

# **Ethics & Bioethics**

## **(in Central Europe)**

**2015, vol. 5(1–2)**

**ISSN 1338-5615**

**EAN 9771338561006 04**

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**Web site:**

[www.ethics-and-bioethics.com](http://www.ethics-and-bioethics.com)

**Indexing and Abstracting:**

Philosopher's Index

PhilPapers

Google Scholar

**Publication Frequency**

two double issues per year

**Publisher**

Prešovská univerzita v Prešove (University of Prešov)

IČO 17 070 775

17. novembra 15, SK-08001 Prešov

**Issue**

April 2015

**License number**

EV 4446/11

**Institutional Sponsors:**

It is supported by KEGA projects 005PU-4/2014 and 011PU-4/2015 as well as VEGA project 1/0629/15

Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej univerzity (University of Prešov Press)

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## **Ethics and/as education**

**Viera Bilasová**

### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on the function and methodology of ethical theory in ethics education as well as on the training, at university, of ethics education teachers within current Slovak contexts. It is predominantly about the understanding and acknowledgement of theoretical knowledge and its methodological connections with educational practice in elementary and secondary schools. The importance of ethical theory in training, being developed through an open dialogue, enables plurality of morals and ethics. To actively and responsibly involve oneself in the process of education requires, from teachers, to be professionally (theoretically and didactically) prepared and university education does contribute to reach this goal.

**Keywords:** ethics, education, methodology, humanities, society

The contemporary character and dynamics of social evolution place high demands on the recognition of the value content of reality. To understand the moral aspects of life; connected to differentiation between good and bad, right and wrong in human conditions requires specific reflection nowadays. Ethics, as a theoretical discipline, with practical morality as objective of its research, nowadays faces new challenges. These are also connected to a search for ways and means to regulate the development of value structures in the educational process. Formation of a need to live in accordance with certain moral rules and norms places demands on reflection of our own interests and needs in contexts of value backgrounds of both the individual and society. Ethical minimum, as an inevitable phenomenon of current forms of coexistence, is an outcome of systematic upbringing and education, and is gradually being formed in relevant social contexts (culture, educational system, practice state of arts, political atmosphere, etc.)

Current ethical discourse places higher demands on ethics as a theory which takes a share in the quality of theoretical training and in the promotion of its methodology capability to help social practice<sup>1</sup> to push good behavior through. Through its educational function, ethics is involved in strengthening the human dimension of morality<sup>2</sup> and its place in the

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<sup>1</sup> Theory makes use of general practices, but in relation to contexts it may also be abstract, focusing on value analysis and concrete life. From this point of view, practice cannot be primarily considered to be only a product or application of a theory. Theory itself is understood as a part or a form of practice, something like “theory of practice” (Višňovský, 2009, p. 186). This applies to educational practice, too, where interconnection and mutual dependency of theory and practice has its own specifics.

<sup>2</sup> Research on morality as a human phenomenon, has its specifications. These are connected to questions of origin, sources of morals and its images. Is morality inherent and part of our human essence or is it the result of the influence of social factors? Many questions and

private life of individuals; ethics functions as their inner need connected to moral belief in the validity of moral norms, both in social and professional lives. The formation of moral awareness is a naturally long lasting process and connected with gradual individual maturing that is determined by various factors.

Ethics education, as a school subject at elementary and secondary schools, has a specific function. Universities should prepare quality ethics education teachers who will be professionally capable and competent to make use of acquired theory in educational practice. Ethics as a theory of morality becomes, in the process of university training, an important factor in the development of creativity and critical thinking as well as an instrument for the formation and justification of ethical principles and norms, valid in democratic social conditions. Quality theoretical training has, in the process of the training of future ethics education teachers for pedagogical practice, an essential methodology and didactic consequences and becomes its basis and a potential warrant of professionalism and success.

Ethics, as a humanistic theory, is related to a certain type of knowledge that is tied up with analyzing the moral dimension of society. In general, ethics makes statements about real life in moral categories and terms, which do not cover causal connections but rather express their value aspects. Moreover, ethics is a theory that assesses practical reasons in the process of moral thinking, decision making (moral choice) and offers help in ethical argumentation while assessing what is and what is expected from anyone. In existential situations, ethics helps to enforce solutions when overcoming conflicts or dilemmas in various life situations. Above all, ethical theory gives us a basis for open discourse that respects the pluralistic character of morals and ethics. This theoretical aspect classifies ethics as an academic discipline and its professionalism consists in its methodological ability to apply acquired knowledge into the practice of human relations. It is about the competency of university training which consists of the competency of graduates to analyze individually and creatively, to understand human situations correctly, as well as to form those competencies which support active share in changes, including one's courage to search and modify values and norms of behavior.

The atmosphere of academic training at any university (predominantly within humanities) nowadays has certain limits that influence the quality and image of results. An absence of serious reflection and theoretical analysis<sup>3</sup> of these factors is a challenge which, in current trends of university

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answers can be found in ethical theories which often differ entirely in their conclusions and recommendations in determining value preference in human decision making and acting.

<sup>3</sup> In 2014, a serious philosophical critical reflection was published on the state of academic education and its social and ideological background in order to identify values on which

training, plays, from its perspective, a more and more acute role. An unfavorable social atmosphere, both from public and social institutions, is one of the factors which in a considerable way and on a long-term basis play a negative role. This is doubly true in relation to humanities whose “social utility” is not sufficiently and effectively measurable. Ignorance of academic work, which in the case of ethics is focused on the moral aspects of the development of an individual and society, has its sources in misunderstanding and undervaluing the moral dimensions in various social spheres. Considering the democratic society’s point of view, the role of ethics and morals is an essential phenomenon which we only rarely realize and acknowledge in our lives and, if we do, then only purposely oriented, often only fragmentally during some criticism of various social activities relating to unethical behavior. This process is often only fictitious ethical analysis which is based in rhetoric and declaration of more political than moral goals. Also media play their negative role here when they enter into the evaluation processes without any deeper analysis, usually with insufficiently developed ethical argumentation. Let us not forget that ethics has, at universities, just as in broader social contexts, its own specific defined and designated institutional form. As a rule, there is an ongoing opinion that a lack of norms in this context is, at the academic level, merely an expression of a lack of personal moral qualities (Bohunická, 2014, p. 65). The mechanism of evaluation requires, also at the academic level, a more transparent and systematic definition of research ethics, pedagogical work ethics, and ethics of interpersonal relations and not exclude control sphere ethics.<sup>4</sup>

If we admit that education<sup>5</sup> is an important factor influencing development of social wealth then we have to acknowledge the importance of universities and its commitment to creation of “added value” which lies in its intellectual potential “to be an opponent to social bad (disruption, decay, corruption) and a factor of social morality, which creates its irreplaceable cultural-educational commitment” (Višňovský, 2014, p. 37). Despite all this, universities are not able to avoid trends of civilization which accompany the current age. The power which economic effectiveness and instrumental rationality present, in various spheres of social practice, is

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academic culture is based. In this work, the results of research conducted by authors from Comenius University, Bratislava are presented (Višňovský, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> The majority of Slovak Universities “do not need” an ethics code and academic ethics is considered to be a personal issue, more or less connected with everyday morality. This fact is shocking because universities are intellectually and theoretically most capable and ready to reflect on problems connected to morality and ethics. This is true not only at academic premises but also in broader social contexts where ethical connections do have feedback and influence on solutions to many problems, also within separate fields of study.

<sup>5</sup> Ľubica Kobová correctly points out that current academic capitalism, with its emphasis on economic rationality (future economic utility) deforms the understanding of the value of education (Kobová, 2014, p. 80).

not suitable for university results and means of quality evaluation.<sup>6</sup> Social pressure should be more present in evaluating academic “capital” which can be found in the main focus of universities – “to create and to let to create” (Višňovský, 2014, p. 45).

Academic tradition, current trends and changes brought about by the transformation of the educational system in Slovakia do influence the training of professionals of ethics education which is a separate school subject at schools (primary, secondary, vocational). In ethics education (moral education)<sup>7</sup> as a school subject, its center is predominantly based on pro-social education that is lacking adequate space for individual creative attitude and creation of moral reasoning that enables the recognition of the moral character of contemporary problems as well as formation of the young generation’s own moral ideas and attitudes. The “unattractiveness” of ethics education, as a school subject in Slovak schools, is supported by other phenomena that negatively influence its effectiveness and educational results (confusing it with religious education, marginalization of its importance in comparison to other subjects, small allocation of teaching hours, breach of the principle of professionalism regarding the tutoring of ethics education, etc.). Understating the phenomenon of the creation of the young generation’s moral consciousness, or its weak forms, may be considered an important factor of school education and its implications may only be scarcely empirically or exactly expressed, in the current quality of education evaluation.

The objective of ethics education lies in the formation of autonomous persons with their own identity and value orientation, pro-social behavior, formation of those skills and abilities which enable them to elaborate individual capabilities and the ability to reason morally and make individual decisions. To learn that acting morally, when enforcing our own interests and goals is a preferable recourse, is a basis of education that promotes the humane dimension of interpersonal coexistence. From the fulfillment of the goal of ethics education in the contemporary modern age, the modernization of content and means of educational approaches in ethics and moral issues, with a focus on reflection of current moral problems and their pedagogy

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<sup>6</sup> Authors of the following works point out those academic practices which influence university work in research, education and control areas. They critically reflect on current influences and tendencies paralyzing the original essence of academic life and work which is intellectual and mental creation that cannot be measured via financial or material effectiveness (Višňovský, 2014, pp. 40–44; Sýkora, 2014, pp. 92–98; Kiczková, 2014, pp. 122–123).

<sup>7</sup> In the context of education, I am inclined towards the use of ethical and moral education terms in accordance with ideas of Gabriela Platková Olejárová who considers the two terms, from its goals and also from the functional point of view, to be synonyms. The author stresses the fact that moral education, which is focused on development of moral attitudes and formation of moral consciousness, is part of ethics education as a school subject (Platková Olejárová, 2010, p. 151).



transformation, should also be a part of it. Enhancement of university teacher training process is part of that sphere of professionalism that is in the hands of university professionals.

In this context, how should an ethics education teacher be trained and what should he or she give to his or her students? Should we facilitate students with the most up to date knowledge and equip them with theory in order to allow them to orientate themselves amongst various moral concepts and approaches to life and its problems? Or is it sufficient if a teacher facilitates enough information on moral principles and norms which may function as an assessment tool for desirable behavior? If the pro-social behavior of students can be influenced, then the question arises: is a young person ready to confront acquired moral rules and norms in the case of moral conflicts? Is he or she able to think individually and opt for one's own value preferences in order to make a right decision, often under the pressure of the situation or lack of time? These are questions that the innovated concept of ethics education,<sup>8</sup> with teachers as the main part and agents, should search for answers to. That is one of the reasons why professional university training is a certain anticipation of ethics education in pedagogical practice itself and theoretical background is one of the most important factors in this training.

Our acknowledgement of the importance of the mutual relationship and interconnection of theoretical and practical ethics, the issue of transformation of theory into practice but also acknowledgment of its impulses for further theory development,<sup>9</sup> have fundamental methodological importance in ethics education training. The methodological premise about the importance of the mutual relationship of theory and practice in university training does have an essential consequence on the practices of moral thinking and moral argumentation, multiplying the functionality and importance of theory in ethics education teacher training. Tendencies which strive to squeeze university training only into one of the levels of ethics theory – ethics education can be considered as essentially wrong. Mutual interconnection and correct understanding of ethics theory – ethics

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<sup>8</sup> A team of professionals from the Faculty of Education, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica has been, on a long term basis, devoted to questions on the concept of ethics education in Slovakia (J. Kaliský, L. Kaliská, K. Čižmarová, P. Fridrichová, V. Korim, E. Balážová, B. Kosová and others).

<sup>9</sup> I can fully agree with a view that university training is connected to a main commitment of university which lies “primarily in development of intellectual culture and formation of students’ intellect, not in formation of their practical skills for future profession – for this goal, there are different types of schools and institutions” (Višňovský, 2014, p. 36). Thus, we cannot make a firm, bureau or other gainful activity out of any university. A pressure on effectiveness, productivity and quality must have in academic circumstances different parameters which also require a different evaluation approach. Unfortunately, current trend of civilization and “will” to reflect on this mental capital does not fit the contemporary needs and atmosphere of consume society, also in Slovakia.

education are key factors for the effectiveness of the educational system of moral education, too.

Ethics is not only about theory; primarily it is a part of a human attitude that has to be asserted when solving real life conflicts. Recognition and understanding of life situations as morally relevant requires a certain cognitive capacity. Ethics and its moral topics are not occasions in human life; rather they are parts of everyday life and require skills and competencies to reflect on them theoretically. To think theoretically about morality means to understand its origin, resources and place in human life as well as enabling us to search for means how to learn it.

Moral maturing, or aging, of each individual human being is a very complicated process and is connected with the gradual growth of moral reasoning, thinking, knowledge and evaluation, which influences the formation of moral ideas and moral attitudes in the context of adequate educational systems. It is a creative process that often collides with traditions connected to acceptance of morality and the principles of morality as an authority. Differing levels of cognitive development of individuals<sup>10</sup> give, as well as requiring a specific approach and capability to enter the processes of the formation of students' moral consciousness. This is a target group for the focus of ethics education teacher training. The importance of ethics theory during this training and its drilling in open discourse level, which enables pluralism of ethics and morals forms, makes up one of the most important parts of university education. It is necessary to work with ethical theory in such a manner that a student learns how to ethically think, reason, argue and how to utilize acquired theoretical knowledge when solving real practical moral situations. Naturally, it does not mean an overestimation of the role or importance of any theory; rather it is an essential as well as fundamental approach to university ethics education teacher training. In effort to understand the net of principles and norms, ethics has to have the ambition to search for and help with revealing that what is currently present in human powers as well as that what can potentially be present. In this perspective, every moral act can be perceived as an offensive and creative intervention into human life and its critical reflection is understood as a certain strategy that helps us to make decisions at various "cross-roads" of life and find the right way.

Still, the most significant agents in education, specifically in moral education, are family and school. It is such a force field of educational influence at different life stages of the life of young people that it, in a

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<sup>10</sup> The moral reasoning of children and the youth moral is usually dependent on age and experience acquired in social and cultural settings. Different authors focus, in their research, on processes of cognitive and moral development and they hold on psychology of morals findings and offer a more complex view on ethics education (Kaliský, Kaliská & Čižmarová, 2013; Vacek, 2013; Gluchman, 1997; Heidbrink, 1997; Džuka, 2010 and others).

decisive manner, influences their personal qualities, including formation of value attitudes and moral competencies. To productively enter into this space requires from us to be sufficiently professionally (vocationally and didactically) prepared and university training contributes to this goal, but simultaneously we have to be sufficiently creative and “open” to new approaches, predominantly in the sphere of ethics discourse and its connections to life.

*This paper is a part of research project – KEGA 005PU-4/2014 Nové výzvy pre učiteľa etickej výchovy v 21. storočí (New challenges for a teacher of ethics in the 21st century).*

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## Value of responsibility in ethical (moral) education

Ján Kalajtzidis

### Abstract

The main aim of the presented paper is to reflect on today's situation regarding ethical (moral) education in Slovakia. The paper argues that the school subject taught in Slovakia under the name ethical education, is in reality much closer to psychology (or even applied psychology) than to ethics. One of the main reasons why it is possible to suggest this claim is the almost full inclination of ethical education to theory of pro-social development inspired by the work of R. R. Olivar. A suggestion of the paper is to retreat from this position and to incline closer to ethics by the help of value education. As an example of this possible course, the value of responsibility is introduced.

**Keywords:** ethical education, moral education, prosocial development, responsibility

Ethical education<sup>1</sup> is a school subject which is, in Slovakia, taught in elementary and secondary schools as an elective subject.<sup>2</sup> The realization of ethical education is specific in Slovakia, as it is based solely on the conception of pro-social development. Pro-social development is a conception which deals with the debate around individual differences and motivations of behaviors directed at benefiting others. As a benefit of others, one might count: helping, sharing, donating, caring and even comforting. One of the most well-known authors writing on the concept of pro-social development is Roche Olivar. The ideas of Olivar were used as a fundamental starting point in the establishment of ethical (moral) education in Slovakia. He defines pro-social behaviors as "those behaviors that without looking for external rewards help other people or groups, according to the criteria of these". Pro-social behavior in his opinion "increases the probability of generating a positive reciprocity, solidarity and quality of interpersonal relationships or social consequences, safeguarding the identity, creativity and initiative of individuals or groups involved" (Olivar, 2010, p. 9).

There is a wide discussion about the sufficiency of this conception on ethical (moral) education. The discussion started mostly because, from the beginning of the 90's, the tendency appeared to consider ethical education and the theory of pro-social development as something of synonymous. This tendency grew into accepting the false idea that ethical education equals the theory of pro-social development. Ethical education started to be understood as a school subject which is based more on psychological than philosophical conception (Grác, 2004, p. 3). Even ethics was a part (and still is) of philosophy at least for more than 2,500 years.

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<sup>1</sup> The literal translation of the title of school subject which could be more precisely translated to English as moral education.

<sup>2</sup> Pupils and students are obligated to choose one out of two options: religion education or ethical education.

Grác and other authors who reflected on this issue, namely: Zelina, Sukub and Gluchman criticized this tendency on the base of different ideas. Grác who has been writing on this issue for more than 15 years, states that ethical education, as a school subject, cannot be constitute without moral norms. In his view, when we constitute education without moral norms it cannot be called ethical<sup>3</sup> education. It might be some kind of pro-social education, but not ethical. One of the arguments is that pro-social behavior contrary to ethical behavior is not regulated by moral norms (Grác, 2004, p. 4). Grác, together with Zelina, warns us that Olivar's conception does not reflect on moral norms which are the foundation of any morality and therefore moral (ethical) education. Grác goes even further and claims that sometimes when we enforce pro-social behavior we might abandon moral behavior (Grác, 2006, p. 67; 2008, pp. 246–247). He claims that pro-social education has its place in ethical education, but the purpose of it (pro-social education) is to help make ethical education didactically more interesting and methodically fresher.<sup>4</sup> To replace them, to consider pro-social education as something equal to (as alternative to) ethical education is a mistake.<sup>5</sup>

Finding that ethical (moral) education as a school subject in Slovakia is framed as a pedagogical and psychological discipline instead of an ethical one is supported by many authors. Some of them even claim that ethics, which supposed to determine the aim of ethical education, is pulled aside (Vargová, 2009, p. 277). Kaliský and Kaliská likewise as Vargová noted that it is probably not correct to reduce the moral education to pro-social education. The school subject ethical (moral) education is very weakly grounded in any (if in some) philosophical background. It doesn't follow any ethical theory and on the contrary it is connected to psychology. They even stated that ethical (moral) education in Slovakia in its current state might be understood as a version of applied psychology (Kaliský & Kaliská, 2009, p. 107).

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<sup>3</sup> Ethics is understood as a theory of morale and morale is understood as a set of moral norms regulating human behavior.

