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THE SENSE OF INJUSTICE IN OBJECTIVE HERMENEUTICS. THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE COMPONENTS

Poczucie niesprawiedliwości w hermeneutyce obiektywnej. Czynniki obiektywne i subiektywne

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Abstract

The article presents the analysis of the experience of injustice within the framework of the objective hermeneutics method. The first part outlines the state of research devoted to injustice and describes the objective hermeneutics method. The second part provides a reconstruction of the sense and meanings of the first ten sentences from the record of a narrative told by an adult woman who, as a high school student, suffered emotional trauma caused by her unfair treatment by the history teacher. The aim of the article is to demonstrate that the objective hermeneutics method can be an effective tool in reconstructing situations in which the sense of injustice appears.

Keywords: sense of injustice, injustice, objective hermeneutics.

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia analizę doświadczenia niesprawiedliwości w ramach metody hermeneutyki obiektywnej. W pierwszej części zarysowano stan badań poświęconych niesprawiedliwości oraz opisano metodę hermeneutyki obiektywnej. W drugiej części dokonano rekonstrukcji sensu i znaczeń pierwszych dziesięciu zdań z zapisu historii opowiedzianej przez dorosłą kobietę, która jako uczennica szkoły średniej doznała traumy emocjonalnej spowodowanej niesprawiedliwym traktowaniem jej przez nauczyciela historii. Celem artykułu jest wykazanie, że metoda hermeneutyki obiektywnej może być skutecznym narzędziem w rekonstrukcji sytuacji, w których pojawia się poczucie niesprawiedliwości.

Słowa kluczowe: poczucie niesprawiedliwości, niesprawiedliwość, hermeneutyka obiektywna.

Introduction

The article presents the analysis of the experience of injustice within the framework of the objective hermeneutics method. The first part outlines the state of research devoted to injustice and describes the objective hermeneutics method. The second part provides a reconstruction of the sense and meanings of the first ten sentences from the

record of a narrative told by an adult woman who, as a high school student, suffered emotional trauma caused by her unfair treatment by the history teacher. The aim of the article is to demonstrate that the objective hermeneutics method can be an effective tool in reconstructing situations in which the sense of injustice appears.

Social sciences study the sense of injustice not only on the level of an individual experience but also in the context of interpersonal and intergroup relations. Psychology of justice is a branch of social psychology. Earlier theories and studies focused on distributive justice connected with socially just distribution of goods (Berti et al., 2010, p. 542). Researchers who analyse injustice in interpersonal relations adopt various perspectives. The main studies are based on the theories of Homans, Adams, the Walters, and Lerner, and the elements they all share are so called benefits gained and costs borne by other people with whom an individual compares himself (Lerner, Whitehead, 1980, p. 219). Wosińska believes that “a person experiencing injustice is an economic person who rationally analyses the essence of goods and looks for profits most beneficial to him” (1989, p. 66). In her opinion, perceiving and experiencing a given situation as an unjust one happens in the process of social comparisons (Wosińska, 1989). Ossowska draws attention not only to the ambiguity of this concept but also to “its associative aura and such a great emotional load that it is hard to embrace all intuitions connected with it” (Ossowska, 2002, p. 138). Szyszkowska is of a similar opinion: “experiencing injustice as an emotional state clearly points at the existence of one desired justice which is by definition more ‘perfect’ than justice actually experienced, and longing for ideals, including ideal justice, is the hallmark of humanity” (Szyszkowska, 1997, p. 27). Justice is a concept valued in every democratic society, and it is reflected in people’s attitude to law and order. The majority of unjust situations include intellectual and emotional components. Injustice can be divided into two kinds: a situation when one has not received gratification even though one deserves it, and a situation when one is punished even though one has not deserved it (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008, pp. 209–234), the former one being the most frequent.

Deutsch believes that a vast majority of people live in an unjust environment not being aware of it. It might be caused by their dependence on the system in which they function, that is family, school, workplace, and local community. All these environments are governed by traditions, rules, norms, structures, etc., which impose the manner in which a person is to, or should, behave and which might be considered one of the causes of injustice. Frequently the exact cause of injustice is difficult to notice because it is deeply rooted in the system in which a person who experiences injustice functions (Skudrzyk, 2008, p. 370).

