



Halina Monika Wróblewska

University of Białystok, Poland

e-mail: h.wroblewska@uwb.edu.pl

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1985-3877>

From Lifelong Creativity to Self-Authorship: The Humanistic and Creational Dimension of Women's Citizenship in Education – Maria Grzegorzewska and Irena Wojnar

<http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/PBE.2023.023>

Abstract

The developed issue aimed to search for sources and categories of meanings used to define the essence of citizenship in the context of the adopted humanistic and creative perspective. The research problems concerned the following: 1) the areas of civic activity in the subjective and social dimension of reference; 2) the place of women's lifelong creativity in the humanistic and creative dimension of citizenship, and 3) the space of transgressive development in women's lifelong creativity in education. Due to the research problem that arose in the procedure of analysing the lifelong creativity of selected female characters, secondary sources and evidence of their professional work were taken into account. Sources of the interpretation of citizenship were adopted based on Maria Ossowska's (1946) essay *Wzór obywatela w ustroju demokratycznym* [The Model of a Citizen in a Democratic System], in which the author distinguished and characterised 13 civic virtues and identified abilities proposed by Charles Taylor (2001). My perspective on interpreting the sources of citizenship combines the humanistic and creative dimensions, an added value contained in the title approach: from lifelong creativity to self-authorship. Self-authorship is understood as the forces of subjectivity, intentionality, the meaning of life and creative adaptation. The lifelong creativity of women in education and their achievements determine their cognitive and social value and emancipatory nature. Women's lifelong creativity shows the presence

of important areas of transgressive development related to the acquisition of knowledge and scientific achievements and the activities carried out in the field of social practice, referred to as (self-)realisation.

Keywords: Maria Grzegorzewska, Irena Wojnar, citizenship, women, Poland, lifelong creativity, self-authorship.

Introduction

The developed article was created in response to the call from the Przegląd Badań Edukacyjnych; *Kobiety w Edukacji/Kobiety o Edukacji* series [*Educational Studies Review; Women in Education/Women about Education series*] to develop a text for the thematic issue on women's citizenship participation and the gender of citizenship activity. In accordance with the assumption adopted by the series' editor, citizenship is not understood as a formal and legal status in this study, and citizenship activity is not limited to the public sphere. There is also a consensus that both the term citizenship and the term citizenship activity are multi-level constructs, the definitions of which are worth looking for. Education itself, to which there are references, is understood here very broadly, not only in terms of formal education. The scientific goal of this paper's analysis is to search for the sources and categories of meanings of the essence of the idea of citizenship and to discover it from the humanistic and creative perspective. The areas of citizenship activity of the presented figures of women in education have been placed in the subjective (individual and personal) and social dimensions of reference.

Sources and categories of meanings of the humanistic vision of citizenship: Theoretical foundations of the research

Encouraging us to reach for the unknown, art allows us to discover our own 'existential substance,' woven from non-aesthetic values. We are dealing with an attempt at self-creation, the 'poetics' of oneself.

(Wojnar, 1994, p. 91)

In the 1940s, Maria Ossowska, in her essay *Wzór obywatela w ustroju demokratycznym* [The Model of a Citizen in a Democratic System] (1946), distinguished and characterised 13 civic virtues: perfectionist aspirations, open-mindedness, internal discipline, tolerance, activity, civil courage, intellectual honesty, criticism, responsibility for one's word, socialisation, chivalry, aesthetic sensitivity and a sense of humour. Perfectionist aspirations may concern both the improvement of collective life and oneself. Open-mindedness and internal discipline refer to the ability to prioritise the more important things over the less important ones. Tolerance does not interfere with preferring what is considered right. Activity is a disposition to improve the existing reality. Civil courage is the refusal to remain silent in the face of iniquity. Intellectual honesty is the opposite of hypocrisy and delusion. Criticism refers to the ability to compare different 'admitted' positions. Responsibility for one's word is associated with keeping contracts and simple punctuality. Socialisation is the ability to live harmoniously in society, overcoming egocentrism, generosity and social service. Chivalry is the observance of competition rules and is related to respecting the opponent. Aesthetic sensitivity is a cultural value added to civic engagement. Finally, a sense of humour is interpreted as an antidote to all totalitarian tendencies of the holders of the 'only right.'