<sup>4</sup> Others authors identified the purpose of pro-social education as a meaningful tool in achieving the aims (such as the good). But those must be determined by ethics (Vargová, 2009, p. 278). Platková Olejárová claims that even prosocial development is important in moral education, it cannot be considered as sufficient. In addition there is a need to focus on continual moral progress through the stimulation and development of moral consciousness (Platková Olejárová, 2010, pp. 157–158).

<sup>5</sup> Grác's argumentation is based on his own research (quantitative 2003 and qualitative 2004) in which he found many limitations of this incorrect identification (pro-social education as ethical education). Some of the most important shortcomings are insufficient understanding of many important issues by pupils who already completed a course of this "ethical" education in their schools. Among others he claims that high school alumni interchange moral and non-moral norms, or they have big problems when identifying the solution to problems where there is a conflict of norms. All of those (and others problems) are, in his opinion, results of inadequate theoretical preparation of students.

One of the suggested alternatives of how to overcome the conflict which exists today (in relation to mentioned problems) is to supersede the influence of pro-social behavior with value education.<sup>6</sup> Gluchman claims that one of the possible alternatives of much needed reform is to prefer the development of critical moral thinking instead of pro-social development. He finds one of the tools of how it can be achieved in analytical ethics which strive to develop a critical and analytical way of moral thinking.<sup>7</sup> One of the examples of this type of ethics is ethics of social consequences. Ethics of social consequences is an ethical theory which is striving to help to look for the solutions to moral problems by the stimulating of the thinking of the moral agent. To stimulate moral thinking, ethics of social consequences uses real and/or hypothetical moral situations in which moral values and principles are put in use (Gluchman, 2009, p. 67). Fundamental values in ethics of social consequences are human dignity, humanity and moral right. Closely interconnected to those values are secondary values: responsibility as well as justice. All of those values are elaborated and realized with close correlation to positive social consequences (Gluchman, 1996, pp. 46–51). Therefore Gluchman's idea is to use moral values in connection to the development of critical thinking and with focus on consequences. This is one of the possible proposals of how to change today's insufficient state in moral (ethical) education.

One of the most important values which could and should be used in moral education is in my opinion responsibility. The answers to the question which might arise in this proposal: why responsibility? is the claim, that responsibility always was and still is, a key concept of morality. As a result of the rapid growth in science and technology, realization of the importance which moral responsibility has for the preservation of humankind is growing as well. Even if it is impossible to achieve maximal moral responsibility, it is important to strive for it.

Today's regulatory documents of the Slovak state educational program ISCED<sup>8</sup> mention the value of responsibility in almost all of its variants (for kindergarten, for elementary schools and even for high schools). The

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<sup>6</sup> As far back as at the beginning of the 90's, when the concept of pro-social development was introduced in Slovakia through the translation of R. R. Olivar's book, Zelina criticized the inaccuracy of the translation. Zelina especially noticed the title *Ethical education* (*Etická výchova*) which he insisted is inadequate because there is a large difference between ethics and prosocial education. One of the shortages of the introduced concept (of pro-social education) is, in his understanding, the absence of values (Zelina, 1992, p. 12).

<sup>7</sup> In praxis, this is rather a difficult task. The teacher has to consider his/her audience (target group) of moral education and in what way (and degree) the audience is capable of developing critical moral thinking. As Komenská stated, there are different ways classifying the target groups of (bio)ethics education; e.g. age, education level, previous knowledge and experiences in bioethical issues, etc. For example, target groups can be divided according to previous knowledge on ethics (general public, experts/professionals in the identified field, students of ethics and philosophy) (Komenská, 2012, pp. 28–38).

<sup>8</sup> Acronym for *The international standard classification of education*.

American author Kathryn Wentzel studied responsibility through the concept of social responsibility and its association to academic achievements. She claims that development of social responsibility is a matter of great concern not just for students, but even for their teachers and their parents. One of the reasons why it is so is finding that social responsibility is associated with various aspects of school performance. Learning and behaving responsibly in the classroom is causally related and irresponsible behavior can result in disorder, poor interpersonal relationships or even academic failure (Wenzel, 1991, pp. 1–2).

But what is responsibility and how can it be taught? In my opinion, we can try to teach responsibility on the one hand by being responsible. On the other hand, we can try to teach responsibility through theoretical explanation of what the value of responsibility is. Of course this might be more convenient mostly for the older students, but at a fundamental level, it is necessary even for the younger ones.

When trying to understand responsibility we need to look for the answers to three important questions which are associated with the issue. Who is responsible? For what is he/she responsible? And to whom is he/she responsible? Before trying to answer those questions, theory must be able to answer first the cardinal question: what is responsibility?

In academic literature we may find a lot of different distinctions and types of responsibility. Foremost is the distinction between formal<sup>9</sup> and informal responsibility. In connection to informal responsibility we need to differentiate moral and causal responsibility. Moral responsibility which exists only in connection to the moral agent can be distinguished with regard to the bearer of it onwards: individual moral responsibility and collective moral responsibility and specific type of collective moral responsibility as joint responsibility.

Every moral agent irrespective of its type exists in a specific time and space. In this respect when we examine the concept of responsibility, it can be examined only in the frontier of these variables. It is possible to distinguish responsibility in respect of what we did or did not do as retrospective. On the other hand, in respect of the future we distinguish prospective moral responsibility. Prospective moral responsibility is a form of responsibility which is ascribed to an agent before something happens. Usually, prospective responsibility is connected to the concept of duties and retrospective is tantamount to a sort of blameworthiness or praiseworthiness. Retrospective and prospective responsibilities are inextricably linked and prospective responsibility is usually understood as a prerequisite for retrospective responsibility.

A very important issue in the discussion on responsibility is the issue of free will. It is an attempt to understand under what conditions of the agent

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<sup>9</sup> Formal responsibility is understood in this distinction as legal responsibility and it is not within the scope of interest in this paper.



and the action we can assign moral evaluation to the agent; assign praise or blame and then to reward or punish him/her. Ethics of social consequences<sup>10</sup> holds the view known in academic literature under the term compatibilism (soft determinism). The essence of the idea is that it is possible to believe in determinism and free will at the same time. That free will and determinism are compatible. The result of this position is that we can accept determinism and still reason about moral responsibility (Gluchman, 2005, pp. 47–53).

In ethics of social consequences the principle of moral responsibility is closely connected to the principle of moral justice, which determines its content. Moral responsibility is interconnected to the realization of the principle of justice which is understood as acting in compliance with fundamental moral values valid in human society. In other words human dignity, humanity and moral right are values which are necessary for understanding and determining moral responsibility (Gluchman, 1996, pp. 46–51).<sup>11</sup> It is important to notice that theoretical study of the value of responsibility can help us not only to comprehend it, but to see and understand the connection to other values which might be used in process of moral education as well.

Nowadays, moral responsibility is understood as the ability of an agent to take account for his/her actions or omissions.<sup>12</sup> This competence is interconnected with the possibility to praise or blame him/her (reward or punish him/her). However this understanding is not sufficient enough; additionally the agent must be able not only to bear something (to take account) but she must be able to act. On the one hand the responsibility is understood as an ability to bear, on the other as an ability to act. It is important to acknowledge this aspect of responsibility; as a facility to assign duties to an agent.<sup>13</sup>

Moral responsibility is understood through three aspects implicitly inherent to it. Moral responsibility is understood through notions of ability, duty and guarantee. The notion of moral responsibility as ability is aimed at the concept of the moral agent. Morality generally requires accountability (individual or collective), before ethical evaluations can be assigned. Hence, this notion expresses a capacity which must be fulfilled by an agent to become a moral agent. Being morally responsible (through the notion of ability) means being eligible for moral evaluation. Moral responsibility, as an ability, is a requirement which must be fulfilled before we can reflect on

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<sup>10</sup> Consequentialist ethical theory is used as the methodological basis.

<sup>11</sup> Besides this very partial explanation, ethics of social consequences discussed responsibility in connection with issues of the moral agent and moral agency.

<sup>12</sup> This is becoming more and more important in today's global society.

<sup>13</sup> The agent must be able to act on behalf of something. If the agent is not capable of acting on behalf of something, it is impossible to refer to him/her as responsible and therefore as an agent. There is no purpose in assigning duties to somebody who is unable to be accountable for them. In this sense, responsibility is understood as an integral and central attribute of moral agency.

other notions of responsibility. This notion of moral responsibility is a grounded one. Without the ability of an agent to become a moral agent, there is no point reflecting on other aspects of responsibility. Only when an agent is able to fulfill requirements, only then does it make sense to consider assigning duties which can be later sanctioned (praised or blamed and then rewarded or punished) as a sign of approval or disapproval. Moral responsibility through the notion of duty<sup>14</sup> is understood as an ability to act when required. And only when the agent is capable of fulfilling them (former understandings of responsibility), only then does it make sense to talk about moral responsibility as guarantee,<sup>15</sup> which is understood as an ability to bear consequences (Kalajtzidis, 2012, pp. 132–138).

There is a wide range of understanding of what is a value. But there might probably be agreement on that in a positive sense; value can be described as something which is useful in satisfying human needs. In this sense, moral values are those values which are used as standards of good and evil, and have the strength to govern or at least inspire, behavior and choices which moral agent makes. That's one of the reasons why value education is so necessary in today's schooling, and the moral (ethical) education could and should be the place where we can realize it. The presented paper showed an example of how it can be done by the study and use of one of the most important moral values, the value of responsibility.

*This paper is a part of research project – KEGA 005PU-4/2014 Nové výzvy pre učiteľa etickej výchovy v 21. storočí (New challenges for a teacher of ethics in the 21st century).*

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<sup>14</sup> Moral responsibility understood through the notion of duty expresses obligations or tasks which are assigned to the moral agent. In ethics of social consequences those are described as: to make decisions (to deliberate) and act on them, in that way, those consequences which will be outcomes of those decisions and acts, would be mainly positive. Moral responsibility is understood as a duty to act in compliance with justice and fundamental moral values valid in human society in particular: human dignity, humanity and moral right.

<sup>15</sup> Moral responsibility understood through the notion of guarantee is in the view of ethics of social consequences perceived as an ability to bear consequences and therefore to achieve acts which are in accordance with moral duty. The possibility to exercise moral responsibility via the notion of guarantee means that it is possible to impute reward or punishment to a moral agent.

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## **Didactic and ethical aspects of learner's assessment in the subject of ethical education**

**Gabriela Platková Olejárová**

### **Abstract**

The paper is focused on some didactic aspects related to the assessment of learners in the subject of Ethical Education. Reasons are given for the importance and influence of verbal assessment in the mentioned subject, which has a significant impact on the behaviour and actions of the learner, his self-image, self-respect, self-confidence and self-education. In this context, at the end of the article out some professional competences of Ethical Education teacher are pointed out, especially teaching competence, regarding an appropriate approach in assessment, which is interconnected with classroom didactic principles, ethical education, educational style and pedagogy of Ethical Education.

**Keywords:** ethical education, verbal assessment, self-image, self-respect, self-confidence, self-education, didactic principles, educational style, pedagogy of Ethical Education.

Ivan Podmanický states that the aim of didactics in Ethical Education is: setting the goal and content of the subject; examining the specifics of the subject (e.g. selection of knowledge and necessary skills); determination of the requirements, process aspects of the subject (chosen methods, principles, educational style of the teacher, organizational forms, material means); the impact of various factors on the efficiency of Ethical Education classes (e.g. the personality of a teacher, the form of his/her preparation, school climate); didactic analysis of the relationship to other scientific disciplines and the genesis of the subject within school education of the Slovak Republic (Podmanický, 2012, p. 10). These didactic aims can also include the question of evaluation, in the classes of Ethical Education. The subject is not classified and its assessment is just evaluated as pass/fail.<sup>1</sup>

Ethical Education teachers only often have recourse to a single option; evaluate the learners in the class verbally,<sup>2</sup> or provide (in terms of

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<sup>1</sup> Besides this are typical features of the subject of Ethical Education, Blanka Kudláčová, in addition, states that the profession of Ethical Education teacher is special for other reasons: the content and the method of teaching have their major particularities, compared to other subjects; the teacher must be ready to respond to new and unexpected situations constantly; 'results' of work cannot be tested or measured; parents and the community often have unduly high expectations and requirements of a teacher of Ethical Education; The teacher is himself the bearer of certain values and takes certain attitudes and beliefs, and therefore he/she is more personally involved in the educational process (Kudláčová, 2004). In addition, we can recall the words of Beáta Kosová, according to whom Ethical Education is not primarily focused on the acquisition of knowledge solely, but mainly to "cultivate" living, the "training" of skills and "bringing up" attitudes. While a student does not need these qualities for his/her final exam, the rest of his future life depends very much on them (Kosová, 2007, pp. 154–155).

<sup>2</sup> Positive verbal evaluation as follows: does not stress a learner and put emphasis on positive results instead; it also contains recommendations as how to improve; it reduces the

pedagogy) and Ethical Education positive assessment, ascribe the children/learners positive characteristics;<sup>3</sup> Accept the child/learner as he/she is; to the negative phenomena respond peacefully by referring to the consequences; encourage them, reward or punish with caution (Lencz, 1998, p. 11).

Despite the above-mentioned didactic and pedagogical recommendations, student teachers of Ethical Education often raise to question of how to maintain authority in classes of Ethical Education, as it is not a classified subject. The problem is that classification, in their sense (and the perception of most teachers), is still considered the primary and most relevant means of maintaining the discipline, desirable behaviour and acting of a learner. They also mistakenly believe that classification guarantees the optimal relationship between teacher and learner and the foundation of effective learning and training. This perception is usually based on traditional trends in evaluation, which can be summarized as follows:

- Evaluation is focused on a finite amount of acquired knowledge with enhancement of the cognitive aspects of personality.
- From cognitive processes, memory (reproduction) is preferred to creativity (production).
- The learner's immediate performance is assessed at the expense of the others, especially the emotional and social characteristics of the child's actions.
- Failure of a learner is assessed by marks of lower degree, thus what is assessed is not what he/she knows, but what he/she does not.
- A comparison prevails with the norm or with the class; individual variations and peculiarities of child's personality are practically not tolerated.
- Evaluation is often based on authoritative positions of distrust towards the child, the mark is used as a mean of coercion and it creates negative mental states, which may block the development of personality.

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risk of discrimination of weaker learners; variability of verbal evaluation approaches the individuality of a learner (Kolář & Šikulová, 2009, p. 89).

<sup>3</sup> One of the teaching principles of Ethics confirms this: *The principle support of the positive features of a learner's personality* – expresses getting to know an individual by direct daily contact, while the mastery of basic diagnostic procedures is necessary. Its effectiveness affects the fulfilment of two basic assumptions. The first is a positive attitude towards the learner by the teacher (pedagogical love), which allows him to see the student in a real light, including his/her pros and cons and forms the basis for initial trust. The second assumption is that choosing educational policies and practices is based on knowledge of the positive traits of a learner's personality. Appropriate highlighting of real positives in specific teaching situations creates an atmosphere of trust, helps to develop healthy self-respect of learners and also amends negative traits of his/her personality. Not to mention that if a learner achieves success of acceptance and appreciation of others, he/she has a greater tendency to cope with his/her own mistakes (Podmanický, 2013, p. 31).

- In school evaluation, external discipline is overestimated at the expense of conscious self – regulation.
- To overestimate the importance of formal grading, as the main form of school evaluation, other types and forms of evaluation should be used, including the self – evaluation of a learner (Kosová, 2000a, pp. 12–13).

If student teachers (or teachers of Ethical Education in practice) insist on such a traditional approach towards evaluation, soon they will have difficulty in retaining good (cooperating, confidential, honest and friendly) relationships with learners, which is reflected in the behaviour and actions of learners in the class. In case of potential problems in the behaviour of a learner therefore is quite appropriate for the teacher to look for the reasons and perhaps they will find the answers in the following questions: Is the personality of a learner formed solely by the cognitive aspect? What is the nature of a learner's personality? Is fair assessment of a learner performance – based? Based on what value criterion can we compare and evaluate the performance of pupils of Ethical Education? Does the created social and ethical climate in the classroom have any impact on the performance of a learner? Does a learner have the right to respect for individual expressions in the assessment by the teacher? Does a learner have the right to self-assessment? Is it ethical to use grades as a means of maintaining discipline? Is a teacher responsible for the personality development of students through verbal evaluation? Does the teacher–learner relationship affect objectivity of evaluation of a learner? Is it fair to downgrade the claims on performance of a learner, regarding his/her current emotional and mental state? Can an empathetic teacher be unfair in his/her assessments? How to avoid negative effects of evaluation? Is it correct to use only positive evaluation?

To believe that the above mentioned practical tendencies of assessment (inducing the amount of these and other similar questions) are not currently present in the lessons of Ethical Education for several reasons, which a teacher should realize, to prevent problems. Ethics focuses more on the non-cognitive part (emotional, moral and social) of personality and goals, the especially attitudes, values and beliefs of a learner, are more affective (than cognitive),<sup>4</sup> as base education.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in Ethical Education it is recommended to replace memorization and reproduction by the creativity, thinking and production of learner. Therefore, traditional forms of classification (written or oral) fail here. In accordance with the humanistic

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<sup>4</sup> Ethics is primarily focused on education to pro-social behaviour, which is reflected in moral attitudes and in regulation of the behaviour of learners. For Ethical Education, the primary goal is development of ethical attitudes and pro-social behaviour. It also includes the development of social skills (open communication, empathy, positive assessment of others ...) as well as the support of mental hygiene and it participates in the primary prevention of behavioural disorders and learning (ISCED 2, 2011, p. 2).

<sup>5</sup> The question then arises – according to what criteria can we (if at all) evaluate the attitude and opinion of a learner? The ethical problem arises especially when family education differs from the education at school, or if it is inconsistent with the opinion of the teacher.

concept of teaching,<sup>6</sup> it is typical for Ethical Education to take into account the situation of learners and their experience; combine education and communication with practical life; emphasize a holistic personality; focus attention on the person (child/learner) and believe that everyone has the opportunity to improve himself/herself (Podmanický, 2012, pp. 18–19). Katarína Krelová adds that assessment of a learner should be viewed in his/her development and comprehensively. At the same time, assessment should have an encouraging effect (Krelová, 2005). In Ethical Education, there should also be the rule of individual approach in verbal evaluation (to assess the learner's performance within his/her possibilities and abilities); a teacher should, in verbal evaluation, be open to the development of a child/learner and should try to use formative assessments (not fixed and summative). In addition, it is proposed to differentiate the tasks so that a child / learner can be successful. Finally, it is necessary to teach a learner self-evaluation, because a learner has the right to evaluate himself. The purpose and the importance of evaluation becomes, then, to teach learners to live their own life, to achieve the highest levels of personal development – their self-development – so that they could be guided consciously towards their own creative self-realization (aims of education). Evaluation, as part of the educational process, should encourage this (it requires good self-knowledge and self-esteem) (Kosová, 2000a; 2000b).

