth" of subjectivity cannot be narrowed to linguistics as subjectivity already possesses, at a very elementary level, the possibility expressing its own uniqueness. At the most simple level, these forms of expression are like those of a small child, like" the thing over there"," I″ or" no". With the first example ("the thing over there"), the child implies a distinction between himself and the world. With the words "Me" or "I", he indicates the awareness of being an "Other" in relation to others. With the third example," no", the child shows his will in relation to foreign will (Mollenhauer, 1986, 124).

The special challenge for understanding lies obviously in its asymmetric character. Because the child has to be led through the linguistic conventions, it is not in an equal position to assess either the topic of the discussion or its rules. If this is correct, this does not exclude the possibility of mutual understanding; the rules of discussion will anyway be created by both participants. This means that even if the adult is linguistically more competent, every single situation will be reconstructed into a new special argument, dispute, or discussion – in a very Schleiermacherian sense of the word.

If we take the preconditions of understanding seriously, as they have been described in hermeneutics, it is easy to notice that the reality given for the educator is highly complicated, and any kind of systematical settings of rules or norms are impossible. The tension between the singular and the universal is the starting point of pedagogical practice. But it also remains a never-reachable goal of education when everyone continuously recreates this tension – at least not in the linguistic sense or linguistically.

Conclusion

Based on previous considerations concerning education as a mediating practice, what can we conclude?

A first conclusion is that the theory of *non-affirmative education and Bildung cannot revert to the theory of hermeneutics*. General hermeneutics, as described in this chapter, offer us tools for understanding what understanding and interpretation mean, in general. Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, focusing on interpretation and understanding linguistic expressions, reflect a distinct take on epistemology. However, Schleiermacher's hermeneutics exceed epistelomogy, e.g., by developing a theory of the self and self-awareness. Such a general theory, or philosophy, of human existence expressed by the dialectics between being, thinking, knowledge, and language contributes to our understanding the process of Bildung. It also highlights the dimensions of pedagogical dialogues.

However, although linguistic transmissions occur within a pedagogical relationship in which both educator and child constantly aim to express their understanding and intentions through language, and despite they interpret each other for finding out about others and themselves, hermeneutic theory of communication, interpretation, and understanding mediated by language is not a theory of education.

The second conclusion from this analysis would be that the *non-affirmative theory of education and Bildung cannot be thought beyond or as something distinct from hermeneutics.* Teaching in schools and other pedagogical institutions is based on curricula. In many countries, these curricula express quite detailed educational standards and other measurable goals. In this connection, hermeneutics operates as a reminder that education and Bildung are, ultimately, not processes that can be determined beforehand. Pedagogical processes operating through language ultimately originate in the participants interaction, which, due to its hermeneutic nature, is dependent on both parties. Regarding external expectations and curriculum, pedagogical work, as hermeneutics reminds us, cannot be expected to affirm these external interests. In fact, despite policies that would limit teachers' pedagogical degrees of freedom, the unique character of the pedagogical interaction escapes this external determination.

The third conclusion would be that *in hermeneutics there often exists an implicit a theory of pedagogical intervention.* From the perspective of non-affirmative education, hermeneutic reasoning does *not* mean that schools as an institution should

refrain from or avoid providing a perspective of reality. On contrary. Pedagogical institutions have to offer some perspectives on the world. In addition to learn about the world, teaching opens up the possibility of arguing from different starting points and understanding different worldviews. Such a hermeneutically contrasting pedagogy offers the learner the possibility to develop their own horizon, which means understanding their own position in relation to others.

To conclude, with the help of non-affirmative hermeneutic pedagogy, the individual is offered a critical distance from oneself in order to exceed or change their own position or correct their own practises." To exceed" oneself or to redirect one's thinking or emotions, is not trivial at all. Rather, these processes belong to the core of Bildung as they mark the process of identity. Exactly here lies the point, which can be described as *multilayered identity*: as the individual reflects on herself, thereby grasping the duplicity between" me" and" I″, the individual is, in principle and to a certain level, able to steer oneself and the own process of Bildung or the development of identity. This conclusion clearly echoes the notion of maturity, or *Mündigkeit* in the German Bildung stradition. On his question of what enlightenment is, Kant answers that it is "man's exit from his self-inflicted immaturity". Then, to "have the courage to use one's own reason" means precisely to judge independently, even against authorities and given traditions and ways of thinking (Dörpinghaus et al., 2006, 63).

Such use of reason is both subjective and public, and reflects what in the first section of this chapter was referred to as an identity able to act self-formingly without losing oneself and a reflexive intersubjectivity as public discourse, living with continuously answering the open question of who we are, open for cultural change without dismissing history. In a non-teleological view of history and the future, Bildung presents itself as an unending task, a kind of perfection without the idea of perfectibility. Non-affirmative education, which aims to prepare for participation, is such a discourse.

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