Citizenship education is one of the basic tasks of democratic systems and civil society. The Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on 22 May 2018 on key competencies for lifelong learning assumes that citizenship competencies consist of the following components: democratic knowledge, skills, attitudes and democratic values (2018/C,189/01). If the concept of civic

education is a concept of reflection on the world and translates into actions in it and expressing judgments about it, then it should be adequate to the present day and should be made a reality. An attempt can be made to define the essence of citizenship education and the axiology of citizenship from the studies on the works of Hannah Arendt, the author of *The Human Condition*. In her works, Arendt repeatedly invites people to reflect on the essence of thinking, tradition, culture, politics, freedom, truth, authority, and education. According to Arendt, ‘The end of the common world comes when this world is seen in only one aspect and is allowed to be presented only in one perspective’ (Arendt, 2010, p. 79). She was convinced that each of these categories should be rethought because the socio-political situation in which they function and gain importance is constantly changing. **Respect**, understood by Arendt as a dialogue, refers to opening up to perspectives of the world other than one’s own, which, by the mere fact that they are revealed to oneself and others, contain a claim to be considered. Everyone has the right to present their perception of the world, defend it and persuade others of it. Everyone is also a potential initiator of actions serving the realisation of this perspective in relation to a given problem. For this very reason, everyone deserves respect and recognition of these rights. Arendt associated **responsibility** with man’s consent to function in the public space – with his will to transform social, political and economic reality – and with acceptance of the world’s diversity. A responsible person is aware of the complexity of challenges, and they require taking a stand and taking action that will bring – foreseen as well as unforeseen, surprising – consequences. Therefore, it is important to be able to discuss many proposed, often contradictory, positions on these challenges and to choose or develop the most optimal position from the point of view of a given community. With this sense of responsibility comes **courage**. It takes courage to distance oneself from what is known, safe, established and universally (and publicly) accepted and a certain readiness to search for what is unpredictable, undecidable and uncertain. It takes courage to present one’s way of perceiving reality to others because it usually exposes one to discomfort resulting from criticism of the opposite (being accused, above all, of violating the boundaries in which a given community feels safe and secure). **Surprise** is an important value for Arendt.

The surprise of the world initiates reflection on its complexity. It is a specific form of feeling the world, of recognising what is complex, hidden, incomprehensible and worthy of attention and consideration from different perspectives. Wonder is ingrained in discovering one's limitations and ignorance and in the educational potential resulting from the possibility of distancing related to oneself, so it is associated with courage, respect and responsibility (Arendt, 2016, pp. 158–181; Koc, 2020, pp. 50–52). The category of responsibility and social service resounds in the model of human development proposed by Martha Nussbaum, who emphasises the right to participate in making decisions affecting the functioning of the community or even the world: 'We should all take a stand on the issues in which we live and pay special attention and commitment to our immediate surroundings' (2008, p. 72).

Social service is a field conducive to understanding man and the world in a globalised reality. Education, or more broadly, upbringing for global citizenship while maintaining a sense of identity and its recognition, is an extensive and complex project (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 105). In searching for the essence of citizenship, one should reach for the sphere of human subjectivity. This sphere combines personal and subjective abilities, thus allowing the ethical dimension of citizenship, which is of a source nature in relation to its legal and political approach (Homa, 2013, p. 279), to be revealed. According to Paul Ricoeur (2013), the subjective way of being is expressed in the possibility of acting while pointing to oneself as the perpetrator of the action. Being a subject is expressed in the phrases 'I can' or 'I do,' not 'I am (so-and-so)' (Ricoeur, 2003). Karolina Rozmarynowska (2018), elaborating on the issue of the subjective sources of citizenship, noted that abilities have their source in human agency, which determines that when speaking of citizenship, it is an act that is being discussed, not an event. Following Charles Taylor, Rozmarynowska identifies abilities as the following: having the concept of the past and the future, making choices, giving meanings to things, reflective awareness of norms, interpretation of reality and articulation of one's view of the world (Rozmarynowska, 2018, p. 41; Taylor, 2001, p. 401).

The essence of citizenship includes the category of agency. It refers to, for example, an interesting original concept by Margaret Archer (2013) showing

the multi-relational space of being and creating oneself in the world and one's place in it. In her morphogenetic theory of the morphogenesis of the self, person and agency, Archer (2013) takes agency, emotionality, normativity, and reflexivity as the basic properties that build humanity. Man determines his place in the world in the course of a constant, internal conversation through selected activity and involvement in action, which require reflexivity and self-reflexivity (Archer, 2013, p. 190).