To achieve this objective (self-knowledge and self-assessment) the topics of Ethical Education for primary and secondary schools are more or less directed so. For example, we can mention the topic related to the dignity of a human person and respect for each other, where in the framework of educational objectives, attention is focused on the adoption of himself, support and development of self-esteem and self-knowledge, as well as a positive self-image. Self-evaluation is, then, evaluation of the information contained in self-image and it includes the feelings that this evokes within us. If it does matter to a learner to have good grades, in achieving poor results his self-evaluation will suffer greatly. If a learner does not care about the marks, low marks could not affect his self-evaluation significantly. Objective information about the learner himself and subjective evaluation of such information thus has an impact on self-evaluation (Lencz & Krížová, 1993, p. 32).

The same applies in verbal evaluation in Ethical Education. For this reason, I believe that in the context of the word – assessment – in Ethical Education, it is important for the teacher to avoid frequent and excessive

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<sup>6</sup> Humanistic education should focus on the learner as a person, with all rights to his/her individuality; facilitate the process of development of the learner's personality; ensure that the learner gains autonomy, independence in teaching and becomes creative; liberate tuition from “tyranny” errors; abolish memorization of knowledge; give learners the opportunity to follow their own motivations; develop personality in all its aspects (Fazekašová & Dargová, 2003).



negative evaluation and various mistakes in the assessment (halo effect, categorizing, inability to be empathetic, not noticing the mental states of the assessed learner, base assessment of prejudices and the like). Verbal assessment should reassure the learner in his ability, give him a sense of accomplishment and thus create a favourable atmosphere for the cooperation of learner – teacher. A teacher of Ethical Education should be aware that school evaluation has a significant impact on the learner's self-concept, and thus on his/her ability for conscious self-regulation – based on evaluation, the learner's self-concept is formed as a successful or unsuccessful individual (Kosová, 2000a; 2000b). Sometimes the teachers does not realize the impact of their verbal assessment on a learner, but often the conduct and behaviour of learners, in relation to each other or in relation to the teachers, reflect the teacher's evaluation. Therefore, the teacher should be more responsible and cautious in the evaluation of a learner.

The basis for educational action in Ethical Education is to help the learners in self-evaluation and positive feeling of success, which in turn is associated with positive self-evaluation. The learner approaches new tasks with the hope of success, his/her motivation is increasing, and he/she works with pleasure and usually achieves a good result (Lencz, 1998, pp. 7–10). In this respect, one can paraphrase the already well-known phrase that children become those who we consider them to be.

In addition, it may be right, here, to seek meaningful verbal evaluations. Why do teachers depend on verbal assessment? What is the purpose of verbal assessment for the learners? These two issues are related to the functions of evaluation, which may include motivational, informative, regulatory, educational, prognostic and differentiation functions (Kolář & Šikulová, 2009). Kosová (2000a) also points out, from the perspective of a learner, the following assessment functions: cognitive and self-recognition, motivational – activation, auto-regulative (self-controlled, self-evaluative, regulative, selective and prognostic functions). From the perspective of a teacher, the author speaks about developing, diagnostic, auto-diagnostic and auto-regulatory (information about the results and effectiveness of our own educational activity) functions. Educational function (as well as cognitive, self-recognition and self-evaluation functions) plays a relevant role for Ethical Education. Verbal evaluation of the teacher in the lessons of Ethical Education in this context should lead to the formation of positive qualities and attitudes of the learners (e.g. responsibility, perseverance, conscientiousness, hard work, etc.) to (her)himself and to the others. Furthermore, the educational function of assessment has the impact on the value orientation of a learner and his/her confidence. Finally, the evaluation of a learner, in the subject of Ethical Education, assures the learner in his/her ability, gives him/her a sense of achievement and creates a favourable atmosphere for teacher – learner cooperation (Kolář & Šikulová, 2009). In the lessons of Ethical Education, the teacher should, through the

method of Ethical Education – strengthened by other people (recognition, praise from the teacher, support, etc.) make the positive and desirable behaviour and actions of the learner the goal and, at the same time, motivate him/her to further performance and gives the learner confidence to achieve success. As already mentioned, school assessment has, in fact, a serious impact on the self-understanding of a learner, and thus on his/her ability for conscious self-regulation, which is based on evaluation of the learner and creates the self-concept of a successful or unsuccessful individual (Kosová, 2000a). Skalková states that positive assessment raises a sense of trust, meets the need for social recognition, strengthens the feeling of confidence, causes a positive attitude of learners towards the teacher's needs in the teaching process and motivates their strength and ability to bring even better performance. She also adds that negative assessment cannot be excluded, but it is necessary to consider its adequacy and the need for it (Skalková, 2007, p. 178).

Emphasising the importance of such verbal evaluations in Ethical Education classes requires didactic and methodological professional skills, excellent motivation sustained during the whole lesson, maintaining and developing appropriate educational style and correct communication between teacher and learner from teachers of Ethical Education. Equally important is the climate in the class. Therefore, I believe that it is essential that the teacher of Ethical Education should gain and improve his/her professional competencies and ethical competencies needed for teaching the subject Ethical Education. The teacher of Ethical Education should be a qualified expert and professional in his/her field, as the subject of Ethical Education has its obvious educational and learning objectives, methodology and didactics (including the problem of verbal assessment).<sup>7</sup> This assumes a successful education in the field of Ethics, respectively in Ethical Education and the acquisition of professional competencies, especially the subject and didactics. The personal aspect of the teacher, his personality traits also play a very important role. The Ethical Education teacher is a facilitator – helps, advises, directs (does not command, does not mentor) and via assessment, performing and acting (action), affects the behaviour and actions of learners (as well as his/her self-esteem). The learner is not an object of the teacher's action, but represents an important subject. The specific effectiveness of

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<sup>7</sup> Emphasized competence and professionalism justifies the need to talk about the personality of the teacher of Ethical Education, because of his/her expertise clearly formulate objectives and choice of methods, ability to evaluate students – praise, the choice of teaching forms, implementation and management of teaching. Knowledge of patterns of Ethical Education lesson also creates a positive climate and the ability to create positive relationships with learners that is an essential tool for the effect on the development of a learner's personality. Achieving the goals of the lesson and developing the learner's personality depends on how expertly the teacher of Ethical Education leads, implements and manages the lesson of Ethical Education (Platková Olejárová, 2013, p. 108).

teaching Ethical Education classes is based precisely on the positive relationship of teacher and learner (Platková Olejárová, 2011, pp. 268–269). Mutual teacher–learner interaction in the subject of Ethical Education (the learner is not only the object, but subject of education as well) should encourage, stimulate and develop the learner’s personality. For effective interaction, some social needs should be filled – even in verbal evaluation – such as the need for safety, feedback, fellowship, love, need for self-realization, recognition, the need for successful performance and the need to avoid humiliation. It is expected to create these conditions in the subject of Ethical Education from the personality of the teacher (his professional actions and behaviour) and induce, in the context of evaluation and feedback, such a situation that would enable the learners to realize an idea about themselves, their human possibilities. The relationship to the teacher is also influenced by the extent to which this works (Pelikán, 1995, pp. 88, 92). The need for adequate verbal evaluation, acquisition and development of social, communicative, evaluative and even counselling competencies of the teacher of Ethical Education can then be emphasized based on the competences. Mastery of such competences not only promotes a good relationship between teacher and learner, but also supports the success of teaching the subject of Ethical Education.

*This paper is a part of research project – KEGA 005PU-4/2014 Nové výzvy pre učiteľa etickej výchovy v 21. storočí (New challenges for a teacher of ethics in the 21st century).*

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## **The school classroom as a prejudice-free zone**

**Júlia Klembarová**

### **Abstract**

The present article deals with the contemporary situation in schools which is characterized by growing diversity among pupils and students in the classrooms. It points to the existence of prejudice in the thinking of pupils and it tries to find a way which can help teachers overcome these prejudices and make classrooms a prejudice-free zone where the pupils can meet and learn.

**Keywords:** school classrooms, prejudice, tolerance

In recent years, Slovakia has become a country which is open to people from various countries, cultures, ethnic groups and different minorities. Diversity can also be found in schools. School classrooms turn to places which may be represented by interaction among pupils and students of various nationalities, cultures, ethnic minorities, religious groups and so on.<sup>1</sup>

I consider these differences and specifics among individual pupils to be two sides of one coin. One side is represented by the positive effects of this interaction which is based on the enrichment of pupils' lives, particularly acquisition of new knowledge about interesting habits, traditions of various cultures, minorities. On the other hand, this situation incorporates negative aspects too. Differences among individual pupils can very often lead to the marginalization of individuals from the classroom community; sometimes it causes the derogation of individual pupils and perception of them as being less important than the majority of pupils in the classroom.

Why do I mention the positive and negative aspects of diversity in the classrooms? The answer to this question is simple and interconnected with the concept of the climate in classrooms. As we know, classroom climate is one of the most important factors influencing the successful educational process. Petlák understands it as a certain atmosphere of the classroom, as a set of values and norms and as a cooperation between the teacher and pupils (Petlák, 2006, p. 26). Gavora presents his understanding of classroom climate based mainly on social aspects in the classroom. In his understanding, classroom climate is defined as a level of pupils' satisfaction in the classroom which is determined by the fact, whether the pupils

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<sup>1</sup> Differences among individual students cannot be based on their health conditions either. In connection with this, it is possible to speak about differences of students resulting from their special needs. Law on education no. 245/2008 characterizes special needs to be requirements to modification of content, forms, methods and approaches in education of pupils with special needs. The need of modifications in the education of these students is determined by their health conditions, for example their disability (physical, intellectual or multiple disabilities, with communication problems, with autism and other pervasive developmental disabilities), talent or their development in a socially disadvantaged environment.

understand one another, whether a certain level of compatibility is present and whether there is a certain level of solidarity typical for the classroom (Gavora, 1999, p. 137). As we can see, Gavora's definition focuses mainly on the interpersonal relations within the classroom and particularly on the fact, whether these relations are based on mutual understanding, compatibility or solidarity. I agree with the presented definition and I think that relationships in the classroom represent an important factor of the overall climate in the process of education. In my opinion environment functions as important component in this process of education but I believe that individual relations among pupils (and between pupils and teachers too) are more important.

The above mentioned positive and negative aspects of diversity in classrooms affect the classroom climate in a significant way. When there are good relationships among pupils, they respect each other, help each other and by such behaviour the process of education is positively enhanced. On the other hand, negative aspects resulting from pupil diversity very often lead to the slowing down of the educational process.

An important question is what is the reason for existence of these negative aspects? Why are there negative emotions towards pupils who are different than us? What is the reason for their marginalization and other negative aspects in behaviour towards them? I think that these negative feelings and aspects result from prejudice which the majority group in the classroom feels. Prejudice can be defined as situation in which we reject the members of a different culture, religion, race, country and so on, on the basis of unimportant external characteristics without any effort to get to know them in more detail. In other words, prejudice is based on the assessment of other human beings (pupils) without getting to know them. It is based on the thoughtless rejection of others (Mistrík, 2006, p. 52). In my opinion, it is possible to find children with prejudice toward others in each classroom. In many cases, the basis for prejudice is built in their home environment. What can we do with this situation? Is it possible to overcome this problem and teach pupils to accept others in the classroom regardless their individual differences? I try to answer this question in following part.

### **Tolerance as a means of overcoming prejudice**

One of the ways of eliminating and restricting the cases of discrimination and marginalization of pupils in the classroom is to lead the pupils towards tolerance of others. Tolerance education should be an inseparable component of ethical education in primary and secondary schools. I consider it necessary to emphasize that to lead pupils and students towards tolerance should be included in all subjects, but mainly it should be a part of ethical education (based on the character of this subject). I agree with Kosová who points to the fact that through ethical education we are able to solve various problems in contemporary education. This ability is



determined by the personal, social and morally oriented character of ethical education which meets the needs of contemporary society with the main aim of developing the human being (Kosová, 2007, p. 148).

Rudolf Dupkala defines tolerance as ability and willingness to bear any kind of ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, political or morally-ethical otherness (Dupkala, 2013, pp. 11–12). In this definition one important aspect is lacking and it is the ability to also tolerate otherness and differences resulting from the health condition of individual. In other words, tolerance represents an ability of human being to live with other people who are different for example in their origin, race, opinions, values, health conditions; they belong to various religions and so on.

Concerning the understanding of tolerance, Sara Bullard emphasizes the practical aspect which is associated with this value. In her opinion, tolerance is not only an abstract moral concept, but it is a way how to live with the otherness and differences of individual people (Bullardová, 2007, p. 29). She introduces several basic features of tolerance, for example the ability to bear a situation which we do not like, the ability to be interested in other people, sympathize with other people although we do not agree with their opinions. The value of tolerance is not bound to certain political, religious or cultural membership. Every human being, regardless his political, religious or cultural background, is capable of tolerance, but he is capable of intolerance too. It is his decision which of these two approaches he will follow in his life through his behaviour and actions. We cannot acquire tolerance based on pressure from other people and similarly we cannot lose it in similar circumstances. To become a tolerant person is a long-term process and we need to learn how to achieve this goal (Bullardová, 2007, p. 30). Individual signs of tolerance permit better understanding of the basis of this value. Another important point is to think about how we reach tolerance, and particularly within the field of education, how should teachers develop tolerant behaviour in their pupils.

How is it possible to teach pupils to be tolerant? Is it exclusively a task for schools and particularly a task for the teachers of ethical education? A basic matter of fact we need to keep in mind when answering this question is the fact that tolerant behaviour is not inherent which means that we are not born with it. It is a result of family and social education, as well as in the case of its opposite – intolerance (Gluchmanová, 2008, p. 162). We can say that the life path children will follow (tolerant or intolerant) is primarily affected by their upbringing in their families, social environment and schools and the influence of these aspects on their personalities.

I agree with Platková Olejárová that a child spends the majority of the day in school. School represents an environment where children establish interpersonal relations to other children (friends, schoolmates), but also relations with teachers and other people working in the school. Formation of these relations is very important because pupils, through this interaction,

also create relation to themselves. "The fact that other people accept us or, on the other hand, reject us has an impact on the formation of our own image" (Platková Olejárová, 2011, p. 494). On the grounds of this, self-perception of individual pupils is positively enhanced by the acceptance of all pupils in the classroom, mutual cooperation, willingness to help each other, mutual respect and tolerance among all pupils in the classroom. Based on these positive aspects, each pupil acquires and confirms the feeling of his value, fellowship and importance of himself within the community in the classroom. I can conclude that the above-mentioned cooperation, empathy among pupils, mutual respect and cooperation of pupils and also pupils and teachers represent various manifestations of tolerance and tolerant behavior within the school environment. Using the words of Gluchmanová, the primary basis for tolerance is to realize that to be different does not mean to be inferior (Gluchmanová, 2009, p. 75).

I agree with presented opinion of Platková Olejárová that school is a place where children spend a major part of the day and it is a reason for the necessity of education promoting tolerance in schools. But I believe that children should already obtain a necessary basis for tolerance and tolerant behavior during their childhood within their families. I suppose that family environment represents the primary place where tolerance should be taught to children and following this, school functions as a further level of the socialization process which should lead them to the development of their tolerant behavior towards other pupils.

The importance of family environment and its influence on education promoting tolerance is also stressed by the American social psychologist Gordon W. Allport. He points to the fact that children exhibiting tolerant behaviour come from families for which a positive and friendly atmosphere is typical, these children feel loved and accepted no matter what they do. They feel safe in their families, have good relationships with their parents and they can express critical opinions to their parents and relatives (Allport, 2004, p. 442).

Bullard emphasizes the need for love for the development of tolerance and tolerant behaviour in children. She holds the view that financial background or education level in a family is not important. Without love, support, appreciation, growing self-confidence and hope in families, children are not able to accept the otherness of other people (Bullardová, 2007, p. 28). In families lacking the presented attributes it is barely possible to speak about promoting tolerant behaviour in children because they lack basic support, love and interest of the family through which it would be possible to develop tolerance to otherness and differences of other people.

This fact is also stressed by Allport who claims that children with prejudice usually come from families for which threats are typical. Their relationship to their parents is positive only on the outside, but in reality, these children hate their parents. There is a prevalence of strict parenting,

children are not allowed to be critical of their parents and consequently they behave in similar way to other children in the class (Allport, 2004, p. 442).

On the basis of the presented opinions I conclude that education towards tolerance is, in early childhood, founded on the attitude of the parents and family towards their children, as the family represents the first and most important factor influencing the development of a child. Later, in the period of school-age, part of this difficult task moves to the school, teachers and the classroom environment in which the child (pupil) becomes a member of a community of peers and a subject of interpersonal relations.

Allport refers to the existence of several resources of tolerance too. In his opinion, tolerance is based not only on one source, but it should be understood as a result of several elements functioning in one direction. The more of these sources (nature, family environment, parenting, various experiences, influence of school and community) affect in one direction (to acquirement of tolerance), the more tolerant a pupil will become (Allport, 2004, p. 444).

Connected to this, it is necessary to emphasize the need for harmony between education in the family environment and in that of the school. If teachers lead pupils to tolerance and acceptance of otherness and various differences in the school it is necessary that the upbringing in the family environment goes in the same direction, otherwise, it would be counter-productive to teach pupils to be tolerant towards other people in school, while at home these children are not allowed to meet and play with certain children (from minorities, different religious groups, children with special needs and so on).

Leading pupils to be tolerant towards other schoolmates in the classroom means teaching them to accept other people, to be interested in other people (schoolmates, friends, teachers, parents, relatives and so on), to accept their opinions which can be different. Each pupil is able to become tolerant but also intolerant of other people and the life path he chooses to follow depends on him alone. Here I see a place for the teacher (and also other people who are near this pupil) as a certain leader and motivator in the process of education and move towards tolerance.

The teacher represents a certain model of behaviour for his pupils and it means he should personalize the characteristics and behaviour that he expects from them.<sup>2</sup> The teacher should behave to all pupils in a tolerant way; respect their opinions, differences, habits and different values. The teacher's personality represents an important factor in the successful

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<sup>2</sup> This is stressed also by Elizabeth Campbell who points to the importance of the moral qualities of teachers. A teacher's moral character represents a necessary condition for the development of the moral character of his pupils. In her opinion, responsibility, justice, impartiality, honesty, courage, empathy, friendliness, tolerance, love to pupils, respect, and many others, are among the important moral qualities of the teacher (Campbell, 2003, p. 25).

formation of pupils because the teacher is a model for them and his approach to education and pupils influences the behaviour and actions of his students in future life (Platková Olejárová, 2013, pp. 107–108).

It is possible to conclude that a teacher's behaviour to his pupils (likewise, the behaviour of parents to their children in childhood) affects, in a significant way, the attitudes of pupils to their schoolmates in the classroom. Based on this, it is necessary for the teacher–pupil relationship to be filled with trust, respect, willingness, empathy, justice, humanity and dignified behaviour of all participants. The teacher should behave to all his pupils (regardless individual differences in culture, race, religion, existence of special needs and so on) as to morally equal human beings, to show them esteem, the respect which they deserve (Gluchmanová, 2012, p. 203).