The pursuit of justice is a fundamental aspect of social life. It is an issue of great interest not only to philosophers, who want to discover what is just and what is not, but also to psychopedagogues, whom it can help to understand a human being in the context of his social life (Miller, 2001, pp. 527–553). A situation of a person who has experienced

or is experiencing the sense of injustice results in the emergence of an extremely complicated system of subjective and objective factors. Capturing a subjective moment of the individual's relation with the world is usually a unique cognitive phenomenon, and his objectivization can be achieved only by agreeing on the meanings and interpretations.

The sense of injustice is an experience of the unique nature. It is difficult to capture a subjective moment of an individual's unjust relation with the world in the context of the reality surrounding him. In his article *Homo Viator*, G. Marcel emphasises the role of experience in human life, which is not only extremely individual but also extremely subjective. Individual subjective and objective experiences allow people to introduce changes to the way they perceive (experience) themselves and the world (Marcel, 1984, pp. 14-21). Understanding a social mechanism thanks to which people perceive the reality through their stories (which always take place in a particular time and place) is vital for the analysis of the sense of injustice in subjective and objective categories. People's individual unique stories play a key role in apprehending their idiosyncratic sense of injustice.

Experiencing the sense of injustice – a subjective aspect

The term “subjective” is defined as “inaccessible to others directly, not known by anyone else” (Reber, 2000, p. 718). In psychology “subjectivity” refers to phenomenological experiences and their subjective interpretation. Hence, it can be deduced that events which take place in an individual's life are perceived as something internal, unknown to others, and carry three meanings: “personal”, “mental” and “individual”, each of which entails a different dimension of dependences (Reber, 2000, pp. 718–719). Subjectivity is something internal, personal, to some extent spiritual, and closed to external factors. The sense of objective and subjective injustice appears at the moment in which an individual experiences harm which he perceives in the categories of loss suffered without his consent (Latawiec, 2003, p. 49).

In the 1980s G. Mikula (1985) played an important role in European studies on injustice; he noted a subjective “experiential” nature of injustice. In his phenomenological analysis of injustice he examined the tension which appears as a response to perceived injustice (Górnik, 1994, p. 85). In his considerations devoted to the sense of injustice, Mikula introduced a technique based on the narratives of the victims of injustice. Using retrospection, they described unjust situations they experienced including information regarding: the kind of environment (family, school, workplace, etc.); interpersonal relations, with particular attention given to teacher-student relations; the nature of unjust behaviour (e.g. breaking a promise, emotions); the consequences of unjust activities (e.g. withdrawal, resistance); and a change in the perception of the situation (Mikula & Schlamberger, 1985, pp. 37-49). It should be noted here that the sense of injustice is experienced not only by the victim of an unjust situation but also by the

perpetration. However, the victim's perception of the sense of injustice is much stronger than the perpetrator's, which stems from the difference between gains and losses in the relation between these two participants of the situation (Skarżyńska, 1988, p. 89).

Utne and Kidd notice that the sense of injustice is always connected with negative experiences and indicate its four dimensions: (1) Internal attribution – a person who has experienced the sense of injustice is convinced that a perpetrator acted of his own free will: “He did it because he doesn't like me and not because he was forced to do it”. (2) Stable attribution – in this dimension a victim is convinced that activities directed against him are not random and incidental: “He always does it”. (3) Intentionality – a victim believes that what the perpetrator did was intentional: “He knew what he was doing and he wanted to do it”. (4) Controllability of the causes – this dimension is linked with intentionality and stability. Activities perceived as intentional and stable are also treated as the ones a perpetrator can control (Górník, 1994, p. 84).

According to Zaborowski, the victim's perception of injustice is usually accompanied by psychological discomfort. He mentions two situations resulting from injustice and typical responses to them: a situation in which a person behaves in an unjust way and a situation in which a person is a victim of injustice (Zaborowski, 1986, p. 91), and offers a following conclusion: injustice is “a shock situation which intensifies human emotions and disrupts psychological balance”. A person who has experienced the sense of injustice may experience various emotions, including indignation, anger and a fighting spirit, but he might also feel dejected, resigned and think: “if injustice rules the world, I will also be unjust whenever I can”. Experiencing injustice may lead to various emotional problems, which might markedly disrupt an individual's successful social and psychological functioning (Skudrzyk, 2008, p. 370). Uchnast is of a similar opinion: he believes that justice is a condition without which healthy interpersonal and social relations cannot be built (Uchnast, 2008, p. 247).