Man is an active agent subject to the world's influence, but he also creates this world (Kozielecki, 1999). The optimal form of human autonomy is a man-author (Obuchowski, 2000, p. 42). The dominant properties of the human author are subjectivity, intentionality, the meaning of life and creative adaptation (Obuchowski & Błachnio, 2011, pp. 167–171).

Purpose of study and research problems

As mentioned in the introduction, this paper's analysis aims to search for the sources and categories of meanings of the essence of the idea of citizenship from the humanistic and creative perspective. These sources and categories of meanings provide the background for the considerations outlined in the theoretical foundations section. The following research questions were constructed to address the research problems:

1. What areas of civic activity in the subjective and social dimension of reference can be distinguished by analysing the sources of life and creativity of the most outstanding Polish educators – Professor Maria Grzegorzewska (1888–1967) and Professor Irena Wojnar (1924–2021)?
2. What important spaces are occupied by these women's lifelong creativity in the humanistic and creative dimensions of citizenship?
3. What important areas of transgressive development are shown by their lifelong creativity in education?

Due to the research questions posed, secondary sources and evidence of these educators' professional work were taken into account in the pro-

cedure of analysing their lifelong creativity. To distinguish and analyse the areas of women's civic activity, the research method again referred to the source of civic virtues proposed by Maria Ossowska (1946). Based on these, a division can be made, taking into account the subjective sphere (agency, activity, responsibility, socialisation) and the personal sphere (perfectionist aspirations, open-mindedness, internal discipline, tolerance, courage, criticism, aesthetic sensitivity and a sense of humour). Among the subjective abilities proposed by Charles Taylor (2001), the giving of meanings to things and the interpretation of reality deserve special attention. As for the social dimension of civic activity, it would include activities for and commitment to others; permanent readiness for change; and pedagogy expressed by acting for good, eliminating deficiencies and restoring human dignity, namely, pedagogy of activities for the benefit of others. The author's perspective on interpreting the sources of citizenship combines **the humanistic and creative dimensions**. The creative perspective consists of two aspects: the issue of lifelong creativity as a subjective and transgressive dimension of citizenship and the approach to lifelong creativity leading to self-authorship. Self-authorship is understood as the forces of subjectivity, intentionality, the meaning of life and creative adaptation (Obuchowski & Błachnio, 2011).

Analysis results

The individual dimension of humanism (perfectionist aspirations, open-mindedness and internal discipline)

The year 2022 marked the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the State Institute of Special Education, currently the Maria Grzegorzewska Special Education Academy in Warsaw, an institution that was founded by one of the most outstanding Polish educators: Professor Maria Grzegorzewska. On this occasion, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland paid tribute to the outstanding creator of special education in Poland (Resolution of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland of 14 October 2021 on establishing 2022 as the Year of Maria Grzegorzewska). In 1916, Maria Grzegorzewska obtained a doctorate

at the University of Paris (the Sorbonne) for her dissertation: '*Une étude sur le développement des sentiments esthétiques – Recherche esthétique expérimentale chez les élèves des écoles bruxelloises*' [Study on the Development of Aesthetic Feelings - Studies in Experimental Aesthetics Conducted Among Students of Brussels Schools] (Hryniewicka, 2014a).¹ Her surname was included on the list of the 20th century's most outstanding women in psychology by the editors Sibylle Volkmann and Helmut E. Lück (2014). Maria Grzegorzewska was an advocate for the dignity of other people, their human and civil rights and the inclusion of people with disabilities in society based on equal citizenship. She devoted her whole life to these values.

Professor Irena Wojnar (1924–2021) – an icon and a true lady of Polish pedagogy – was a unique, charismatic, very reliable and devoted person in both great and small things. She engaged in research with high scientific competencies and was a professor who made art out of her scientific, didactic and social activity. She found her vocation in creative pedagogical work and university education, pursuing it with full dedication, commitment, experience, imagination and professionalism (Cybal-Michalska & Piejka, 2022, pp. 61–66).