Although I emphasize the role of the teacher in this process, it should be stressed that each individual pupil is of utmost importance. Pupils and students represent the basic and main active subjects in the process of developing tolerant behaviour. It is necessary for this process to be based on the theoretical as well as on the practical approach towards tolerance. Following the interconnection between theoretical basis and practical application of the given value in solving particular problems concerning tolerance in society, it is possible to achieve a full-value and effective process of education promoting tolerance. It is necessary to emphasize that fundamentals of this process should emerge from a theoretical understanding of the main issue (tolerance). When we expect pupils to behave in a tolerant way towards others, to respect others and perceive their needs as their own, it is necessary to teach pupils about the basis of tolerance, about important aspects of the diversity of individuals which should be understood as a natural part of society.

This need is also emphasized by Platková Olejárová who points to the fact that contemporary changes in the structure of the school classroom (primary changes from mono-cultural structure to multi-cultural structure) require changes in the process of education too. Pupils in the classroom are in contact with schoolmates coming from various cultures (countries, religions, they have different health conditions and so on) and very often they do not know how to cooperate with others, tolerate others and establish friendly relationships with other schoolmates. Platková Olejárová holds the view that the substance of this problem is in the cognitive level of pupils. In her opinion pupils do not have knowledge about different cultures, habits, traditions, values and this fact is also reflected in their attitudes towards their schoolmates. Their relationships are very often based on prejudices, stereotypes and it often leads to the derogation, bullying and discrimination of pupils from minority groups (Platková Olejárová, 2011, p. 494). It follows that, for the development of this theoretical basis of tolerance, it is essential to supply pupils with the core of tolerance, with the existence of various cultures, their specific traditions and values, different religions and

other peculiarities with main aim of pointing out the fact that diversity represents a merit for society.

Despite the importance of the theoretical dimension in leading the pupils to tolerant behaviour, it is necessary to combine it with the practical life of pupils. While explaining various aspects it is important and beneficial for teachers to use examples from everyday life which can help pupils understand the issues of tolerance in a better way. The need for interconnection of theory and practice within education is also stressed by Marta Hargašová: "Education towards tolerance, as every education, does not mean to speak about tolerance, but to encourage pupils to behave in a tolerant way" (Hargašová, 1997, p. 23). In different words, mechanical memorizing of the main aspects of tolerance is not sufficient. It is more important to show the links between the theoretical understanding of this value and its application in the everyday life of pupils, to show them how it is possible to be tolerant of other schoolmates in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

Tolerance represents an important part of life in contemporary society. For our existence in various groups and communities it is necessary to be tolerate, accepting, show esteem and respect to other people although they are different to us. Education towards tolerance has several dimensions (family education, education in schools, social communities and so on). It is of crucial importance for these dimensions to work in one direction and to develop tolerant behaviour in pupils. This education should be based on theoretical grounds and it is necessary to apply obtained theoretical knowledge in everyday life situations. Such education understands pupils to be active partners in the process of their own development which will help them perceive and feel the need for tolerance and tolerant behaviour towards others in contemporary society.

*This paper is a part of research project – KEGA 005PU-4/2014 Nové výzvy pre učiteľa etickej výchovy v 21. storočí (New challenges for a teacher of ethics in the 21st century).*

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## **The relevance and role of environmental values in ethics education (in the context of environmental ethics)**

**Adela Lešková Blahová**

### **Abstract**

Moral values in environmental education, in the broader context of ethics education as a compulsory elective subject is the main focus of this paper. The author aims to describe the contribution of individual concepts of environmental (ecological) ethics in the matter of identifying those (environmental) moral values, which are consistent with general environmental education objectives, introduced by Jan Činčera. As for the objectives, reverence for life, responsibility, voluntary simplicity, care, bio-centric equality and (eco)justice are described. Methodologically, mainly the concepts of Albert Schweitzer, Han Jonas, Aldo Næss, Erazim Kohák, Hana Librová, as well as eco-feminist concepts are applied.

**Keywords:** environmental ethics, environmental education, ethics education, moral values, reverence for life, responsibility, equality, (eco)justice, voluntary simplicity, care

This paper focuses on the interconnection of environmental education with the objectives and content of ethics education as a compulsory elective subject.<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the National Program for Education,<sup>2</sup> ethics education is mainly realised in the form of pro-social education, which should be reflected in the moral attitudes and behaviour regulation of students (NPE ISCED2, 2008, p. 18). Enhancement of social skills (open communication, positive assessment of others), as well as promotion of mental hygiene [...] are parts of the education (NPE ISCED2, 2008, p. 18).<sup>3</sup> In this sense, ethics education is a form of prevention against certain behaviours and learning disorders (NPE, 2008, p. 18). The educational concept 'Man and Values' has been a dominant one, oriented on the formation and cultivation of intellectual, spiritual and social dimensions of young people (NPE ISCED2, 2008, p. 18). Formation of personality with his or her own identity and value orientation, where respect for people and nature, cooperation, pro-social behaviour and national values have an important place, is the main objective of this educational concept (NPE ISCED2, 2008, p. 17).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Slovakia, ethics education is realised as an alternative to religious studies. Students have to choose one of the two subjects. Thus, at primary and secondary schools, the subjects are classified as compulsory elective subjects, i.e. ISCED2 and ISCED3.

<sup>2</sup> The National Program for Education is a binding document that states general aims (including framework content) of education as such and key competences that shall be by education enhanced. The document is issued and published by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>3</sup> These aims attained through the creatively-humanistic education of Milan Zelina (the so called KEMSAK) (NPE Ethics Education ISCED2, 2011, p. 3).

<sup>4</sup> To be more concrete, education in this section should lead students to: self-esteem, individual thinking and feelings, autonomous assessment, forming their own opinions and attitudes and it also teaches students how to discern good from bad, communicate

It is obvious that pro-social behaviour and cooperation are central moral values of ethics education.<sup>5</sup> This aspect is reflected in both the content and thematic focus of the subject. Social themes and topics on the enhancement of socially desirable behavior (positive assessment of a self and others, empathetic, tolerant, assertive and pro-social behavior) are dominant.<sup>6</sup> In the lower stages of secondary education, one of the application themes is the protection of nature and the environment (from the pro-social behaviourist point of view), or ethical aspects of nature protection. Emphasis is on internalisation of basic concepts related to nature and environment protection. However, the contextual and performance standard of ethics education, in relation to the mentioned theme, does not concretize what (moral) values, in terms of pro-natural<sup>7</sup> behaviour, students should learn and enhance. Hence, the following part of the text is oriented on delimitation of these values in environmental (ecological) ethics, being a part of applied ethics.

Before trying to specify the values, answers to the following questions should be searched for: What are the concrete objectives of environmental education? How should environmental education influence our behaviour and attitudes? If we do not take into account general objectives of environmental education in Slovakia,<sup>8</sup> we have to confront students with the following challenges:

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effectively, act pro-socially (age relevancy), recognize principles of good interpersonal relations, internalise pro-social values, attitudes and social norms, and how to develop social skills (NPE ISCED2, 2008, p. 18). At the higher secondary stage of education, the following additional themes are introduced: ability to cope with and effectively manage crisis situations, preclude aggressive and escapist forms of behaviour (chicanery, mobbing), enhancement of self-control and self-assessment (including self-appreciation), learning how to be empathetic, tolerant, self-critical and assertive, and how to communicate correctly (verbal and non-verbal communication), etc. (NPE ISCED3A, 2008, p. 20).

<sup>5</sup> Robert Roche Olivar's concept of education aimed at pro-social behaviour, is the inspirational source for the structure of ethics education in Slovakia (Olivar, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> According to ISCED2, the content of ethics education is formed of ten basic and six applicative themes. Namely: 1. open communication; 2. dignity of a human person, self-esteem, positive self-assessment; 3. positive assessment of others; 4. creativity and initiative; 5. expression of feelings; 6. empathy; 7. assertiveness; 8. real and imaginary models; 9. pro-social behaviour – help, donation, sharing, cooperation, friendship; 10. complex pro-social behaviour; 11. ethics – search for the roots of pro-social behaviour; 12. ethics and economical values; 13. ethics and religion – tolerance and respect; 14. The family I live with; 15. marriage and parenthood education; 16. nature and environment protection (NPE Ethics Education ISCED2, 2011, p. 4).

<sup>7</sup> Pro-natural or pro-environmental terms are used as concepts expressing respect for nature and live other than human; used analogically to pro-social behaviour.

<sup>8</sup> In Slovakia, the objective of environmental education lies in the enhancement of such personal qualities of students that can make them capable of discovering and solving environmental problems and enable them to participate directly in nature protection and promotion (Kelcová & Kukumbergová, 2007, p. 6). From the practical point of view, we talk about enhancement of the theoretical knowledge of students (about nature and natural processes and about the importance of its protection), of their skills (communicative,

1. *How* should a man live in order to “tread on the Earth more softly”?

Or:

- a) How can we, in our own life, cause less harm to other living creatures?
- b) How can we, in our own life, induce better things?
- c) How to avoid errors in answers to the previous two questions?

2. *Why* should a man “tread on the Earth more softly”?

Question number one asks for a concrete way (means) of pro-natural behaviour from the life-style point of view. This question (and challenge at the same time), can be developed by further questions. Answers to additional questions delimitate crystallisation of the behaviour and thinking of an individual who is inclined towards a pro-environmental life-style. Concretely, such a life –style requires from us to:

- a) reduce our ecological footprint,
- b) be active citizens and take part in the creation of a better world,
- c) think critically.

The second question asks for the sense and meaning of such behaviour. The answer lies in understanding the mutual connections and interconnections of ties and the world, respect for life, joy of world beauty and active sympathy with the universe (Činčera, 2007, p. 55).<sup>9</sup>

Apparently, every answer to any of the given questions represents some values or virtues that regulate and motivate our behaviour. Reduction of ecological footprint requires responsibility and modesty. Active citizenship

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numeric, study, social, technical, environmental problems solutions skills, etc.) and especially about enhancement of their save-the-planet attitudes (Environmental education for primary and secondary schools curricula, 1996, p. 1). Concretely (from the procedural point of view), we have to be respectful of the following principles: 1. teach students about natural environment – emphasis on the level of knowledge; 2. educate students through the natural environment – focus on enhancement of students’ skills; 3. educate students about natural environment – formation and improvement of positive values and attitudes towards protection of nature (Environmental education for primary and secondary schools curricula, 1996, pp. 7–8).

<sup>9</sup> It is a personal model of Jan Činčera. This model has been influenced mainly by phenomenology (E. Kohák, J. Patočka, M. Heidegger), but also by ideas of A. Schweitzer. The author understands environmental education as a way that helps us find our place on Earth while following the given aims in the long-term horizon (Činčera, 2007, p. 55). In this sense (broad scope of environmental education), it is close to the meaning of environmental education as one of the elements of moral education, which, as Gabriela Platková Olejárová states, leads to an acquirement of our ability to autonomously think, evaluate, act and to feel responsible for our own behaviour (Platková Olejárová, 2010, p. 155). Environmental education means cultivation of the (moral) personality of man, development of his or her moral opinions and knowledge in the pro-natural spirit (reverence for life) and respect for other moral values, e.g. dignity of life, justice, simplicity, responsibility, care, humanity, equality, freedom, etc. (Lešková Blahová, 2011, pp. 547–548).

requires being respectful of justice, equality (not only in relation to humans) and of care (wellbeing and the good of others), too. Critical thinking goes hand in hand with acknowledgement of freedom, pluralism and tolerance. When trying to reveal the motivation for our pro-natural behaviour, values of love, respect, admiration and respect for life, (natural) beauty and variety of life are dominant. Naturally, it is possible to continue in such a taxonomy of values (or rather virtues). However, an attempt to contextualize the given values into ecological (eco-philosophical) concepts seems to be more beneficial. . These concepts are more helpful when trying to conceptualize our methodological basis.

Towards what concrete values and attitudes shall we lead our students and what personality of our students shall we try to form, in order to have students who behave pro-naturally? Several authors offer concrete answers to this question. One of them, Albert Schweitzer says that *reverence for life*<sup>10</sup> should have a prominent place in our life. To revere and respect life means to acknowledge it as something holy, admire and love it, to be a part of it and to feel sympathy with the whole universe. Thus, reverence for life includes values and attitudes such as love, goodness, responsibility, fellowship or participation (in the pain or happiness of others), ability to forgive and our sympathy with the suffering of others (Schweitzer, 1993, pp. 25–40). The life and work of Schweitzer has influenced many other environmental (ecological) ethics representatives. His legacy, mainly his reverence for life as a basic value of human life, can be find in the ideas of Henryk Skolimowski, Aldo Leopold, Erazim Kohák and others.

Another relevant value, which should regulate our behaviour towards pro-natural behaviour is *responsibility*. Skolimowski says: One cannot show reverence without responsibility; at the end, responsibility becomes reverence. Responsibility is part of reverence. These two terms mutually define one another (Skolimowski, 1999, p. 201). Also Aldo Leopold emphasises responsibility for our own health, hence also for Earth health (in its self-restoration meaning) (Leopold, 1999, p. 250).<sup>11</sup> Responsibility requires not to threaten conditions of limitless human existence on Earth, mainly in the context of nature vulnerability brought about by the technical impact of humans (Jonas, 1997, p. 35). As Hans Jonas states, it is inevitable to postulate responsibility, or the principle of responsibility as categorical (not hypothetical) imperative. In this sense, responsibility is unconditioned duty, entails a change in strategy of morally responsible behaviour (Jonas,

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<sup>10</sup> Schweitzer is one of the first environmental (ecological) ethics representatives who realised the need to broaden the moral and ethical reflexivity of human–human, or human–society reference to human-living entities (in the manifestation of a will to live meaning) reference. Only this kind of ethics is consistent and reverence for life is its basic principle. Hence, the basis of the good lies in the maintaining and fostering of life. On the other hand, the basis of the bad lies in the destruction, damage and obstruction of any life (Schweitzer, 1993, pp. 25–26).

<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, his ethics is called Land Ethics.

1997, pp. 73–81). A prerequisite of this change is the justification of the objective and meaning of natural life (and life as such). Every life process (life) has a teleological base, i.e. is good in itself. By moral reflexivity we express our yes towards the life or human life and thus we reject any nonexistence.

The outcomes of our reflexivity are such norms (the abovementioned principle of responsibility) that forbid any expressions endangering the existence (survival) of mankind and nature. The principle of responsibility has an existential-ontological dimension (Jonas, 1999, pp. 129–131). Moreover, the understanding of responsibility in this manner entails its non-reciprocity disposition; i.e. we have to act responsibly with no regard for the acting of future generations. We are responsible for the future, for human life and its quality in the future (Jonas, 1997, pp. 128–129).

Another prerequisite of reverence for life is our acknowledgement of the universal right for life and the blossoming or rather *reverence for the equality principle in the biosphere* that comes from appreciation of biodiversity (species diversity) as a value that has to be protected and sustained. Sometimes, also a term bio-centric equality, which assumes (eco)justice (justice for all, not only for human beings), is used. In accordance with this term, it is not permissible to hierarchize living forms on the basis of their relative internal value<sup>12</sup> or to say that one kind of animal species is more “valuable” than any other. Often, the aforementioned hierarchization leads to a claim for the right to kill other, less valuable species (Næss, 1996, p. 241). However, according to Næss, reverence for bio-centric equality (according to which all living creatures have the same value) does not necessarily mean an equal approach towards animals. The statement that human needs should never be superior to needs of other species is not even valid. . The principle of equal rights for life and blossoming requires limitation of killing and decrease of obstructions in development and possibilities of others. In the case of humans and other species’ conflict of interest, bio-centric equality obliges us to think and compare the relevance the satisfying of our needs (marginal vs. vital needs) (Næss, 1996, pp. 242–246). From the normative point of view, we should follow the following motto: You shall never expose any animal to any unnecessary suffering (Næss, 1996, p. 246)!

A responsible approach towards nature, the Earth and the world as such demands *voluntary (self)constraint*. This strategy is the basis of the idea of permanent and approximation and internalisation of this idea is what environmental education strives for. Voluntary (self)constraint, as an ecologically beneficial life-style, means a personal strategy or life-style, expression of ecological activism, our willingness to, on the basis of our own conscious decisions, give up or withhold from (entirely or partially) the

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<sup>12</sup> As an example, on the basis of the (lack of) presence of self-consciousness, consciousness, soul or a place within the evolutionary scale, etc. (Næss, 1996, p. 241).

fulfilment of certain needs. Voluntary (self)constraint entails seriousness of volition or even moderation in our choices, opposite to consumerism. This approach requires reverence and humbleness (towards nature and life), considerateness (the ability to retreat from our own requirements and claims) and conciliatoriness but also modesty and self-control. It is a form of self-transcendence (an acceptance of self-sacrifice) (Kohák, 1998, p. 81).

Hana Librová calls this type of behaviour the so called *ecologically favourable luxury*. It means effective and well-considered utilization of our reserves (material, financial, energetic) by constraining our own needs through conscious modesty. The author gives some examples, such as rational economy, self-supply or self-help (Librová, 2003, pp. 58–59). According to the author, this kind of luxury is an ecologically favourable type of more rational behaviour. Characteristic for this kind of behaviour is an effort to maximize material and energetic savings, rejection of wastage and consumerism and conscious reduction of the ecological footprint. Ecological luxury is inclined towards application of bio-centric technologies and recognizes and respects the internal value of nature. Besides, it also has a social dimension – it manifests itself as interpersonal altruism. Rather than life-style, it denotes segments of behaviour. This type of behaviour has a statusforming function and it is original and relative according to the unique life of every individual (unique households). It requires elementary environmental knowledge, tact for nature, fantasy and creativity and competency to balance self-constraint and heavy claims. We can talk about, for example, gardening, rejection of motorism, preference of buying mineral water in glass (not plastic) bottles, travelling and exploration of new destinations, etc. (Librová, 2003, pp. 46, 61–62).

It is interesting that, apart from the intended pro-environmental behaviour in the spirit of the voluntary self-constraint, Librová discovers another type of ecologically favourable behaviour in society. The author calls it a life in accordance with *voluntary simplicity*. In contrast to ecological luxury, voluntary simplicity is not intended and deliberate; it is unintended, secondary and results from the orientation of a human towards values other than consumer ones. Most often, this type of behaviour is present in multi-member and multi-generational households. It is characterized by lower dynamics of shopping and spending. This can be achieved by possession of things with long-term consumption time, renovation and repairing of immovable assets and daily used things, their recycling, specifications in eating habits (self-supply of fruits and vegetables, vegetarianism) but also by individualism in dressing and fashion (resisting the new trends; preference for second hand shopping, sewing and dressmaking by oneself). Low water and electricity consumption, waste management (recycling), preference for soft tourism (family trips, slower transportation – bicycle, destinations close by; not souvenirs but experience

as our aim) and so on are characteristic for voluntary simplicity (Librová, 2003, p. 28; 1994, pp. 95–130).<sup>13</sup>

Apart from these values, the value of *care* is also present in environmental (ecological) ethics. Care most obviously manifests itself in the form of care ethics in (social) eco-feminism. It can be interpreted as a process or activity that requires reverence, empathy, trust, help and support but also reciprocity, as a mutual enrichment. Care entails care for somebody but also concern for somebody or something (Kiczková, 1998, p. 150). In our case, we talk about care and concern for nature. Care for nature is a basis for the establishment of trustworthy relations and protective attitudes.

