

Love in the time of Me

A sociopedagogical study

Summary

The book 'Love in the time of Me. A sociopedagogical study' reconstructs the cultural changes in the spheres of intimacy, love, emotionality and the significantly individualized forms of existence among heterosexual couples. Its theoretical narrative and methodological conclusions focus principally on partnership relations described in scripts from young people studying at selected universities in Poland and Czechia.

Partnership relations are defined as stable intimate relations between two people which exert a creative influence on the form of social and individual life histories, and are rooted in the socio-economic and cultural context.

The theoretical part of the book draws on terminology defined by theorists such as J. C. Kauffman, N. Luhmann, E. and U. Beck, A. Giddens, L. Jamienson and E. Illouz. The first three chapters define partner relations and love present in contemporary circumstances of cultural tension. The main theses comes down to a change in emotionality stemming from emotional capitalism, social media and cultural narcissism, which push apart (separate) those in a relationship, who then prioritise their own individual needs. The devaluation of the concept of Us and elevation of individual desires also leads to phenomena of interest to social pedagogy regarding: the conversion of women's social capital into sexual capital, emotional autism in virtual relations, the emergence of unprofessional 'expert analysis', occasional and transient relations that do not lead to starting a family. The whole range of social problems related to sexting, sponsoring, prostitution, cyberviolence and cyberpornography is not just a question of psychological support, but also the responsibility of the institutional and cultural structures that transmit values.

The research that led to this book was a qualitative-quantitative study aiming to answer the following question: Which cultural models of partner relations are preferred and practised by young people studying in Poland and Czechia and how do they differ? Such a subject required the construction of several research tools: extended questionnaires for 400 respondents in Polish and Czech, an understanding interview (J. C. Kauffman) for two hundred heterosexual couples, and live and virtual debates as part of the author's course 'Intimacy between being together and separate'.

The dynamic picture of partner relations in the lives of Polish and Czech students allowed four categories of relationship history to be distinguished. Most Polish students (of

whom more were female) represented the initiating-traditional partnership script, but a highly individualistic form, while the majority of Czech students fell into the category of postmodern partnership scripts. These results do not allow unambiguous theses, but propose a constructivist diagnosis of current changes in the Me epoch, whose representatives are entangled in cultural narcissism, and are often unable to form lasting intimate relationships, instead seeking acknowledgement and self-adoration, in essence: Selfie ergo sum.

Translated by Rob Pagett