Irena Wojnar studied at the Sorbonne in Paris from 1958 to 1960 as a Ford Foundation scholarship holder. She obtained her doctorate based on the

¹ Years later, thanks to the efforts of Professor Bruno Koper, this work was found in the Polish Library in Paris. A copy of it was donated to the Institute of the Academy of Artistic Education, and the translation was published on the occasion of the university's jubilee in 2012 entitled 'A Study on the Development of Aesthetic Feelings. Research in the Field of Experimental Aesthetics Conducted among Students of Brussels Schools.' It is impossible not to mention the circumstances surrounding the preparation of the dissertation related to the loss of some research materials caused by the actions of war, which did not prevent Grzegorzewska from bringing the work to an end. As we know, the research materials were taken in Belgium and brought to Poland for study in 1914. Unfortunately, they were destroyed during the evacuation of Wilkomierz, where Grzegorzewska was caught up by the outbreak of war. Recreating and elaborating on them in such a short time after returning to Paris testifies to great perseverance in the implementation of plans, which became an important source of its further development of fruitful activity (Hryniewicka, 2014a).

dissertation *Situation actuelle de la jeunesse par rapport B l'art*. The Polish extended version of this book, prepared after Wojnar's return to Poland, was published in 1964 as *Aesthetics and Upbringing* (a second edition was published in 1970). In the preface to the book, the French promoter, Professor Etienne Souriau, recalled the neglect of school education through art and the modest efforts made to remedy this situation. Against this background, he considered Wojnar's work 'an active force in the current of bold actions.' Wojnar's dissertation was published in several languages, which initiated further interest in the theory of aesthetic education outside Poland. Professor Irena Wojnar's long-term cooperation with the International Society for Education through Art (INSEA) led to her being elected its vice president in 1988. This was undoubtedly an expression of great appreciation for her work and scientific achievements. She held this position until 1991.

Aesthetic sensitivity (culturally added value to citizenship engagement)

While characterising Maria Grzegorzewska, Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz (1976) described her passion, which

appeared both in creation and in protest [...] Her perception of the world was characterised by passion. Her ability to delight, see things in perspective, and perceive barely perceptible details when it comes to human beings. Grzegorzewska has never been a desk person, although she was often seen at a desk. She was an artist in every detail. Ideas – they were born suddenly, violently, often surprising. [...] Beauty – in every form – captivated Grzegorzewska from early childhood. She reacted to the ugliness with almost physical pain. This also applied to human acts. She was capable of a surge of enthusiasm and delight and the indignation of the deepest... Brave herself (although shy by nature), uncompromising and chivalrous – she demanded a similar attitude from the people around her. Where Grzegorzewska was, beauty was born. Even if it was just a hotel room rented for a few days; its character was changing because she rearranged, changed, added something (Han-Ilgiewicz, 1976, pp. 246–247).

The role of art is not limited to the sphere of aesthetic sensations and experiences. Aesthetic culture is a kind of rung, the basis for shaping personality in other non-aesthetic ranges. So far, the widespread presence of art and the richness of its values create the unknown, the possibilities of satisfying the various needs of modern man, especially in the moral and cognitive sphere (Wojnar, 1980, p. 13). According to Wojnar, it is up to man to create the work of his own life, which is a 'possible existence.' By encouraging man to reach for the unknown, art allows man to discover his own 'existential substance,' woven from non-aesthetic values. Man is dealing with an attempt at self-creation, the 'poetics' of oneself (Wojnar, 1994, p. 91). Thanks to the existential awakening inspired by the values of art, a person's sensitivity can contribute to strengthening their identity, intensifying the experience of the present moment, and enriching it with a poetic dimension (Wojnar, 1994, p. 92). A certain kind of creative attitude resounds here, marked by an active human relationship with the world and life. It is expressed in the need to learn, experience and consciously process the existing reality and one's own self (Popek, 2000).

Humanistic premises of anxiety (interpreting reality, giving things meanings)

Wojnar said:

My own 'humanity' is thus expressed in various areas of interest, in the spatial and institutional dimension (at the University of Warsaw and the Polish Academy of Sciences) and the temporal dimension, in relation to activities in immediate actuality as well as in thinking about the future (Wojnar, 2016, p. 9).