Objective hermeneutics as a method used for reconstructing the meaning and sense of a narrative

In her article entitled *Objective hermeneutics as methodology and a method of empirical studies* [Oiektywna hermeneutyka jako metodologia i metoda badań empirycznych] (2013), Danuta Urbaniak-Zajęc refers to a representative of objective hermeneutics, German researcher U. Oevermann. He assumes that human activity has sense and is given particular meanings. However, apart from the subjective sense, which is connected with intentional activity, it also embraces the objective meaning and objective sense (Urbaniak-Zajęc, 2013, pp. 174-221). Objective hermeneutics is interested in so called objective structures which are shaped in social life; it focuses on an individual and his decisions in the social dimension. These decisions are treated not as an expression of an acting agent's intentions but are considered in the context of already existing

objective social structures. Objective hermeneutics primarily examines the agent's interactions, not his intentions. Urbaniak-Zajac notices the importance of the process of socialization in which an individual acquires knowledge of social structures and of meanings and rules which govern social life.

The main assumptions of objective hermeneutics outlined above do not exhaust the complexity of the issue in question, but allow for capturing its multidimensionality and delineating its main areas. Objective hermeneutics is multifaceted. Being aware of its strong and weak points, D. Urbaniak-Zajac summarises its main assumptions in the following points: (1) An individual is not an open book to himself, because his behaviour is frequently motivated by unconscious mechanisms. (2) Human activity is determined by biological, social and cultural factors, and that is why situations in which people refer to the same senses and meanings are similar. (3) The formation of an agent and development of his distinctiveness are other significant elements of objective hermeneutics.

According to U. Oevermann, "the objective" and "the subjective" play an important role in an individual development of a person, as they are interrelated and complement each other. "The 'existence' of a subjective perspective is conditioned by the 'existence' of an objective perspective, which is, however, not abolished, but only considered inadequate" (Urbaniak-Zajac, 2015, pp. 19–20). A individual makes a subjective choice from many objectively existing situations. "Subjectivity" is thus an indicator of the person's individual perception of the world, refers to his personal choices and matters in a situation in which a researcher is also present (Urbaniak-Zajac, 2010, pp. 9–10).

The interpretation of the narrative with the use of the objective hermeneutics method

The researcher asked a 39-year-old women the following question: "Please, describe a situation in which you experienced the sense of injustice, including its causes and your response to it". The question asked for a description of any experience of injustice, it did not impose the moment when it took place, the causes why it happened or the impact it had on the Narrator's biography. The question was expressed as a request. This polite expression is free from coercion or other forms imposing an answer. A request is a relation running from a questioner to a questionee. In this case the researcher was the questioner, and the Narrator, further referred to as the Narrator or the Woman, was the questionee.

The request to describe a situation in which she experienced the sense of injustice contained elements regarding its causes and her response to it. It might be argued that the request contained too many details, as it is difficult to imagine a description of a situation in which a participant experienced the sense of injustice without mentioning its

causes and a response to it. Thus the second part of the question could have been omitted and can be treated as its redundant specification.

A request to describe a situation in which one experiences the sense of injustice is an invitation to reveal a personal experience, and, as such, is an invitation to enter a special asymmetric relation. While the Narrator is disclosing information of the sense of injustice she has experienced, she shares with the researcher knowledge of herself in a very intimate situation, while the researcher does not share with her any personal knowledge of herself. Initiating a mutual relation between the researcher and the Narrator initiates permanent, albeit asymmetrical trust, which exists outside the record of the narrative and is not the subject of the analysis. The researcher's trust is expressed in formulating the question as a request. The Narrator's trust in the researcher begins at the moment when she starts to describe her experience of injustice. Even though these two trusts exist outside the record of the narrative, they play a significant role in the quality of the mutual relation between the researcher and the Narrator and substantially influence the quality of the research material.

The record of the narrative consists of 71 numbered sentences. The article presents the analysis of the first ten sentences:

[1] I most often experienced the sense of injustice at school. [2] While such situations from my primary school are not particularly vivid in my memory, these from high school are. [3] In most cases it was connected with the way teachers treated us – students. [4] Fortunately, they were sporadic situations, which evoked short-lasting anger, outrage and resentment. [5] Short-lasting. [6] However, there was one thing which I cannot describe as 'temporary', as it was rather a series of events, and the heroine of this thread was the history teacher. [7] In a nutshell, she treated me unjustly, graded me unjustly, and viewed me unjustly. [8] Unfortunately, I never learnt why. [9] And I guess it is still a problem to me, even after all these years, I regret not asking her how I wronged her neither then (I absolve myself for this) nor after I finished school. [10] All the more so because I had plenty opportunities to do it, one of them quite recently, that is 20 years after these events took place.