To sum up, a brief outline of (environmental) moral values has been offered by the author that should have its place in environmental education and in ethics education as a compulsory elective subject, too. It was attempted to show how helpful environmental (ecological) ethics can in this manner be, mainly in the theoretical framing of given values and virtues. By using different methodologies of environmental ethics, some moral values (reverence for life, responsibility, bio centric equality, eco-justice, voluntary self-containment, voluntary simplicity and care) have been defined in more detail which we should not forget when forming students' personalities in the spirit of pro-environmental behaviour. Naturally, there is still a place for other moral values, virtues or principles. However, what the realization and acknowledgment of relevance of the moral scope of environmental education is important. Thus, environmental ethics (as a part of ethics education, too) should not be only about promotion of ecological literacy but also about the influence of attitudes and value orientation of children and the youth. This is where a space for practical application of theoretical methodologies of environmental (ecological) ethics can be seen. Thanks to these theories we can break away from improvised ecologically beneficial behaviour because now we have something to rely and base our behaviour on.

*This paper is a part of research project – KEGA 005PU-4/2014 Nové výzvy pre učiteľa etickej výchovy v 21. storočí (New challenges for a teacher of ethics in the 21st century).*

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<sup>13</sup> In our society, alongside these two kinds of pro-natural behaviour, there is also a behaviour that follows the so called trade luxury. Basically, we talk about shopping of precisions assists, here. This luxury is without any modesty or self-constraintment and without any reduction of ecological footprint (Librová, 2003, pp. 56–57). For example, we can talk about travelling to up-till-now-untouched destinations, skiing at glaciers, private collections of precious reptiles and birds. Trade luxury wants to own everything that is endangered and precious without any intention to protect it for other people and for nature itself (Librová, 2003, p. 57).

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## **The borders of penal law repressiveness in the light of ethics: Polish experience**

**Stefan Konstanczak**

### **Abstract**

The author of the article discussed the functions penal law accomplishes in society. Later, he referred to Polish experience in the area of executing its provisions. He showed that Maria Ossowska (1866–1938) presented a profound analysis of the system of applying law in Poland. Referring to many examples she considered penal law to be excessively repressive. In the conclusion, the author states that Ossowska's analyses were used in political system's reform in Poland after 1989. However, this fact has not, so far, eliminated some pathological phenomena so far.

**Keywords:** penal law, justice, legal order in the country, social depravation, law's repressiveness

Institutional law is man's creation and therefore it always expresses the interests of its creator. All its bodies (administration, civil, penal and constitutional law) constitute a kind of structural skeleton organizing forms of collective life. Penal law fulfills control and corrective functions in society because it protects not only what is essential for the whole society but also defines what the borders of individuals' freedom are. In this respect, penal law is somehow secondary with regard to other bodies of law because, first of all, constitutional order, frames of collective life and the functioning of authorities have to be defined, and only later can we define what is important to this order. In this way we also describe what is subject to protection and all range of admissible sanctions used in case of infringement of or offence to these values. Therefore, analysis of penal law's regulations allows one to not only get to know the range of legally used sanctions but first of all, points to those values which are particularly protected in a given country. "Penal law is, thus, a relatively reliable mirror of the political system which it is meant to secure ... [t]his system imposes some definite features to penal law" (Zoll, 1992, p. 111). Therefore, it is enough to investigate the penal code of a given country to obtain the certainty whether this country is of democratic or totalitarian character.

Rigorous execution of penal law regulations is, by nature, controversial, especially if this law is considered to be strict and is used in the summary. Therefore, in every society, penal law must fulfill simultaneously two fundamental functions – protective function and guarantee function. Protective function relates mainly to collective life because it secures values important to the whole society and particular individuals. Guarantee function of penal law, however, is combined with securing the rights of the individual, providing protection against possible abuse of sanctions by the authorities (Zoll, 1992, p. 111). It is obvious that both functions should be fulfilled in a balanced way by penal law so that social interest and the

individual's rights would be encroached as little as possible. To reach this, by virtue of penal law, various sanctions and measures of compulsion are not only used to restore the order encroached upon by a given offence, but also to not allow this balance to be disturbed. Excessive pressure on protective function is combined with weakening of guarantee function and vice versa. Therefore, a situation in which guarantee function is fulfilled worse than before results in weakening of the sense of public security. In the state of law, securing public interest cannot happen at the expense of an individual's rights and therefore, authority has to respect some of the individual's interests even when they are in contradiction with the public interest. Similarly, some individual interests might be encroached for the public interest. Obviously, in totalitarian systems, the individual's interests are not able to disturb the authority in realization of undertaken aims, and thus fulfilling protective function by the penal law gains a constant advantage. Automatically, it is definitely more repressive than the one used in the state of law. It can easily be explained by showing the motivation of the authority while using penal law. In the state of law it is an ultimate right (*ultima ratio*), and in a totalitarian state, a primary right (*prima ratio*) (Zoll, 1992, p. 114). It implies a constant expansion of the range of penal sanctions used in the countries of a non-democratic system. For these sanctions are, first of all, used to extort respect for the authority's interests. While, in the state of law, these sanctions are mostly used to secure individuals' interests and, therefore, the very fact of disobedience towards authority does not matter in the application of sanctions. As a result of such status quo the social sense of justice is disturbed, because the offenders are punished, sooner or later, adequately in relation to the apparatus of authority. "Ours" is treated indulgently because his/her offence towards law is often only treated as a mistake and not a crime. Somebody who is recognized to be an enemy suffers much more severe punishment for the same offence. Such status quo can be reflected in the articles of penal law, as particular circumstances of committing a deed, allowing the representatives of law to partial or complete redemption of some people from penal liability for having committed a deed legally forbidden. Impairment of the legal system in totalitarian regimes is sometimes so extreme that it allows judges to punish people for deeds which are not considered a crime according to legal regulations. A typical example of this practice in non-democratic countries was punishing so called dissidents for belonging to a trade union or for establishing associations.

As can be seen from Polish experience, political authorities are willing to expand the list of values which are subject to protection only to have a possibility to control citizens' life to the highest extent. The very representatives of legal institutions are not able to counteract this fact because they are professionally obliged, as civil servants, to realize the provisions of institutional law. In this situation, philosophers usually take

over the corrective function. Excessive repressiveness of institutional law obliges ethicists not only to criticize it but also to show the negative consequences of this status quo to the authorities' institutions. In this case ethicists perform the control function over observing human rights in a given state. Such status quo was noticed in Poland, especially in the second half of 20th century. Therefore, it is worth analyzing the argumentation of the time, which was in favour of protecting individual's rights and estimate its efficiency.

### **Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938)**

Twardowski was not a lawyer but he left a lot of notes and short treatises concerning legal matters. His legal output is difficult to understand without some remarks as far as his vision of man and society is concerned. He generally assessed the moral condition of man much better than his contemporaries. In his opinion, it was not true that man was an egoist because all social life and particularly family life denies it. Thus, egoist attitudes are much rarer than is generally considered, and therefore, in his opinion, human inclinations to do evil are not as common as it seems to people in general. Therefore, he believed that everybody can be led to the right path if given such a chance and shown how to succeed. Thus, his idea of penal law was rather showing the way which leads to correcting a fallen man and not simply to the execution of revenge.

The outline of a lecture by Twardowski "Ethics and penal law towards the idea of free will", presented in the academic year 1904–1905 tells us a lot about his attitudes towards penal law (Twardowski, 1904–1905). At the same time, Twardowski was combining theory and practice of penal law execution: "Prosecution of an offender might be caused and justified by a given theory. Twardowski mentions three such theories: the theory of punishments, the theory of improvement and the theory of deterrence. [...] Determinism cannot be reconciled with the theory of punishment which originated from the primary need for revenge, balancing infringed justice, redressing the damages done to the moral order. However, according to Twardowski, it is possible to reconcile determinism with the theory of improvement and the theory of deterrence. On this basis punishing and, therefore, prosecution is only a means of the same purpose used outside, the same as inner feeling of regret, repentance, pangs of conscience, etc. appearing spontaneously" (Jadczak, 1993, p. 191). Simultaneously, the aim of punishing is to stop the offender from doing the same in the future, as in the case of a deed for which he was punished. This attitude was also applied to educational practice because Twardowski thought that punishment in school education is only effective when it deters or contributes to improvement. This standpoint resulted from his conviction that characters, who are still not shaped in a moral aspect, are to some extent flexible and, thus, it is possible to influence their formation. At the same time he was

inclined to think that offenders do not have a formed moral basis and therefore we should follow the same rules as they are applied to children. However, when the offender does not use such a possibility, it means that his character is so distorted that the only solution is to separate him/her from society and even his/her physical elimination.

An offender bears responsibility for every deed he commits. It does not have to always be full responsibility. Therefore, Twardowski's attitude is a result of the conviction that people who committed a legally forbidden deed and were acting under emotion or weakened will, should be given a chance to improve themselves, while people whose bad deeds resulted from their character should be isolated or eliminated from society as they will always be a threat to others. And Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886– 1981), his disciple, adopted such an attitude from his teacher and master.

According to Kotarbiński, justice is not a state automatically reached – it was only a kind of a postulate which, for its realization, requires some defined efforts from a community. “It is generally desired that new injustices would not appear, and the ones which are already here would stop” (Kotarbinski, 1987, p. 385). Righteous law cannot be excessively repressive. This opinion was also shared by Maria Ossowska.

#### **Maria Ossowska (1896–1974)**

Maria Ossowska was not Twardowski's disciple however, and it was Tadeusz Kotarbiński who had the biggest influence on her. In this way a transmission of some of Twardowski's postulates were transferred into the scientific output of Maria Ossowska. It was particularly noticeable in her opinions concerning the theory and philosophy of law. Therefore, she was a typical representative of the Lvov and Warsaw School in her considerations on the sources of obliging law. She approved Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz's attitude: “no one deserves anything only because this is he/she and not the other person” (Ossowska, 1983, p. 411). She also noticed that positive law (institutional law) should be formulated in such a way that it would not be in contradiction with the socially approved understanding of justice. However, it does not mean that such law can adopt a universal formula because every idea of justice renders a hierarchy of values expressed by the authors of law. Penal law is not an exception here.

Nevertheless, Ossowska's standpoint was of a social character of law which always expresses the character of a given community and protects its interests. Prosecution of somebody was not accidental but it rendered a generalized attitude of a community within which it was performed. Execution of law must be accomplished according to socially accepted rules. Only then may it be considered just. Ossowska claimed that execution of responsibility in relation to the offender consists in the authorization of “punishing him/her, condemning him/her or obliging him/her to some restitution benefits” (Ossowska, 1983, p. 427). She also accepted a situation

when man might be the judge of him/herself, and therefore he/she can start to provide some restitution benefits even though nobody had the slightest idea of their guilt. Our conscience is then the instance executing responsibility. Instances executing law have three types of tools at their disposal:

1. right to punish,
2. right to reprimand or condemn,
3. authorization to demand restitution benefits (Ossowska, 1983, p. 427).

In most situations they happen together but sometimes there are situations where someone suffers punishment without being condemned or the duty to bear restitution benefits. There is a clear concurrence of Twardowski's views, although it is hard to assume that Ossowska knew his works and lectures devoted to these problems. However, Ossowska noticed the phenomenon of restricting the question of bearing responsibility only to the area of penal law. "Forming responsibility is connected with the prohibitive character of law, for which the first task is not to admit evil" (Ossowska, 1983, p. 128).

Bad law depraves citizens. The law of the time was characterized by an instrumental and mainly repressive character. She noticed perspicaciously then: "Conditioning of citizens with the help of penalties and awards is an old and well-known phenomenon, however it has exceptionally wide use with regard to more situations in which the state demands obedience from their citizens" (Ossowska, 1983, p. 147).

The excess of law never serves its observance because in some moments there is such satiation of them that everybody can be prosecuted because doing anything is always against a code's article. Such situation favours the domination of the repressive function of penal law over its educational function. In this way penal law starts to not only be at variance with common sense but also even with the proclaimed ideology. Ossowska meant here so called *freedom rights* because Marxists deprived citizens of their freedom of acting, reportedly in the interests of them, using censorship, repressing the so called opposition, and also the rest of citizens just for supporting this opposition. Anybody could be considered a criminal not even being aware of this fact. However, this problem did not appear without reason but it was a result of growing disruption between the law and its interpretation and application. Therefore, Ossowska was talking not about law but about "administration of law". It became a tool of executive authority and hence, basically, there was no independent judiciary in the countries of real socialism.

This administrating of law allowed the breaking down of the relationship between guilt and punishment because some people were practically absolved from responsibility for criminal offences. Ossowska criticized the discrepancy between legal settlements and the power of public

condemnation of offenders. For her, that was also a result of pathological phenomena appearing in the selection to juridical professions. Other pathological phenomena in the work of juridical institutions were “groundless secrecy of some legal procedures” and “the lack of people’s trust in the equality of people towards the law in general” (Ossowska, 1983, p. 151). As a result, the law seemed to be a bugbear for people, a tool for keeping society in check and not an institution protecting their security and law. Such conviction was enforced by the fact that the social feeling of justice is decreasing because the only result of legal reforms is a constant increase in its repressiveness (Ossowska, 1972, p. 9). Therefore, Ossowska with great courage and consequence stigmatized examples of depravation both of the authority and representatives of law.

### Conclusion

In social opinion, things which are too few in a given society or much fewer than it is expected should be protected in the first place. Along with the growth of society’s wealth, law’s repressiveness towards economic offenders is decreasing. Legal regulations in this matter, so far, constantly reflect the state of threat appropriate to the society of deficiency. Therefore, sentences for petty theft and derelictions are often equal to the sentences for severe crimes. Such status quo differs from a social feeling of justice because repressive law serves the authority to maintain control over citizens and not to provide them with security.

Following Maria Ossowska endeavours to make Poland a state of law, we cannot forget that they were reflected in the state’s improvement programmes realized in our country after 1989. Nevertheless, the way to introduce the full realization of her postulates is still far away.

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## **The promotion of infantilism ethos in consumer society**

**Joanna Mysona Byrska**

### **Abstract**

This paper attempts to show the crucial changes that have occurred in consumer society in relation to the society of production and analyses a new ethos which is being promoted, at present, in consumer society, the infantilist ethos. This paper discusses what the infantilist ethos is and shows that this is an ethos which, for the common good of society and men, should be overcome.

**Keywords:** consumerism, consumer society, infantilist ethos

The consumerist attitudes are becoming more and more popular in the contemporary rich societies of the western world. The issue of the consumerism is currently engaging many authors, i.e. Zygmunt Bauman, Jean Baudrillard, George Ritzer and Benjamin Barber. Their analyses complement each other and give a wide-ranging image of consumer society. Georg Ritzer analyses the structures of consumer society, for Jean Baudrillard the most interesting aspect is the mechanism of consumer society, while Zygmunt Bauman focuses his attention on postmodern society. Analysis of the above mentioned authors shows a reality changed, with new aspects which would cause new challenges and new possibilities – thus not always positives.

This paper attempts to show the crucial changes that have occurred in consumer society in relation to the society of production and to analyze a new ethos which is being promoted, at present, by consumer society; the infantilist ethos. This new ethos will cause further changes which, in the long term, could turn out to have disastrous effects. The infantilist ethos, at first sight, does not seem to be dangerous, but further analysis enables one to state a thesis that this is an ethos threatening the existence of whole societies. This paper will discuss what the infantilist ethos is that is being promoted, at present, in consumer society and show that this is an ethos which, for the common good of society and men, should be overcome.

Among the many changes that sets consumer society apart from previous societies of production, according to Benjamin Barber, the appearance of a new ethos is crucial. This is an ethos which seems to be promoted by consumer society as following; it enables consumption without reflection, therefore much bigger, on which depends the prosperity of the world of consumption. According to Barber, this new ethos is strong and very expansive, as fulfilling its requirements does not demand any effort or hard work, but on the contrary, it is easy and pleasant (Barber, 2008, pp. 13, 22).

The consumer society in which we live nowadays and in which Barber connects with the appearance of the infantilist ethos, first appears at the beginning of the 20th century. Although the issue is not new, its range of development and its influence on men is. The notion of consumerism, so

popular now, according to Georg Ritzer was used for the first time in 1925 and its aim is to describe the changes which have occurred in the world. These changes consist of a profound change in the relationship between the world of business (production) and the people buying goods. In the world of production, goods are produced to fulfill existing needs. In the consumer world, one should be convinced that one needs certain goods, as supplies exceed the normal demand (Ritzer, 2009, p. 72). The description of the occurred change is simplified and certainly should have been further developed to present a full image, but it will be sufficient for the explanation of the appearance of the new ethos.

The world and society focuses on consumption, and currently we can consume whatever we want, both material and non-material, people, animals, etc. Spending money is becoming a value, a worth, and economizing is not very popular as it limits the current consumption abilities. For this reason, paying in installments or on credit is promoted. In the world of consumption, it is more desirable to spend your future gains (by paying in installments) than saving for goods that will be available at a later date.

In the world of consumption, as a consequence of the changes which have occurred and of submitting all other values to the standard of life and of moving material values to the highest priority, new means of consumption and a new ethos are appearing.

Baudrillard pays attention to the fact that the world of consumption is full of simulations and those are simulations which displace the real world and are becoming more real than the current reality. This situation could be, above all observed, in the shopping center whose reality is artificially created in such a way that a visitor would spend as much time there as possible, buying and consuming goods. There is a nice atmosphere at the shopping center, it is either pleasantly cool or pleasantly warm, there is special stimulating music played there. All bad and ugly sides of existence are not visible either, sedulously hidden by the colorful lights and the guards.

The existence of the world of consumption, overflowing with goods, nevertheless depends on consumers. If they do not buy, if they will escape the persuasions to buy a new product which will upgrade the quality and the worth of their existence, the calm world of consumption will be endangered, as its prosperity is based on the incessant movement of products, buying them and transferring them between people. This is a world where consumption is an necessary part of existence because when people stop consuming or limit their consumption the transfer of goods fades away, new products have no purchasers, they remain on the shops shelves and in the warehouses and, step by step, a crisis comes. This is a special crisis, as shop shelves are still full but there are no purchasers. It is not possible to produce new goods. People do not consume, there is no need for new goods. When

new goods are not needed, employees producing them are not necessary and there are more and more unemployed people. A person without a job, with no regular income, is not a good consumer. The world of consumption perceives good consumers to be only those who are consuming and spending their financial resources.