Wojnar brings to mind the thoughts of Bogdan Suchodolski (1987), who recognised humanism and, at the same time, the 'humanistic world' as a permanent universe of human achievements in the area of knowledge and values; a group of reflections on this universe (humanities) or, more broadly, a way of reflecting in the human perspective; an attitude of commitment and sensitivity;

a determinant of practical action; and a kind of conscience in relation to reality (Depta, 2014, p. 179). Wojnar, referring to Suchodolski's view, understands contemporary humanism in three ways: 1) the human world, the universe of human products; 2) the name of the mental current; 3) human attitude expressed in sensitivity and altruism: 'A humanist is not only a scientist but also a carrier of a humanistic conscience' (Wojnar et al., 2009). The humanistic premises of anxiety are an open proposal requiring sensitive thinking and feeling. 'They refer to the understanding of education, in accordance with Suchodolski's definition, as «creating the fate of a person in the world of values and culture»' (Wojnar, 2016, pp. 15–16). Culture, which needs to be constantly reinforced beyond the artistic and intellectual domain, includes the way of being, perceiving oneself and the world, expressing and creating, and thus, everything that characterises individuals and societies in their deepest identity and originality (Suchodolski, 1987). According to Wojnar, the first area of humanistic anxiety is man, whose inner wealth, defined as humanistic human tissue or subjectivity, is silenced. The disclosed area of concern calls for strengthening the individual's personal sensitivity and deepening the personalistic factor in educational activities. This entails a deep concern for the world of open humanism, focused on what is good and creative in man (Wojnar, 2016, pp. 7–10). Grzegorzewska (2002), referring to the feeling of goodness, noted that 'goodness is so little promoted, so little is said about it, so little is written, and maybe even so little thought. And goodness breeds goodness' (p. 44). After defending her doctoral dissertation, Grzegorzewska, being influenced by a visit to the famous Parisian hospital for the mentally handicapped, surprised her surroundings by unexpectedly changing her interests. She abandoned aesthetics and decided to devote herself to working with the disabled, saying, 'Equalising the wrongs of the handicapped and maladjusted has become the imperative of my life.' In 1919, she returned to Poland permanently. She explained her unexpected turn of interest as follows:

What I saw there made a shocking impression on me – and it carried me away. The need to smooth out the ashes of social life in the country aroused such great interest in this problem that I devoted my whole life to it. Compensating

for the wrongs of the handicapped and maladjusted has become the order of my life (Hryniewicka, 2014b, p. 70).

According to Wojnar (2015), art allows ‘discovering the secrets of a hidden, disabled man, entangled in his own subconsciousness, or penetrates the amazing reality that is «on the other side of the mirror»’ (p. 19).

The social dimension of humanism. Pedagogy of actions for the benefit of the other

In Han-Ilgiewicz’s (1976) memoirs, the author shared that Grzegorzewska’s actions were ‘marked with passion – not philanthropic, but expressing her drive to help wherever possible [...]. She simply could not react, not take an active part in life’ (p. 246). In shaping oneself, the most important for the teacher-educator is the moral value, which, according to Grzegorzewska is much higher than the value of formal education:

to do something valuable, one must be someone internally, one must have one’s own life, one’s own world, one must have a strong foundation of beliefs – one must be yourself! After all, if you are to give, you must have something to give, and in order to give a lot, you must have a lot (Grzegorzewska, 2002, p. 49).

Wojnar’s humanist premises of anxiety combine with the humanistic intentions of education. In this way, aesthetic education acquires a broader character in the perspective of cultural pluralism and the context of ethical and social obligations. The duties of this education seem to be significantly expanded today. ‘They are somehow transferred from actions towards the individual to actions towards the world in which this individual lives’ (Wojnar, 2000 p. 174). Aesthetic education becomes an action to ‘save’ the world and man (Read, 1976). To the posed question ‘Aesthetic education, twilight or chance?’ Wojnar (2000) replies,

It has been rightly said that, in our times, aesthetic education has become an absurd but crucial issue. Absurd against the backdrop of the insistent presence of the consumerist and selfish philosophy of life, crucial if we want to defend humanistic humanity and the sublime “human tissue,” defined by the “Paideia” tradition (pp. 171–172).

The book *Humanistic Premises of Anxiety* ends with a text on education for peace, in which the author has included a message that tries to remind and, by means of current argumentation, justify the sense and timeliness of the idea of education for peace in people and in the world (Wojnar, 2000). In the current age, the escalation of tensions and conflicts is constantly gaining strength. Not only the ‘order in the world’ but, above all, the ‘order in people’ is collapsing, and the consent for hatred and aggression is growing in strength on a large scale. Even if it is true that the ambivalence of good and evil characterises human nature, their conditioning requires reflection and conscious actions. In a situation where the principle of adaptation has dominated the idea of the future and diagnoses about today’s world, Wojnar’s view is closer to the concept of ‘education for the future,’ suggesting the priorities of alternative visions inspired by the creative possibilities of man. In the presented texts, Wojnar contrasts the difference between ‘the future as adaptation,’ which requires extrapolation, and ‘the future as an alternative’ stimulating creative humanistic education (Wojnar, 2016, p. 11). Wojnar did not live to see the appearance of the last book *Humanistyczne Ambiwalencje Globalizacji* [Humanistic Ambivalences of Globalisation] (Wojnar, 2021).