The reconstruction of the individual sense of injustice experienced by the Narrator when she was a student is a compilation of partial reconstructions. The analysis focuses on interactions and on what the Narrator really conveyed in her narrative and ignores the intentional aspect.

The first sentence of the narrative indicates that the Woman "most often experienced the sense of injustice at school". It reveals that she had a well-developed ability to classify particular situations as unjust. She used a plural form, which strengthened the information of the frequency of unjust situations in her life. The phrase "most often" indicates that unjust situations occurred also outside school. The phrase "most often" is an adverbial phrase in the superlative form used to express the greatest degree of the described quality, in this case the frequency of an experience. The Woman named school as the place where she most often experienced the sense of injustice, yet she did not name other places. As she referred to the period when she attended high school,

other environment in which she could have experienced the sense of injustice in her life was, considering her present age, her workplace and relations at work. As the phrase “the most often” indicates the highest frequency, it can be deduced that there are also other frequencies of experiencing the sense of injustice such as “often” and “seldom”. High frequency can also be indicative of two other issues: a kind of “sensitization” to the sense of injustice and the Narrator’s ability to describe such experiences. The first sentence reveals her readiness to share the sense of injustice she experienced 20 years before. This sentence is not preceded by any introduction, any preamble, but it is a straightforward declaration of a personal experience. It can be said that the Narrator willingly and incisively divulges information about herself. The first sentence of the narrative is a direct outcome of the Narrator’s consenting attitude to disclose her personal story. In this context it can be said that the Narrator cooperated with the researcher from the very beginning of their meeting since she revealed the emotion, she was asked for, already in the first sentence of her narrative.

The second sentence contains an assessment of the quality of memory traces which constitute the narrative. The Woman made a distinction between the quality of her memories from primary school and memories from high school. The former ones are less vivid than the latter ones. The Narrator used the phrase “not particularly vivid in my memory”. She did not say “are not vivid” nor “vivid memories”. Specifying the quality of memory with the term “particularly” serves as a kind of blocking or stage directions. “Particularly” creates an aura of indecisiveness and, at the same time, is an indicator of low cognitive precision. The Narrator described the process of remembering as a trace in the memory and used an impersonal reflexive construction (in Polish) to describe it (a direct translation from Polish would be: “the situations (...) did not write themselves in my memory”). For her, remembering is an “external” process, just like recording sound or a film with the use of specialist equipment. It is possible that the word “particularly” is a semantic expression of a decision whether or not it is worth remembering particular events from one’s biography. Events not worth remembering can be hidden in an elegant statement that they “are not particularly vivid in (...) memory”. Juxtaposing high school and primary school as the sources of memories regarding the sense of injustice may be interpreted in two ways – either the number of unjust events which happened in the Narrator’s primary school was smaller than in high school or she did not remember them as clearly as the ones from high school because of a greater time span which elapsed between the interview and her primary school years. She used a special contrasting conjunction (in English expressed by “**while** such situations from my primary school are not particularly vivid in my memory, these from high school **are**”, in Polish “**o ile** (...) nie zapisały się jakoś wyraźnie **to** sytuacje z liceum **już tak**”) in order to emphasise the fact that she remembered the latter ones better. The problem is that there is not a great difference between the last class of primary school and the first class of high school, and that is why it is interesting why the events from high

school were remembered by the Narrator with great precision and events which happened not much earlier – not very precisely. The first two sentences of the narrative contain a kind of contradiction, as the lack of memory traces regarding the sense of injustice in primary school stays in opposition to the statement that these feelings were the ones most frequently experienced at school, primary school being also a school.

The third sentence of the narrative describes the nature of the sense of injustice. The Narrator's diagnosis pointed at the relations between students and teachers as the source of injustice. The teachers were the agents of the behaviour directed at students. The Narrator quantified the frequency of their unjust behaviour by using the phrase "in most cases". The phrase "In most cases it was connected with the way teachers treated us (...)" (in Polish 'it' was expressed as *'rzecz'*, an object) may indicate a stylistic shortcut or thinking through categories of events. The Narrator's words might also suggest that some unjust events were triggered by students, the Narrator's peers, not teachers. Moreover, "(...) in most cases (...)" might also refer to unjust situations in the relations between students.