Therefore if one has means of enabling one's consumption and is appropriately consuming, its consumption behaviors, and more specifically one's activity in the shopping center, are more important than whether one is engaging himself in the common activities in the public sphere, according to Benjamin Barber (Barber, 2008, p. 56). Barber, when diagnosing this state, talks about "swallowing the citizens" and consequently, the appearance of the infantilist ethos instead of the ethos of work and saving. According to Barber, society has been literally "consumed". "Consumption" means the dependence of capitalism on consumption and the level of it, and not on production which fulfills existing, crucial needs and on the submitting of all activities to the consumption. Consumption, and the level of it, is currently a condition of the progress and the development of society, depending in its existence and functioning on the quantity of the consumed goods (Barber, 2008, p. 56).

To develop consumption, but at the same time to not reach the level of saturation and satisfying needs, according to Barber, the infantilist ethos is promoted, together with a new attitude that may seem to be comfortable, but upon longer reflection is actually not, moreover it can constitute a danger for the totality of society and its condition.

The infantilist ethos, mentioned by Barber, sets one basic requirement, précised further by Georg Ritzer: in order to enjoy continuously growing consumption and incessant buying and possessing a growing number of products, it is necessary to stay an eternal child, buying those things which one likes at the very moment (Ritzer, 2009, p. 66). A characteristic feature for the childhood is the inability to wait for gratification. Children only learn in the process of developing and maturing that some of their desires cannot be fulfilled immediately. The infantilist ethos pushes an adult consumer to behaviors typical for children – a desire realized immediately, even with no time for reflection as: "do I really need this product?" It is supported by different types of advertisements convincing consumers that "you deserve it", "you can afford it", etc.

The infantilist ethos is also supported by so called "new facilities" (Ritzer, 2009, p. 69), i.e. amenities such as credit cards and possibilities of taking a quick loan for a chosen product. As a result reflection, characteristic for people in pre-consumption societies, "can I afford it" and "do I really need it" disappears in face of believing that you can pay for it later, that "I can afford it", and the world is changing its face to a very friendly one for a rich consumer, who can – if he wants – live not limited by the content of his wallet. Installments postponed to a later date do not seem

to be problematic. It is also an attitude characteristic for children at a certain level of their development – the future is perceived as remote; commitments taken today do not seem difficult to be met in the context of events which are going to happen one day.

The infantilist ethos is supported by the changes which have occurred in society. In the magic world of consumption, described by Ritzer, there is no need to go through the following stages of life linked before with the passage of time. Keeping the cycles of life appropriately to age, so important formerly, is currently changing, which is also visible in the language: old maids or confirmed bachelors are, nowadays, called single and no one is pointing to them as those who were not successful in such a crucial thing as settling down with a family and having children. They are often presented as persons who should be appreciated for their lifestyle.<sup>1</sup>

One – if he only wants it – can stay forever youthful and does not enter this stage of life which is connected with responsibilities, limits and postponing of gratification for the effectuated efforts or for the realization of one's wishes. The attitude of Peter Pan seems to be simply demanded by the world of consumption: spontaneous reaction for the just discovered needs, yielding to temptations, spontaneous spending of money and buying of gadgets.

We can ask why the new ethos of the world of consumption is the infantilist ethos. The answer is very simple. Children do not have any formed ability of selection of their needs and expect immediate gratification. Children will buy everything; they are a very important group of consumers in the market. Adults who have not grown out of childish behaviors are much easier to surrender to consumption suggestions. Infantile attitudes are, for that reason, demanded by the consumer world. Benjamin Barber stresses that infantilisation involves the promotion of “egocentric personal choices and narcissistic personal profit” (Barber, 2008, p. 27). The adult – child is still concentrated on himself, and is convinced of the necessity to realize his own needs which should be respected by all others. As a consequence, the world of consumption accepts behaviors usual for spoiled children as having a real power over oneself, and even sometimes as an expression of private freedom. They are appearing as catchy advertisement slogans, like: “be authentic”, “do whatever you want”, “you can afford it”, “you are worth it”, “and who said that you cannot?”, etc.<sup>2</sup> Acting according to momentous fancy gives only an appearance of real power over oneself, it is an

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<sup>1</sup> Certainly, the issue of singles is complex and there are many changes which have occurred in society that are reasons for not having a family, even if wished. Thus, it is not a core problem of this paper. In the context of the infantilist ethos, singles are persons who never grow up, as they do not need to grow up, and public opinion is not as strong as it used to be.

<sup>2</sup> All quotes are fragments of advertisements in Poland in the last 10 years.

absolutisation of private freedom egoistically understood and not taking into consideration the existence of consequences which should be born one day.

The choices of the adult – child, according to the infantilist ethos, are not linked with any necessity to face anyone or any consequences (Barber, 2008, p. 48). Apparently liberated from any potential commitments, relationships or links, one can consume much more, especially if we take into consideration new facilities, enlisted by Ritzer, among which we count the above mentioned bank amenities, enabling the immediate buying of the desired product on credit.

The aim of the infantilisation promoted by the world of consumption is, according to Barber: “(...) inculcation to adults the features proper for children and supporting those features in children trying to grow up” (Barber, 2008, p. 130). A characteristic sign of these tendencies is a fight with the outside symptoms of time passing by and the popularity of products enabling one to keep the youthful look. In this moment a second side of the infantilist ethos is revealed: old age as an opposition to youth is undesirable. The longer we stay young, the better. Avoiding the passing onto the next stage of life (staying with parents longer than in previous generation, not having your own families, etc.) is also an expression of fear about the passage of time.

The infantilist ethos, according to Barber, brings not only the above described changes occurring on the impact of promoted childishness and youthfulness. The changes are much deeper than they seem to be. Taking the social critic Neil Postman as a starting point, Barber points to the existence of a simple dualism child/adult and he suggests that the childishness demanded by the world of consumption privileges “impulse over deliberation, feeling over reason, certainty over uncertainty, dogmatism over doubt, ignorance over knowledge, play over work, pictures over words, images over ideas, watching over reflecting, pleasure over happiness, instant gratification over long-term satisfaction, egoism over altruism, private over public, narcissism over sociality, entitlement (right) over obligation (responsibility), the timeless present over temporality (now over past and future), the near over the remote (instantaneous over enduring), physical sexuality over erotic love, individualism over community, ignorance over knowledge” (Barber, 2008, p. 131).

How will look like the world in which men, instead of thinking, acts on impulse? When play ousts work, individualism ousts community and ignorance takes the place of knowledge? When we analyze those issue it shows that the world of consumption is a very superficial world, not only limited to now and here, to pleasure, play, sex without consequences and commitments, but also with no place for reflection and effort. Finally, we can ask what will happen to a society which is not thinking, is simply enjoying itself and not making plans? If it is lucky, it would get a wise governor and it will last in its existence as long as there will be goods to be

consumed. Otherwise, such a society can quickly be dominated by people acting only for their own profits, which will easily lead to social catastrophe.

According to the dependence of the world of consumption on the permanent growth of consumption all that supports this growth is promoted as demanded and improving the quality of life. As Ritzer states, the process of exchange is interesting, a permanent rotation, movement, transfer of goods (Ritzer, 2009, p. 23) that should not be stopped as even the slowing down caused by the limitation of consumption on credit could launch a global crisis because of the decreasing of demand while supply continues to grow. The infantilist ethos is protection from a possible crisis. But for how long and what are its side effects?

The first problem appearing is the question about children. The world of consumption has an ambiguous attitude towards children. On one hand children, because of their poor ability to select and assess, are consumers ideal to manipulate. On the other hand, when adults have children they need to limit their expenses for their own needs and instead of buying luxury products and gadgets they will be obligated to buy nappies. But children are new consumers so, in the near future, consumers who will grow up and will continue to consume further on.

The infantilist ethos is also supported by celebrities –people who have taken the roles of the heroes or saints of olden days. Celebrities are showing us, via mass-media, how success looks, their quality of life is the highest of all possible, they are well known, famous and adored, because they are well known, famous and adored. A celebrity is a person who is known because of being known, this is why more and more often we come across the notion of “nothingbrities”. Adult – children follow them eagerly as this does not require any special effort. Following most celebrities does not require any laborious work but usually only appearing in the appropriate place and looking appropriate (all the better if it differs much from the accepted aesthetical norms and fashion canons) and behaving appropriately (also, all the better if it differs much from what is perceived as typical). An important phenomenon is the so called “the dripping of needs” – the needs presented by people from the front pages of tabloids are indicative of their social status (Baudrillard, 2006, p. 41). It is also essential how quickly one can realize his desires and needs, the quicker, the higher his quality of life and his social status.

According to the infantilist ethos described by Barber, a lack of commitments also indicates the quality of life. A high quality of life means a small number of commitments (Barber, 2008, p. 47). According to Barber, staying mentally a child and living following the infantilist ethos can protect a human from a sad adult life – full of stress connected to his duties. Staying mentally a child enables one to avoid the negative sides of adulthood (Barber, 2008, pp. 47–48), moreover it positively influences the functioning



of the world of consumption, as the adult – child consumes regardless the future consequences.

Barber assumes that all systems require their proper ethos – i.e. a set of cultural attitudes and cultural behaviors favorable for development (Barber, 2008, p. 65). For the world of consumption it is the infantilist ethos that encourages buying without reflection, consuming and throwing away when the product is used or when one gets bored of it.

Working for society, investing and saving for the society of consumption are not desired behaviors, as well as far-sightedness and investing, so typical of Protestant ethics. Barber, following Daniel Bell, points to a weakening of Protestant ethics and a characteristic lack of any other deeply rooted ethics (Barber, 2008, p. 68). According to Barber, a new form of ethics has appeared, very easy to observe, strongly linked with the infantilist ethos. It is the aesthetics of shopping where the principal rule is: buy to the utmost (Barber, 2008, p. 73). As a consequence, there is a change in the hierarchy of the values realized every day by man. Greed, which used to be a negative feature, stigmatized as undesirable and leading to destruction, is becoming a positive value (Barber, 2008, p. 77). A greedy consumer who is not capable of limiting his needs, insatiable and buying to the utmost is a good consumer society. There is only one condition – he must be solvent.

As an effect of the spread of the infantilist ethos a spirit of unhappiness and depression is appearing. According to Barber, a consumer is unhappy because the world and the society in which he lives is trapping him in a “sad cage of consumption” (Barber, 2008, p. 85). Apparently the consumer can have everything, as happiness in the world of consumption can also be bought. But it reveals that a human needs a wide range of goods that cannot be bought, the biggest shopping spree will not replace the friendship and the company of our fellow men.

It is very difficult to fight with the infantilist ethos as it “creates an illusion of private freedom” (Barber, 2008, p. 87) and the obligation to consume which appears as a kind of compensation, among other things, for friendship and deeper relations, is becoming invisible. Only a citizen aware of his own identity can resist it. It is very difficult to have this kind of identity thus the infantilist ethos is very popular and the ease of the realization of its exigencies additionally makes it difficult to counteract.

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## **Ethics in the context of ‘professional homelessness’: The case of journalism?**

**Tadeusz Miczka**

### **Abstract**

In contemporary discussions concerning values which dominate in professional practice two points of view should be considered simultaneously. The first one takes into account increasing professional specialisation and, which is connected, hierarchy (gradation) of professions in social processes. The other one indicates the openness of professional space, which can even endanger the existence of various professions in their traditional sense. In the present contribution, the latter tendency is of primary importance and the contribution will be limited to the characteristics of the evolution of journalism at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This profession is thought to be the main element in creating images of the contemporary world because it is involved in complicated relationships with the media, business and political decision-makers. These relationships constantly extend the borderline area and ethical non-obviousness. In so called participatory culture (according to H. Jenkins’ terminology) and in the western model of democracy, apart from this kind of interactionism, new journalistic roles appear, which make the profession almost a freelance job. I do not share the more and more popular opinion that everyone can be a journalist, but I analyse the individual and social consequences of the intensely developing phenomenon called ‘professional homelessness’. I am particularly interested in ethical issues which come up in numerous dissertations concerning this problem especially in the debate about the sense, purposefulness and character of professional journalist education because those issues decide about the ethos and specific character of the job. In my opinion in the nearest future, thanks to various kinds of deregulations, both natural and legal, programmed and spontaneous, other jobs will share the fate of journalism. Of course not all of them, but this differentiation will become the basis for the new political and economic global status quo. Reflection on the metamorphosis of journalism creates the opportunity to consider issues important for the future of professional ethics such as: the range of traditional ethics crisis, postmodernisation of applied ethics or changeability of rules of constructing norms describing basic values and ethical personalities in various professional practices.

**Keywords:** Blurring, Participatory Culture, Participatory Journalism, Data Journalism, Vibrating Identity

For many years, at least for one hundred years, in the world there has not been an atmosphere supportive, in a noticeable way, of the positive development of ethics. Man notices the blurring of various borders in nature because they penetrate deeper and deeper levels of the matter and their measurements are more and more precise. Together with this phenomenon man observes increasing gradation and relativization in the sociosphere, in the sphere of interpersonal relations and in the whole psychosocial environment. A Polish philosopher writes about this development tendency of the contemporary world; as a result “in the blurred and chaotic world it is difficult for man to describe his position and to find himself. The lack of borders results in getting lost. It is unknown where good, freedom, decency, responsibility, rationality, the truth, naturalness and privacy end, and where evil, enslavement, indecency, impunity, stupidity, forgery, pretending and

commonality begin. That is why in the playing of social roles, one has to find balance between those oppositions [...] As a result they themselves become blurred, indistinct, controversial, chaotic and uncertain” (Sztumski, 2011, p. 44). It could be just perceived as a state of the increasing anxiety and dissatisfaction of man, because this state is a permanent state of human way of thinking and acting, but this time, as leading contemporary thinkers suggest, it can have a stronger sense. It signalizes the crisis of moral philosophy and poignant inability to develop ethical theories and then introduce them into life. On the one hand, orthodoxy in the attitude towards sources of morality and to traditional moral norms becomes stronger, but on the other hand another conviction arises. Using Zygmunt Bauman’s terminology, if “morality which has no reason or cause” guarantees only the existing of “a thin film of order” then it is necessary today to create good feeling and build happiness on the ability “to live without foundations”. The author of *Two Sketches on Postmodern Morality* concludes: “people seem to have no escape; they have to face their own moral independence which means their own moral responsibility. It cannot be expropriated or sold. This new necessity often results in moral confusion and despair. But it also gives a chance to the moral ego that it has never had before (Bauman, 1994, p. 84).

This sad optimism is shared by many people not only because moral reflection (idea) hardly develops today, it is caused by the necessity of a nervous balancing between the aforementioned extreme tendencies in treating the sphere of values and frequent losing life guidance. Numerous examples are provided by ethics which refer to the norms of behaviour of particular social groups. They can always be recognized by profiles: cognitive, personal and moral. I concentrate on work ethics, and shocking examples of breaching or even neglecting it can be easily found in the workplace. For example the cowardly and irresponsible behaviour of two captains of ferries, an Italian one a few years ago and a South Korean one quite recently, caused justified indignation. They left their ships before the passengers did, while many of them got killed. Many people cannot believe in media reports concerning heartless doctors who, because of many various reasons, do not help patients waiting in emergency rooms or in the streets in front of hospitals. Officers fighting with crime become main characters of scandals when they yield to corruption and commit crimes. Politicians all over the world, who abuse power and destroy their rivals and polemicists, lose their authority frightfully quickly. More and more often journalists even write about the moral arrogance of “western democracies”. One journalist writes about crossing moral borders in order to make the law and to spread ideology: “we demand purism from Africa, Arabic countries, Asia, but we perceive ourselves as moral aristocracy that can do more. The authorities of democratic countries, with the consent of their societies, do the same things totalitarian regimes used to do. It is also approved by world public opinion”

(Siedlecka, 2013, p. 26). Today even real pieces of art prove that ethics in art and in pop culture is always treated in quite an unorthodox way. For example *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) made by Martin Scorsese – the American master of film art, presents acts of unlimited hedonism without any criticism. It is performed by a character inspired by a real person who purposefully cheated one thousand five hundred investors, stealing 100 million dollars. The examples can be multiplied.

The increasing crisis of ethics, especially work ethic, can be easily illustrated. It results in more and more scary social anomalies, such as the phenomenon called deadly destroying of the world by an anthropologist. He says “in the whole human history there was no such stratification as today [...] There was no such situation as today when someone can easily spend one million dollars while another has one dollar a day to live on” (Pawłowski, 2014, p. 16).

Facing the aforementioned examples, the necessity of rethinking (redefining as poststructuralists say) of former findings of moral philosophy, both in the general perspective and in the perspective of particular jobs done by people, is quite obvious. On the basis of the knowledge we have gained so far, including academic knowledge, we can assume that at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century human work is undergoing radical metamorphosis. At a later point in this contribution, this evolution will be traced using the example of the journalistic profession and its ethical attitudes. The thought, which concluded my dissertation written a few years ago, will be developed: “Ethical anxiety is quite justified because we face a phenomenon unknown and unpredictable which already forces all participants of social life to complete and modify previous journalistic deontological codes and community standards of decent behaviour” (Miczka, 2010, p. 172).

Journalism has been chosen because this profession is particularly important in every society and in every culture. It has shaped the consciousness of individuals and communities for over two hundred years. It is not a coincidence that it used to be called “the fourth estate” and today it is often called “the first estate”, because it, at the same time, monopolizes knowledge and becomes the most convincing mirror reflecting the blurred world. It offers its huge potential and its competence to the people who do not come from the traditional journalistic community. Temporarily these are the people who have access to the Internet and possess mobile multimedia appliances. In other words the changes which take place in journalism provoke heated debates concerning both the emergence of new forms of power in the information age and the agony of the job because it is taken over by non-professionals (Divided the World Media, 2012) and this complicated series of processes can be treated as a model example of erosion and disappearance which will be repeated partly or completely in other professions.

Without any doubt, journalism is a highly characteristic example of the so called culture of transparency which makes reality transparent. Thanks to it, as Marek Krajewski proves: an “increasing number of spheres of social and individual life become both perfectly visible and accessible as an object of experience. The culture of transparency, its functioning is based on it, eliminates cultural, social, physical, or connected with customs, barriers which traditionally limited the area of perception and the range of phenomena which we could have experienced. It allows individuals to participate, usually as observers, in the occurrences they have never heard of or that have never been available for them. Its activity is not only connected with presenting what used to be invisible, hidden, forbidden or remote. It is also connected with the fact that things which are revealed in this way are made understandable, legible and clear as far as rules and consequences are concerned. After all, the culture of transparency acts on two levels: perceptual and cognitive, so it defines itself as a complete and perfect tool for experiencing reality, it allows [one] to see and understand reality” (Krajewski, 2003, p. 166). Krajewski’s reflections should be completed with the knowledge concerning the increasing activity of multimedia users in the culture of transparency which today is practically “participatory culture”. It allows or even forces all the individuals to participate more and more often in social life as a co-creator or even creator. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century everybody can be a journalist ... almost everybody.