Lifelong creativity as a subjective and transgressive dimension of citizenship

Man as an independent perpetrator performs two types of actions: protective actions and transgressive actions. In a conservative or adaptive sense, protective actions lead to satisfying basic needs. In turn, transgressive actions entail going beyond the limits of one’s abilities, leading to self-transcendence. Józef Kozielecki (2001) introduced the notion of *homo transgressivus* (p. 242) to describe man as the perpetrator of crossing borders and committing acts of

transgression. Transgressive actions aim to go beyond what an individual is and what he possesses. Transgressions are human activities and mental acts that go beyond the limits of human capabilities and material, symbolic and social achievements and create new forms and structures that enrich the world of values (Kozielecki, 1987; 2001). The basic assumption of the paradigm of transgressivism (what is a man like?) is the assumption of subjectivity (Kozielecki, 2009). Creativity is a specific form of transgressive action. It involves an intentional change, the essence of which is solving new problems of a scientific, artistic, practical or organisational nature. The transgressive concept characterises two models of creativity, treating them as complementary: the conflict model (a form of defence against internal conflicts and frustration) and the fulfilment model (a manifestation of the actualisation and self-realisation of the individual's potential). Abraham Maslow (1990) linked the concept of self-actualisation with the concept of mental health, the theory of needs and the idea of creative development. He recognised that the pursuit of self-realisation, based on the intrinsic motivation of growth and the need to do what one is destined to do and become more and more what one, in one's own way, is and what one can become (Maslow, 1990, p. 96). Man tries to use and exceed his abilities and development potential in the process of self-realisation (self-actualisation).

Creativity can be treated as a specific type of expansion that broadens the boundaries of cognition and the scope of knowledge about the world. The orientation of the perpetrator of the transgression is prospective: it assumes not so much adapting to the existing realities and acting in response to the currently experienced borders but – as Kozielecki (1983) claimed – ‘creative adaptation,’ i.e. building innovations into the future world (p. 505). The essence of expansion ‘towards oneself’ is the transition from what is possible to what is real (Kozielecki, 2001). Making personal transgressions ‘towards oneself’ consists of intentionally developing and crossing mental processes and structures to enrich personal experience and go beyond the dominant lifestyle and mental, characterological or volitional limitations. Activities of this kind can be referred to as self-development, self-improvement, self-creation or

self-creation according to one's own plan. In the last months of her life, Maria Grzegorzewska wrote:

What can I say about my social work? First of all, I cannot differentiate my activities in any way: social, economic, scientific, etc. Ordinarily, I was interested in an important but neglected social problem – the issue of social rehabilitation of all kinds of handicapped, taking care of their fate and understanding this very important social issue; so I took as a clear goal of my activity work in this direction. From whatever point of view, it seemed to me significant and important (Doroszevska, 1989, p. 54).

According to Irena Wojnar (1996), aesthetic education in its modern and dynamic content is a process of human integration. It entails integration with the external reality, which is open, changing and constantly processed in the creative processes of scientific activity, techniques and art. It also concerns the integration of various forms of human activity, 'increasingly unified into a synthesis of creative work and educative recreation' (Wojnar, 1966, p. 246). In the introduction to the fourth edition of *Theory of Aesthetic Education*, Wojnar (1994) argues that 'Art emerges as a noteworthy "instrument" for human education, not only in terms of aesthetic culture but also in all other areas of experience and activity' (p. 10).

From lifelong creativity to self-authorship – The creative dimension of citizenship

Looking at creativity... We will see the world differently...