The Narrator stated that the teachers' activity was directed at students (teachers were agents, while students were entities at which agents' activity was directed) and used a retrospective form: "us – students". At the time when the interview was conducted the Narrator was 39 and had left high school 20 years before, yet she still identified herself with a group of students using the plural form "us". This situation may be interpreted as her permanent identification with the community of students who were the victims of their teachers' unjust behaviour. She did not use the phrase "activity/action" (in Polish "*działanie*") but "the way teachers treated us" (in Polish "*postępowanie*"). The term "*postępowanie*" has over 100 synonyms in Polish and most often collocates with various procedures, including the legal ones. Talking about "(...) the way teachers treated us – students" unmistakably points at the group of perpetrators of this injustice. The adult Narrator pointed at this relation from the perspective of her as a student as the only cause of the sense of injustice she experienced.

In the fourth sentence the Narrator offered a more precise description of these unjust events, stating that most of them were non-recurring incidents, which evoked anger, outrage and resentment in students. She stated that the sporadic nature of these emotions was fortunate: "Fortunately, they were sporadic situations (...)". Her use of the phrase "fortunate", which derives from "fortune" (in Polish "*szczęście*", meaning "happiness" or "good luck") is ironic or even derisive, although it should be noted that this phrase is commonly used when talking about the lesser of two evils.

The fifth sentence of the narrative contains only a very short nominal sentence, i.e. a sentence without a finite verb: "Short-lasting". It describes the temporary nature of the emotions experienced by students, i.e. anger, outrage and resentment. Temporary is an opposite to permanent or long lasting. Such presentation of sporadic situations in which the sense of injustice appeared serves as a reference point for the sixth sentence.

The sixth sentence introduced an event which was not temporary, and was thus much more painful than sporadic events described as “fortunate”. According to the Narrator, the perpetrator of this series of events was her history teacher. She called her “the heroine of this thread”. By “thread” she probably understood the topic connected with the sense of injustice. The Narrator’s utterance should be read the following way: “(...) the heroine of the long lasting sense of injustice I experienced was the history teacher”. Earlier the Narrator talked about teachers in plural, and in the sixth sentence she narrowed it down to one history teacher. Using a plural form when talking about the perpetrators (teachers) of blameworthy behaviour (treating students unjustly) indicates that the Narrator wanted to present teachers’ behaviour as blameworthy for the whole teaching profession.

The seventh sentence of the narrative offers a synthetic diagnosis of injustice the Narrator experienced. She enumerated three types of the teacher’s behaviour which were marked by injustice: unjust treatment, unjust assessment, and unjust perception. Unjust treatment can mean passing judgements and opinions or making decisions which are contradictory to adopted rules and students’ expectations. Unjust assessment is subjective, discretionary, assigns lower grades and uses different assessment criteria. Unjust perception is probably connected with a synthetic evaluation of judgements and opinions of students based on incomplete or distorted information which refers to negative characteristics and does not take into account positive features. Each of these types was stylistically exhibited with a view to increasing their importance. These three types of injustice experienced by the Narrator practically cover the whole spectrum of possible relations between her as a student and her history teacher.

The eighth sentence reveals that the Narrator felt that the teacher’s unjust behaviour was incomprehensible. She wished she had known the reason for it. The lack of this knowledge was more important for her than other circumstances of the sense of injustice she experienced from her history teacher. It can be assumed that knowing why this teacher behaved this way would offer the Narrator an opportunity to argue with her. Falsification of the teacher’s motivation would mean strengthening the Narrator’s moral rightness.

The sentence “Unfortunately, I never learnt (...)” contains the following message: because “if I had learnt, my sense of injustice would have been even greater and my belief that I was right in my judgement of the history teacher would have been stronger”. This phrase in fact reflects the model of the Narrator’s response to injustice she experienced. It assumes that if she had known why the teacher behaved in an unjust way, it would have increased her sense of injustice. Such an assumption might be based on a negative picture of the teacher, as, regardless of her motivation, the Narrator’s sense of injustice would increase. On the other hand, an increase in the intensity of this negative emotion would be accompanied by an increase in Narrator’s belief in her rightness. The Narrator, although it might sound like a paradox, preferred a lower level of rightness and a lower intensity of the sense of injustice.

In the ninth sentence the Narrator admitted that not knowing the motives of the history teacher's behaviour was a big problem for her. Not undertaking effective activities to obtain the knowledge of what she had done wrong was a source of her regret and she blamed herself for never asking the question.

A certain complexity is revealed here: on the one hand, the teacher is the source of the sense of injustice in all three areas, but, and on the other hand, the Narrator is greatly interested in her own shortcomings, which gave rise to the teacher's unjust behaviour. It might be interesting to consider the Narrator's assumption that – if the teacher was so unjust – whatever her alleged misdemeanours were, from the Narrator's perspective, they were untrue. Thus, a question arises why the Narrator was so interested in discovering the teacher's motivation. Her desire to discover it can be treated as a desire to understand the situation which happened 20 years before.