There are many characteristics of “participatory culture” but all of them concentrate on the qualities which, according to Henry Jenkins, are expressions of the fact that “common people take media in their own hands” to create dialog with that multimedia, to create new communities thanks to them and to create new directions of the development of culture (2006). His books present conscientious analysis of comprehensive research. Reading them suggests that human life moves to *terra internetica* (today mainly thanks to handy electronic appliances especially smartphones – the multitask successor of mobile phone and ephemeral “cloud computing” replacing computer hard discs) and *homo interneticus* lives in permanent on-line mode constantly surfing, recording, Googling, copying, modifying, pasting, Tweeting, sharing, blogging, mailing, playing, “updating their status” etc. The multimedia user suffers from overactivity which can be called info-activism (Miczka, 2014) and uses the freedom offered by the Internet (I use this notion to describe information technology) in a not very responsible way. This freedom can be called info-freedom (Miczka, 2011, pp. 188–201). “There is more freedom in cyberspace (than in monopolized economies, countries with job security systems, institutionalized organizations, in ideologically, religiously and politically directed social processes) so it is a new area for spontaneity, risk, chaos and a difficult area for all the actors in the game about the future” (Zacher, 2006, p. 126).

In this new field a dynamic game about the future of journalism is played as well. A game which cannot be avoided because journalists quickly and efficiently reach for every new medium, and such a meta-medium as a computer (thanks to which the Internet has developed) not only creates the opportunity to perform new forms of professional activity but also permanently transforms all the spheres of this activity. Nicholas Negroponte professor of media technology and long time director of the Media Lab at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as one of the first researchers of this phenomenon, described its origin and predicted its future in 1995 in his book *Being Digital*. The change of the press in which the role of the “guard of information” (gatekeeper) was more and more limited, the border between information and commentary, between reporting the facts and being involved in the facts, was blurred. The author called it *The Daily Me*. In his opinion in such a press market the reader can create their own pages, choose information which is interesting for them and put them wherever they want (Negroponte, 1997, p. 20 and further). This researcher says that the same will happen to television and its employees and eventually “television will be a medium with free optional access just like a book or a newspaper; it will be possible to browse or change it any time of the day, whenever the information is provided” (Negroponte, 1997, p. 45).

In various countries and cultures on every continent the processes of radical metamorphosis of journalism take place. They depend on such circumstances as limiting the phenomenon of technological exclusion, the state of development of “participatory culture” and models of democracy and forms of postmodern political authoritarianism. To simplify the characteristics of the phenomenon, one may say that the development of the profession goes in two opposite directions. One direction is increasing professional specialisation, which is connected with hierarchization of professional roles; the other is total professional freedom based on spontaneous and often grassroots programme regulations. In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century journalism undergoes at least three kinds of transformation: professional journalists enter into cooperation with amateurs who record and observe the surrounding reality, softening or weakening for the time being their competitors ; nonprofessional journalists try to get rid of any tutelage; while the most talented and the best-equipped ones create elite journalism serving new global and/or local authority in the process of glocalization.

In every case, the professional borderland extends and that is the area where the journalist’s identity, their ethical personality and their system of values can be easily changed. This is the system of values they relate to, while they gather information and make it public.

Before the most important forms and styles of contemporary journalism are characterized, ethical problems connected with its main source which, nowadays, is computer technology must be discussed. The significant, even

revolutionary, (cf. Moor, 1985, p. 269; Rogerson & Bynum, 1995) influence of the Internet upon social life is commonly mentioned during discussions concerning its advantages and disadvantages in relation to the world of values (Zecha, 2005, pp. 97–112). For example Beata Maj, a psychologist, concerning the issues of violating other people's freedom, does not take responsibility for her words, experimenting with identity, equal rights of authorities and anti-authorities, stimulating strong impressions and easy access to anti-values in digital communication. She concludes with the following words: "Discussing [...] the subject of values we should take into account the fact that in the range of options given by life, the Internet is just one of them. If we want to enjoy life to the full we have to learn to use all of them. The development of the Internet cannot be treated only as a proof of the progress of the world but as a specific moral challenge as well" (Maj, 2005, pp. 273–274). Humanists' attitudes, usually a bit utopian, are often shared by scientists but both of them rarely demand the justified control of the ethical behaviour of Internet users and creating information technology law which should be obeyed.

So far communicational practice, which has lasted twenty five years in economically and technologically best-developed countries, has shown that the rules, so called netiquette, referring to the general rules of decency are ostentatiously broken by numerous internauts, not only those who are anonymous. Kazimierz Trzęsicki reminds that the belief that moral development always accompanies scientific, technological and social development belongs to the past. Computer technology has developed in an epoch when pragmatic and moral values are not coherent but according to the author: "the more technical knowledge someone has, the more humanistic knowledge someone needs [...] The mission of global information technology ethics is to create ethical basis for global information technology law" (Trzęsicki, 2007, pp. 20, 22). The problems of information technology ethics, which is proven by all the above-mentioned scientific research, is still in its early stages so the area for abuse unfortunately extends, although it is already quite big because of the freedom of the press (which for example allows it to conduct investigation and not to reveal the source of information). Many representatives of the profession effectively avoid professional responsibility.

Following the direction suggested by Negroponte one can find out how pragmatic values limit or even replace moral values. This American inventor and researcher is, first of all, interested in increasing the multitasking of multimedia; the fact that they are commonly available and easy to use. He also mentions the tendencies in their development which directly indicate changes in the ethical attitudes of the people who use the achievements of technology in an amateur or professional way.

Negroponte vividly describes the behaviour of contemporary readers, spectators and listeners; simultaneously he characterizes their new



communicational competences and the changes that take place in journalists' work. Using mental shortcuts, among other things, he notices: "Nowadays on a TV set we can regulate only brightness, volume and channel. In future, we will be able to decide about political and sexual preferences or about the dose of violence which is allowed" (Negroponte, 1997, p. 45). The metamorphosis of receiver-consumers into receiver-prosumers (co-authors) he perceives as obvious and inevitable. He treats their possibility of personalizing messages as a chance to stimulate their imagination; he admires the intensity of the phenomenon and he addresses the readers of his scientific book: "Let's imagine a computer with a button which allows us to make a newspaper more or less personal. We can have many buttons like that including one changing the political attitude of the newspaper from the Left to the Right, and use them to modify the set of news concerning political issues" (Negroponte, 1997, p. 128). Without any doubt the multimedia user even today has many buttons like that to use. They can for example concretized the vision of communicational phenomenon described by researchers as *We Media* or *The Daily We* (Bowman & Willis, 2004; Gilmore, 2004), and they become a more and more reactive and interactive participant of culture.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the work of journalists, both of individuals and editorials or other teams of workers, is shaped by the model of intercast rather than the previous model of media communication – broadcast. Culture researchers often compare it to a cobweb because traditional vertical connections among participants of communicational processes are replaced by horizontal connections; it is also compared to a peer-to-peer social network, because the borders and the differences between senders and receivers are less and less visible. In such a communication system, journalists, reporters, editors-in-chief, editors, advertisers, receivers can more and more freely swap their roles and they can create media communities of a new kind. According to Clay Shirky, those communities are completely different to the audience that traditional journalists addressed their messages to; they develop on their own, they get divided inside the community, undergoing many metamorphoses, for their participants' participation in actions is more important than the quality of the actions. As a result they are very resistant to any attempts of interference. They exemplify "strong organizing without organization". They can possess power but "without (traditionally understood) leadership" (Shirky, 2008)

Usually new kinds of journalism characterized by multimedia character, hypertextuality, non-linearity, interactivity, virtualization, convergence and personalisation are called community journalism. Their community character is not based on the model of hierarchy which has been dominant in the structure of the audience so far, it was domination of privileged groups. Referring to Axel Bruns' terminology, it is based on models of heterarchy,

which is the authority of diversified groups, and panarchy, which is the authority possessed by all participants of the communicational process, and their aim is the “model of anarchy” which means absence of any authority (Bruns, 2005, p. 13 and further). In participatory culture there are various forms of community journalism, mainly civic journalism, digital journalism and participatory journalism. All the mentioned names are not precise, their range of meaning often overlap in some countries; for example today in Poland civic journalism, which represents a community politically and ideologically involved, becomes synonymous with participatory journalism, which is based on a cyber-libertarian understanding of freedom in using multimedia.

Leaving pointless terminological arguments aside, especially when all over the world spontaneous and legal deregulation of the job takes place, we can assume that the dominating direction of journalism development is a participatory one (Zwiefka-Chwałek, 2009), which means opening to modifications introduced by internauts, smartphone users and cloud computing users. The level of participation, in other words, the depth and intensity of this modification, can be measured using the so called Cliff Wood test – the editor of the journalist site *Slashdot*. The test consists of three questions: Would the content of the website be different without internauts’ participation? How would the content change without internauts’ activity? Is the existence of the information possible without internauts’ activity? If the answer to all three questions is positive it means that participants of digital communication are given the status of journalists. Some researchers ironically call this kind of professionalization “do-it-yourself journalism”, but others find in this kind of cultural participation the source of positive democratic attitudes.

The development of participatory journalism is supported by cultural expansion of multimedia and more and more aggressive social movements fighting for extending the spheres of freedom, for example open publishing or the freeware movement. While considering a few years ago the influence of participatory journalism upon traditional journalism, among others, I wrote “more and more Internet information websites and television programmes evolve in its direction [...] The main rule of free publishing is the most controversial, it is »first publish, then check and select!« [...] In communication where the rule of diversified subjectivism dominates, no-one can take responsibility for their stories, giving information which is not true or pseudo-information (not verified information, based on gossip) multiplying risky or absurd theses [...] It is easy to notice that participatory journalism opens a huge area for abuse of persuasion and manipulation” (Miczka, 2008, p. 276). Participatory journalism is extremely susceptible to the process of tabloidization which means rejecting factual facts (building information out of guesses, speculation and provoked statements and behaviours) replacing the truth with attractions and entertainment and

neglecting the rules of professional ethics. In my opinion the fact is not changed by the attitude of some researchers who say that genres typical for tabloids do not belong to journalism but to “widely-understood pop culture and they should be analyzed as genres with separate construction, poetics, stylistics etc” (Lisowska-Magdziarz, 2008, p. 197).

A form of journalism which represents a different, sometimes opposite to described egalitarianism and total openness (but it cannot absolutely be generalized), direction of development of this professional activity is data journalism, often called journalism of the future. It is based on processes called datafications, creating and using an increasing amount of data of a digital nature. They concern all aspects of human life and human culture but mainly these aspects which so far have been unavailable for digital technology. Datafication is practically managing a huge amount of data which, on the one hand, leads to informational redundancy or at least evokes the feeling of informational overload, on the other hand, they can be, and sometimes are, a source of cultural richness which may develop human creativity.

Data journalism tries to answer the following questions: How to deal with access information (with so called infomass) and sources of information? How to improve the quality of media communication? How to tell and present stories hidden in gigantic clouds and data bases? For the time being it mainly tells complex stories using infographics (charts, tables, diagrams, complicated applications) and in various ways helps the receivers to familiarize or acquire messages overloaded with information. So far it has produced two models of storing and using information: *big data* and *open data*. Both are based on economy of thinking and acting, the first one is based on regular reading of information or doing some simple operations using spreadsheet programmes, the other one is based on programming skills. It can be said that data journalism is managing data and controlling it and its receivers. Journalists are the ones who control because, unlike other participants of multimedia, they know how to make use of informational noise or chaos as an attractive source of innovation and capital.

In other words data journalism, at least now, is an ally of traditional journalism and limits the range of participatory journalism. It is used for algorithmization (organizing) of commonly felt communicational chaos, and this way it becomes an efficient tool to control the information society. Its real direction of development is obviously very difficult to predict. Some researchers say that it will overlap with participatory journalism, which does not exclude the appearance of new journalist elites which will reach for political power.

To sum up, all models, tendencies, forms and styles of journalism today mix together, as a result this work activity becomes not only a free profession but first of all “homeless” one. It is deprived of previous centres, institutions, functions, rules of functioning and of course ... ethical rules.

Journalists, just like other overactive multimedia users, more and more often suffer from vibrating identity syndrome which leads to doubts concerning the existence of a constant and stable professional identifier (Żydek-Bednarczuk, 2013, pp. 13–24). It means they work with constant feelings of transience on a constantly extending borderland. It can lead, or already leads, them to ethical acceptance and non-obviousness. This forces the researchers of contemporary times to have a closer look at the postmodernization of the ethics used in this job, just like in other professions, because the majority of them will share, in the nearest future, the fate of journalism.

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## The ethics of the teacher and the debate about gender

Grzegorz Grzybek & Agnieszka Bielak

### Abstract

The teacher's educational and didactic duties require making reference to basic values. The debate about gender is normative in its nature, and the axiological dimension plays a secondary role in it. It appears that the sides of the conflict, in which the teacher is implicated, do not so much undermine basic values – e.g. the dignity of the person – as derive from given values different norms for the practice of the social life and educational goals of the school. The conflict requires the teacher to rethink the bases of his/her ethics.

**Keywords:** teacher, ethics, gender, development ethics

### The debate about gender

The conflict over the notion of the cultural dimension of sex difference – gender – has recently gained a lot of publicity. The Catholic Church takes a most negative stance on the issue. In the Polish reality, the tension is quite clear. On the Feast of the Holy Family in 2013, a special letter from the Episcopate of Poland was addressed to the faithful. In justifying their conception, the bishops stated: “It is therefore *understandable that we cannot* but be most alarmed by attempts to modify the notions of marriage and family imposed these days, especially by the supporters of gender ideology, which are amplified by the media. Faced with increasing attacks aimed at various areas of family and social life, we feel obliged to, on the one hand, speak out firmly and unambiguously in defence of marriage and family, the fundamental values that protect them and, on the other hand, to warn against dangers involved in propagating a new vision of these institutions” (Episkopat Polski, 2013, pp. 561–562).

In itself, the characterisation of the “gender concept” prepared by the episcopate deserves attention: “Gender ideology is the effect of decades of transformations in ideas and culture, deeply rooted in Marxism and neo-Marxism, promoted by increasingly radical feminist movements and the sexual revolution initiated in 1968. Gender promotes principles entirely detached from reality and from traditional understanding of human nature. It maintains that biological sex is exclusively cultural, that in time one can choose it for oneself, and the traditional family is a relic and a social burden. According to gender, homosexuality is inborn and gays and lesbians have the right to enter into relationships which will found a new type of family and even to adopt and bring up children. Proponents of this ideology argue that every human being has so-called reproductive rights, including the right to change one's sex, to in vitro fertilisation, contraception and even abortion” (Episkopat Polski, 2013, p. 562). It appears that the popularising letter of the bishops contains many simplifications and oblique statements. Can proponents of the “*gender concept*” really be suspected of not

considering the biological nature of humans? Does not this position of the episcopate appear naïve? What is the purpose of this witch-hunt?

For balance, we might want to hear the voices of those who are considered to be supporters of the “gender concept”. Social transformations have gone quite far since the time when women were enabled to study with men. Young women, often better educated than men their age, have difficulty finding partners. Perhaps some men’s clinging to patriarchal ways of functioning serves as an escape from what is new, what poses a challenge. Magdalena Środa notes that “Non-egalitarian nature of household relations is obviously not the fault of men alone, but of the reproduction of specific ways of their upbringing and socialisation (...) No matter how consciously we try to make the upbringing of our children gender-neutral, their social environment exerts enormous pressure on shaping a personality subjugated to specific models of masculinity and femininity. And we are all caught in this trap” (Środa, 2012, p. 127).

It appears that two separate realities have been equalised, that is, cultural models ascribed to the essence of a given sex are confused with biological determination. This is stressed by a further paragraph from the letter of the bishops: “Gender in its most radical form treats biological sex as a form of violence of nature against the human being. According to the ideology; ‘the human being has gender trouble’, out of which one should liberate oneself. By negating biological sex, the human being gains a ‘true, uninhibited freedom’ and is enabled to choose so-called cultural sex, which is exhibited only in external behaviour. Humans further have the right to a spontaneous change of choices already made in this respect, choosing from five sexes, namely: gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and heterosexual” (Episkopat Polski, 2013, p. 562).

Such posing of the issue raises the question of whether sex imposes a specific way of upbringing different for boys and girls. If the age-old tradition of upbringing was the source of oppression for women, it would be difficult to treat this as justified. Issues relating to education and upbringing, and implications of these for the sex difference are prominent in scholarly literature. Does the human spirit have a gender? If it doesn’t, keeping up differences must be a discriminatory practice (Fromm, 2011, p. 35). It appears that the thesis of Erich Fromm, who claimed that biological differences account for discrepancies in character, but these in turn are largely based on social factors stimulated by culture – is justified. Therefore, the debate is fundamentally concerned with culture (Fromm, 2011, pp. 119–120).

Another fragment of the bishops’ letter confirms this: “The danger of gender ideology is in fact the result of its profoundly destructive character, both in relation to the individual and to interpersonal relations, that is to say, to the entire social life. This is because a human being, when deprived of stable sexual identity, loses the meaning of existence, is unable to discover



and fulfil tasks implied in personal, family and social development, including tasks concerning the area of procreation” (Episkopat Polski, 2013, p. 562). Therefore, what is at stake is fulfilling social tasks, whose model is part of culture.

It might appear that the major conflict concerns the “emancipation of the weaker sex”, which has chosen for its allies those that have been excluded, those that refuse to embrace their social sexual identity. Therefore, the axis of the disagreement may run between feminism and patriarchalism. We would then have to assume that the stance of the Episcopate of Poland is caused by a profound unwillingness to give up the dominant position of patriarchalism in society. It seems that this is not about family alone, since family becomes a hostage between two extreme conceptions. The defence of the patriarchal position by the Church is natural, since its institutional structure is based on patriarchalism.

The words of Erich Fromm, claiming that the war of the sexes has not ended yet, are still valid, because women continue to live in a state of frustration. This is caused by their inability to fulfil their female role (Fromm, 2011, p. 35).

We must, however, mention the feminists as well. In the mainstream of public discourse, the term feminist sounds almost like an insult. Most often, it is associated with “a lonely woman (sometimes a lesbian), childless, not wearing a bra. [She is] apart from this, not depilated, not wearing makeup, not attractive, aggressive and deprived of a sense of humour” (Chałupnik, 2008, p. 77). Stigmatising feminists is an important element of the social landscape, in which they are held responsible for broken homes, domestic violence, infertility, demographic decline, crisis of masculinity, collapse of tradition, alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, cancers, general alienation etc. (Środa, 2012, pp. 14–15). With the image of the feminist so distorted, it would be difficult not to accuse her of “genderism” as well. Another problem is that the feminist movement, which is to represent the voice of women in social space, is not recognised by part of them as their representation (Butler, 2008, pp. 47–49). Perhaps the disinclination to being represented by feminist organisations is caused, on the one hand, by the deeply-rooted patriarchal model of society, and on the other, by the fact that some women seem to feel better in the patriarchal model, which gives them an advantage over other women and men. Women who are considered attractive by the masculinised world feel good in it.

It seems that the essence of the debate about gender is not just the opposition of patriarchalism and feminism but also the struggle over economic and social position. Culture places men in the leading position: head of the family, breadwinner.