When designating a place for lifelong creativity both in the humanistic and creative dimension of citizenship, it should be emphasised that creativity is understood in broad and egalitarian terms as an activity and a lifelong attitude of a human being. In theories of everyday creativity, egalitarianism and 'little c' creativity, creativity is perceived as the property of the subject, common, available, having a subjective and personal character and an expression of

a specific lifestyle (Craft, 2001, pp. 45–61; Richards, 1999, pp. 683–689; Runco, 2005, pp. 295–311). Here, creativity concerns everyday life, solving personal and social problems, taking up challenges, realising one's development potential, setting realistic goals and achieving them through active, creative participation in culture and community life (Szmidt, 2013, pp. 234–244). In the lifelong creativity of the presented women's work in education, there is also a (whole) life process going from (self-)realisation to self-creation, where the 'process of changing [the] self-definition' of a person takes place (Obuchowski, 2000, p. 22). Its essence is to adapt the world to oneself, to one's requirements, and even to the creation (by a person) of these requirements according to the private concept of the world and oneself in it (Obuchowski, 2001, p. 161). Self-authorship is understood as the forces of subjectivity, intentionality, the meaning of life and creative adaptation. Subjectivity includes (a) having knowledge about oneself; (b) setting tasks based on one's knowledge; (c) choosing a method for tasks; (d) intelligent execution of tasks; (e) intentional autonomy 'to do'; (f) creative interpretation of desires; (g) generation of a personal model of the world; and (h) self-design (Obuchowski & Błachnio, 2011). The social, professional and personal experiences of women in education – Maria Grzegorzewska and Irena Wojnar – show how everyday creativity of a subjective, personal nature became lifelong creativity and – from the perspective of time and achievements – socially recognised creativity appreciated in a timeless manner. This creativity is real and, in itself, an added value as well as a source of a subjective and humanistic creative dimension of citizenship. As a result, creativity grew out of aesthetic sensitivity, going beyond its artistic perception to include the creative personality and the products of creativity: ideas resulting from everyday activity.

Conclusions

The analysis undertaken on the sources of citizenship from the perspective of lifelong creativity among outstanding women in education and science presents the problem from a theoretical point of view. The areas of activity adopted for the purpose of the study create categories of meanings for the idea

of citizenship. These were included in the individual and personal dimension of humanism: perfectionist aspirations, open-mindedness, internal discipline and aesthetic sensitivity as a cultural value added to citizenship engagement. The interpretation of reality and the giving of meanings to things constitute the humanistic premises of anxiety. The pedagogy of actions for the benefit of others determines the social dimension of humanism. The social, professional and personal experiences of the selected female figures in education show lifelong creativity from the perspective of what is (socially) known and is appreciated in a timeless manner. This perspective is a source of a subjective and humanistic creative dimension of citizenship. The lifelong creativity of women in education and their individual achievements determine their cognitive and social value and emancipatory character. The lifelong creativity of the presented women shows the presence of important areas of transgressive development related to 1) the acquisition of knowledge and scientific achievements; 2) the implementation of activities in the field of social practice; and 3) (self-)realisation. As a result, these areas marked personal visions and projects for change. Their source of creativity was their disagreement with the image of the existing reality, their possession of knowledge determined the tasks and their implementation, and their courage arose from a combination of commitment and agency.

Wanting to serve the Supreme Harmony, man cannot limit himself to harmonious matters and works, and this must be done, happy are those who can devote themselves to such work, but what if everyone would move away from what is pathological and defective? It is for the sake of the Highest Harmony that one should go into greater disharmony, fight against it, increase the value and dignity of even the most handicapped human being, even in the smallest degree (Grzegorzewska, 1967; Gołubiew, 1967, pp. 1–2).

In the lifelong creativity of the presented women in education, a (whole) life process took place: from a creative interpretation of desires to the generation of a personal model of the world; from self-design to (self-)realisation and self-creation. The basic condition for implementing lifelong creativity as

a subjective and creative dimension of citizenship is intentionality and agency, which will allow one – as Maria Grzegorzewska put it – ‘to be able to harness one’s plow to some star’ (Grzegorzewska, 2002, p. 34).

In this paper the perspective on interpreting the sources of citizenship combines the humanistic and creative dimensions and provides added value contained in the titled approach, ‘from lifelong creativity to self-authorship’. On the basis of the analysis of the problem, as well as my research and projects implemented so far in the interdisciplinary area of development, creativity and education, the author proves that the positive vision of man as emerging subject proceeds along the way from revealing the possessed resources and updating the potentials – through their creative implementation – to exceeding the boundaries of the self in transgressive actions (Wróblewska, 2015, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2022a, 2022b).

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