The ninth sentence of the narrative details the Narrator's regret for not trying to find the reason for the teacher's behaviour. She used the phrase: "(...) I did not ask her how I wronged her". She repeated the personal pronoun in the dative twice in one sentence. The phrase "I did not ask her" also indicates an unrealised intention to discover the motive of the teacher's behaviour, although, as the tenth sentence of the narrative states, she had plenty opportunities to obtain the answer. The tenth sentence indicates that, in spite of her considerable sense of injustice caused by the history teacher's behaviour and equally considerable need to discover the motives of this behaviour and the nature of her fault, the Narrator did not do anything to find the answers to these nagging questions.

In objective hermeneutics *sense* is defined as "a conceivable link between all possible ways of being" (Urbaniak-Zajac, Kos, 2013, p. 48). Possible ways of being can assume the form of assumptions from an open set of possibilities. Reconstructing possible reasons for ineffective attempts of explaining the motives of the teacher's behaviour is possible only to a limited extent due to the sequential nature of the analysis and the lack of a broader context (i.e. focusing only on the first ten sentences of the narrative).

The need to explain the causes of other people's behaviour is an element of a social scheme of experiencing injustice caused by other people. In the analysed fragment of the narrative the teacher's behaviour is not explained and, what is more, the inability to do so – despite plenty opportunities – is emphasised. A question arises about the causes of this inability. Numerous meetings between the Narrator and the teacher after the former had left high school, including the ones during which she was already adult, indicate that the mechanism of this inability can be complex. Several hypothesis offering possible explanations can be offered.

The suggested reconstruction is also consistent with the principle of extensivity of interpretation and the principle of economising (Urbaniak-Zajac, 2013, pp. 202–203). It is not restricted, however, to narrow interpretations of the narrative and it does not produce explanations radically contradictory to school practice.

Firstly, sticking to the narration of injustice in one's biography can be an element of a permanent biographical strategy. A sense of harm caused by the teacher's behaviour can "ennoble" one's biography and give it deeper meaning and sense. Striving to maintain the memories connected with injustice justifies the dual nature of the Narrator's attitude – she would like to discover the motives of the teacher's behaviour and she does not do anything to obtain this knowledge.

Secondly, inefficiency in obtaining the explanation for the events which happened at school may have a source in "special" relations between the Narrator as a student and the history teacher. Those relations might be the Narrator's strong and stable opinion of the teacher as a person who is unjust and inflicts harm. In this case each interaction between the student and the teacher will be stigmatised by the sense of injustice experienced in real time or by expecting injustice which is permanently assigned to the teacher.

Thirdly, maintaining the importance of the teacher as a person who treated the Narrator – student in an unjust way may be an element of the victim's holistic perception of the world. From the perspective of the 39-year-old Narrator, the dominating content of the sense of injustice she experienced at school is built of the emotions accompanying unjust situations, their context and their "perpetrator", i.e. the history teacher. Emotions and the content of these situations are stable and permanent as exhibits in a museum. The Narrator described them from her present perspective with such engagement as if she were still a high school student. At the same time she mentioned that she was an adult who had left school a long time ago. Continuous references to the history teacher indicate that she played a role of an interactive "exhibit" not only in the memory of an underage student but also twenty years later in the memory of the adult Narrator.

Relations between a teacher and a student are based on the interplay between them. One of them is the relation of subordination. Teachers teach, educate and are responsible for students' safety. The right to assess the knowledge acquired by students is one of their privileges and duties. The assessment of students' knowledge and competences is traditionally an area tinted by numerous doubts, usually voiced by students. The sense of injustice resulting from a lowered grade is a situation in which "the final result clearly does not coincide with the agent's intention" (Urbaniak-Zajac, 2013, p. 173).

Conclusions

The results of the analysis presented in the article demonstrate a substantial interpretative potential of the objective hermeneutics method. Non-transparent interpretative rules make it difficult to use this method in educational practice on a large scale. Case studies, which describe typical and less typical relations between a narrator and other participants of biographical situations, would definitely be useful examples. The analysis has also shown that the objective hermeneutics method can be successfully used in reconstructing behaviours, motives and circumstances of unjust situations. After elaborating

its methodology, the objective hermeneutics method can prove valuable in various educational and legal contexts.

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