The current economic crisis has largely caused unemployment in branches where men worked (heavy industry, the motor industry). Unemployment in masculine professions raises questions about the model of

family, of marriage. It undermines a cultural stereotype: men at work, women at home. Is the specificity of the current crisis going to be another element in the transformations of family life? (Bauman, 2011, pp. 206–212). At this point, we might ask: are men ready to run homes or take up work in professions considered as typically female? Women, it appears, are quite prepared to work in professions and branches of activity considered male, including important functions of state administration (prime minister, president). Perhaps, then, men should not be educated with specific professions in mind.

And what if the debate about gender is, in fact, about power and economic advantage? Nobody wants to be the socially handicapped gender enumerating the various (at least in the letter of the bishops) gender identities may be intended to reveal those that pretend to change the hegemony of the heterosexual male (their position in the Church is undisputed).

In any case, according to the ideas of radical feminists, sexual roles that are social constructs make it difficult for women to recognise and realise their own social desires and needs. The moral pressure of society makes women meet masculine demands. Besides, this is the only way in which women are able to confirm their value. Male domination is responsible for the norms of sexual behaviour, traditionally oppressive towards women (Bellioti, 2009, p. 369).

Some very important questions have been asked by Judith Butler in reference to the normativity of gender: “how do non-normative sexual practices call into question the stability of gender as a category of analysis? How do certain sexual practices compel the question: what is a woman, what is a man? If gender is no longer to be understood as consolidated through normative sexuality, then is there a crisis of gender that is specific to queer contexts?” (Butler, 2008, p. 15). The author believes that normative sexuality reinforces normative gender identity (Butler, 2008, p. 15). Considered to be a “gender ideologist”, she is discredited in church circles. Józef Augustyn, without referring to her theoretical considerations, offers a brief description of her as a person: “Her personal life and her involvement in activities for the lesbian–gay milieu has – it would seem – a decisive influence on her opinions and her theory of gender. This ideology is, after all, all about finding a broad space in social life for sexual margins” (Augustyn, 2014, p. 556; Ryś & Walaszczyk, 2013, pp. 8–11). We may most certainly read in this statement an affirmation of sexual normativity. One might even say that the author is in favour of the strong influence of the morality of pressure, which is emphasised by a further part of the statement: “The source of sexual behaviours is unrestrained independence, freedom and subjectivity. In gender we can no longer talk about ‘a normal man’, ‘a normal woman’. That would be an abuse. This is a complete revolution of

the earlier social and moral order in the mutual relations of women and men” (Augustyn, 2014, p. 566).

For reasons of intellectual discipline, we should quote several of Judith Butler’s key theses concerning the cultural dimension of sex. The first problem is related to the very description of gender in relation to biological sex in social discourse. Can biological sex be taken to be a pre-discursive foundation, or is it also in some sense the result of cultural perception, in this case, of specific normativity? (Butler, 2008, pp. 50–53). Considering the assumptions of the “ethics of development” (Grzybek, 2010, pp. 18–46), we should point to the role of the morality of pressure, which constructs normative social discourse.

If gender is as determined as sex, then what is its essence, is the difference only grounded in one being determined by culture and the other by biology? Butler’s reply is that sex is not a pre-discursive anatomical fact, but through the way in which it is defined, it is already itself a cultural construct. Therefore, “culture” defines sex (Butler, 2008, pp. 54–55). It appears that the difficulty which Butler’s theses pose for their interpreters is caused by the fact that she moves in the realm of social linguistic discourses. Reading her theory in “ontological” categories is probably a misunderstanding. Here, “Word” is not flesh! Therefore it has to be observed that in cultural terms, including language, every person is determined sexually. Every person, entity has an identifying sign ascribed to it, defining the subject. The conflict is not concerned with ontological bases but cultural conceptions of things. Can we say that biological determination is being rejected? It seems that what is at stake is rather rejecting cultural determination. These two are, however, not identical. Languages of the discourse of this conflict are entirely incompatible with each other.

Magdalena Środa notes that Catholic clergy assume, in the Thomist vein, that essence precedes existence. In cultural studies on sex, the primary reference is existence, rather than the essentialist approach to the nature of being (Środa, 2014, p. 9). This is well characterised by the cultural determination of the masculine and the feminine sex, an issue mentioned by Judith Butler. In culture, we may speak about a masculine universe. Being a person and being a man coalesce in cultural discourse (perhaps “human being” (“człowiek”) rather than “person” (“osoba”) in Polish). The cultural sex of women already bears a specific mark of defining activity. One wonders whether “woman” as “woman” becomes one under the pressure of culture (Butler, 2008, pp. 55–58). “The problematic circularity of a feminist inquiry into gender is underscored by the presence of positions which, on the one hand, argue that the very notion of the person, positioned within language as a ‘subject,’ is a masculinist construction and prerogative which effectively excludes the structural and semantic possibility of a feminine gender. The consequence of such sharp disagreements about the meaning of gender (indeed, whether gender is the term to be argued about at all, or

whether the discursive construction of sex is, indeed, more fundamental, or perhaps women or woman and/or men and man) establishes the need for a radical rethinking of the categories of identity within the context of relations of radical gender asymmetry” (Butler, 2008, p. 59).

Simone de Beauvoir offers a dramatic approach to the problem when she writes: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilisation as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine. Only the mediation of another can constitute an individual as an Other” (De BEAUVOIR, 2014, p. 319). Magdalena Środa stresses this question in her introduction to Simone de Beauvoir’s book in a telling way: “Femininity is gender. Yes, that’s right, gender! (...) Woman is always a prisoner of patriarchy, jailed in her own carnality, her own sexuality and otherness; she is forever unable to define herself in another way than by reference to man who is Master, if not directly hers, then master of the culture and politics in which she lives” (Środa, 2014, pp. 8, 11).

Works in feminist philosophy emphasise that in culture, the mind is associated with masculinity and the body with femininity. Perhaps the body should become in social discourse the basis for women’s freedom rather than what limits and defines them (Butler, 2008, pp. 60–61). Adding the male point of view into this discourse, one might pose the question: Why does the man want to possess rather the body of the woman and the woman – the will of the man?

Judith Butler introduces the notion of “culturally intelligible genders”. This assumes an introductory determination of identity, in which a reference is made to the social matrix, created, one is tempted to say, by the morality of pressure. This matrix – the morality of pressure – presumes heterosexuality and binary division of gender, in which the female subject is defined as the other. The person in culture is her or his gender and is supposed to be it because of his or her sex. This is where the conflict is marked, because the author believes that gender is confused with sex. Significantly, unity – identity – of gender is possible when one experiences the unity of three elements: of gender, of sex and of desire, presuming that these are inscribed into heterosexuality. On the other hand, one should point out that gender is – through the social matrix, the morality of pressure – constitutive of sex as such, which is to say, its social point of reference (Butler, 2008, pp. 68–81). She speaks of this in the following way: “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results (Butler, 2008, p. 81).

If the war of the sexes continues – in its cultural dimension – then we must ask ourselves about its grounds. Karen Horney notes the psychological basis for the dislike of the opposite sex. The first dimension of suspicion

towards the other sex lies in reserve towards the other. This reserve makes true, passionate love a rarity. If love arouses the hopes of great happiness – then the experience of the other as partner often leads to many disappointments. The woman expects the man to be strong and delicate at once, to dominate her and yield to her, to be sensuous and ascetic, capable of “rape” and tender in his caress, devoted completely to her and immersed in creative work. Overestimating one’s partner makes them by definition incapable of fulfilling the expectations. But unfulfilled expectations leave a trace in the psyche. The primary source of elevated expectations is found in the relationship with the father and the girl’s traumas from that period. The historical cultural advantage of men shapes the basic fears of men towards women, which also have their psychological foundations. The man admires and envies the woman’s motherhood, which is why at the basis of sexual relations lies the masculine model of morality. The man is also afraid of women’s sexuality, which creates fear in him. This fear does not apply to old women or to mothers (Horney, 2012, pp. 89–97). However, the cultural definition of the woman stresses the absence of features that the man values: “Woman is said to be deeply rooted in the personal and emotional spheres, which is wonderful; but unfortunately, this makes her incapable of exercising justice and objectivity, thereby disqualifying her from positions in law and government and in the spiritual community. She is said to be at home only in the realm of Eros. Spiritual matters are alien to her innermost being, and she is at odds with cultural trends. She is, therefore, as Asians frankly state, a second-rate being” (Horney, 2012, p. 98). Karen Horney, by making reference to Bachofen’s theories – concludes that we are currently at the stage of repeated struggle for equality, without any notion of how long it will take. In the war of the sexes, the dominant sex creates an ideology allowing it to maintain its position, as well as weakening the consequences of the submission of the weaker sex. In ideology, the difference of positions between sexes is explained as the result of immutable fundamental difference (nature) and the fact that as such, they are the consequence of the will of God. It appears that such striving for subjugating the woman grows precisely out of the fear of her as a sexual being, and that men feel dependent on the sexuality. What builds bridges between the sexes? It is love. It is, however, frequently too weak to carry the burden of difference, fear and mutual aversion (Horney, 2012, pp. 100–102).

Trying to outline the conflict around the issue of gender, we should observe that it is primarily normative in its nature, rather than axiological. The assumption that we are dealing with a normative conflict is based on the conception of the “ethics of development”, of introducing clear distinctions between values and norms, which is not a simple operation in the case of social discourse. It appears that two opposing groups, which we might, for the sake of argument, call “traditionalist”, in favour of sexual normativity, and “postmodern”, pointing to the impossibility of maintaining normativity

which they consider to be harmful – do not question, in the social dimension, the value that is the dignity of the person. Nevertheless, each group draws different models of normative behaviours from this value which they would like to see accepted in social life. However, for the sake of further analysis, we might want to adopt a functional description of gender. “Therefore, gender is ascribing to biological sex (male and female) certain postulated features, which, in the course of socialisation and upbringing through the morality of pressure should be formed in the person of a given sex. These features become the source of culture-based area and range of mutual communication and action” (Grzybek, 2014).

### **Gender equality, gender and work in helping professions**

Gender equality is an element of the principle of equal opportunities, which is in our times a fundamental, moral and legal principle aiming at building a democratic society. However, in many countries, various kinds of inequality or discrimination can be observed. These should be combated through introducing changes into the way specific people and groups think (including professional groups, generational groups etc.) (Tokárová, 2007, p. 332). One of the principles which have a positive influence on the development of a democratic community is the acceptance of the equality of the potentials of women and men, that is, gender equality (Tokárová, 2007, p. 333).

The notion of the socio-cultural dimension of sex, or, in other words, gender, was created in the 1970s in order to distinguish the features of the natural and the social sexual identities of men and women. Gender is a social construct, whose characteristics and behaviours associated with it are shaped by culture and society. Unlike the notion of biological sex, describing a concrete biological fact, which does not change with time or place, the notion of gender means that defining and fulfilling roles, actions and norms associated with the female and male sex in different societies, on different stages of their development and in different social groups may vary significantly. Their character is determined by the development of social relations between women and men, and these are not a natural state (Tokárová, 2007, p. 332).

The notion of “gender mainstreaming” (GM), may be explained as an attitude based on the socio-cultural dimension of sex. GM formulates rules which are to take into consideration the perspective of gender, that is, to make gender equality a constant component of all political programmes and strategies of the countries of the European Union. This strategy is to lead to the taking up of initiatives serving the equality of women and men in public space (Tokárová, 2007, pp. 333–334).

It is believed that the state of such equality of opportunities may only be achieved when an entire society postulates it in all fields of politics as well as in organisations. However, to be able to apply the principle of equal

opportunities of women and men on all levels of life, one should be aware of certain facts, and namely that:

- “- questions of gender play an important role in social and individual life;
- the same issues affect men and women in different ways;
- the main point of social equality between women and men is the balanced approach to gender in all spheres of public activity, and in particular in education and professional work” (Tokárová, 2007, p. 336).

The most important elements, which might guarantee equal opportunities for all, are employment and profession, because it is thanks to those that citizens may participate fully in cultural, economic and social life, as well as to fulfil their own potential (Tokárová, 2007, p. 335).

The essence of the activity of the political strategy of gender mainstreaming is education, which is the means towards the deconstruction of gender stereotypes in the perception of individuals, specialists and public opinion (Tokárová, 2007, p. 346).

Gender stereotypes are a set of patriarchal superstitions, where the value of the woman is undermined and which grow out of the myth of the “naturalness” of the difference between the sexes. They are false imaginations and myths which emphasise the naturalness of social differences between women and men (Tokárová, 2007, p. 338).

One might distinguish several major myths of “the naturalness of differences between the sexes”:

- the myth of features of character typical only for men (masculinisation) and typical only for women (feminisation). Man, “by nature” warrior and hunter, is characterised by activity, domination, strength and rationality. Women, on the other hand, are predominantly maternal and caring, with features such as: passivity, subordination, emotionality, empathy and kindness;

- the myth of women, who are characterised by a natural inclination to take care of the family, the home and the upbringing of children and the myth of men, who are made to perform social function, according to the principle that the meaning of a woman’s life lies in the good of the family, while a man’s – in his work for society;

- the myth that women do not need or want to have the same rights that men have;

- the myth of inborn masochism – sacrifice and devotion of women. It is believed that suffering is natural for women, that they have been made to be mothers and to bear suffering which is involved in the family mission (Tokárová, 2007, p. 338).

This kind of stereotype, as well as others, widespread in society, proves that the current image of the human being is in conflict with the principle of equal treatment and valuation of the sexes. This image is out of date and undeniably masculinised. Very often, the judgement of both women and men is subject to the dictate of the system of masculine values and norms.

Femininity is lost, while masculine features are emphasised, the result of which is an undesirable assimilation of the sexes (Tokárová, 2007, p. 348).

Today's world and its changing social conditions enforce the creation of a new image of the human being. "Specialist pedagogical and andragogical literature devotes too little attention to the issue of the specificity of upbringing, education and socialisation relating to gender. We are dealing with the multiplying and reinforcing of undesirable gender stereotypes, pedagogues frequently refuse to see that patriarchal gender stereotypes are in our new times anachronistic" (Tokárová, 2007, p. 348).

Terms such as: gender, gender difference, gender stereotype or gender socialisation are rarely found in pedagogical literature. Perhaps this is why the contemporary school system encourages preparing girls and boys for future work in the spirit of gender segregation. Frequently, pedagogues are unaware that they are treating pupils of both sexes according to established stereotypes (e.g. "mom is doing the ironing, dad is reading a newspaper"), and that they do not devote sufficient attention to upbringing in diversity, at least gender diversity (Tokárová, 2007, p. 349).

### **The teacher's task in relation to gender**

Before we enumerate the tasks of the teacher in the face of the debate about gender, we might want to quote several examples of misconceptions.

The first problem is the spreading in the Catholic milieu of a fear of sexual education, based on the assumption that it primarily has a technical dimension (Ryś & Walaszczyk, 2013, pp. 21–22). Besides, organising courses, training addressed mainly to teachers (as the ones who influence the upbringing of children), whose aim is the fight against so-called gender ideology (Gumowska, 2014, pp. 55–57). Teachers become hostages in this war, which is further demonstrated by the fact that the state education system is transformed into a site of propaganda fight (Krzyżaniak-Gumowska, 2013, pp. 45–47). Various campaigns are undertaken to counteract homophony and to propagate the principle of equality (Świerszcz, 2013). Opponents of such campaigns consider them a provocation and a kind of violence against children and the youth. How is a teacher to act, then? How could we specify his/her tasks? It appears that he should preserve his distance and see his pupils as persons, that is, beings deserving respect.

To sum up, we might venture the following conclusion: the teacher–tutor, situated between antagonistic normative systems regulating human sexuality, should first and foremost refer to the dignity of the person. His/her tasks towards her charges should centre on developing their ethical personality, that is to say that which constitutes the basic preparation for taking up social roles implied in sexuality.



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## **The ethical and moral context of the functioning of contemporary educators**

**Urszula Gruca-Miąsik**

### **Abstract**

Regardless of what we mean by the concept of a value and which of their classifications we stand for, values play a significant role in moral education, which is the fundamental task of educators. Morality defines and completes human life and affects its many spheres, allows one to be more confident, it adds strength, self-confidence and courage, develops responsibility. School, alongside family is one of the main environments where rules and moral standards are passed on. Through the education system, the young generation must be prepared to function properly in society and properly fulfill specific social roles. The task of a teacher as a developer of young people is to avoid marginalizing young people. However, in many cases we deal with different forms of a child being rejected by an adult. This situation requires referral to the ethics and ethos of the teaching profession. As studies show, young people have a high level of moral reasoning and they only need appropriate guides in life in order not to lose those values.

**Keywords:** ethics, morality, educators, challenges

### **Introduction**

We live in times of cumulative civilization, economic and social changes which are unprecedented in the history of mankind. Technological hyper-acceleration, as it is called by many researchers, in recent years can cause a sense of being lost, instability and uncertainty. An unpredictable future, as well, may lead to the deprivation of the basic need for security. We become paralyzed by fear and stress. The constant struggle with difficulties, searching for a way to find and maintain the right direction and reduce the impact of other people is a challenge for modern man. It is even more difficult since ubiquitous media imply the multiplicity of values, attitudes, and almost require acceptance of undesirable behavior together with the composed system of beliefs.

Contemporary (Polish) times are determined by the transformation process that started here in mid-1989 and creates both opportunities and numerous threats for the development and implementation of moral values. In the process of social development, conditions to make independent choices in all aspects of life are created. Education in the twenty-first century, examining a broad view of cultural problems, cannot ignore the values that are extremely valuable in terms of the moral development of an individual. It also cannot ignore the moral education of the young generation for which a part of the responsibility is borne by educators. This is not an easy task, because traditional patterns of life are becoming less accepted by young people who are trying to shape their values and norms themselves. Contemporary adolescents more often follow their own individual way. In such conditions, their morals and axiology change. Grzegorz Grzybek, explaining daily axiology, claims that "[A] value is what, considering its nature, is appropriate for a man as a human, enables

[him] to fulfill and develop [his] cognitive and volitional abilities” (Grzybek, 2010, pp. 11–25), but it is quite unclear what the author meant by those words because it is commonly believed that there are universal values that exist in many cultures. Although they do not always seem appropriate for a man in certain situations, people decide to follow them due to their intrinsic value.

Regardless of what we mean by the concept of a value and which of their classifications we stand for, values play a significant role in moral education, which is the fundamental task of educators. Morality defines and completes human life and affects its many spheres, allows us to be more confident, it adds strength, self-confidence and courage, develops responsibility.

### **The moral ground for educators’ work**

Leading the discussion on morality Maria Chodkowska initially states that the term is ambiguous (Chodkowska, 2010, p. 17). The author emphasizes that the concept of morality applies to assessing the nature of reality, and thus also refers to assessing the attitudes of society in terms of generally accepted standards of moral conduct. Chodkowska also combines the concept of morality and ethics emphasizing that “morality is situated in the reality that an entity finds functioning on varied spheres. Whereas ethics contains a rational order and justification of the codes of conduct in a certain reality, collected in sets of standards, codes. It emphasizes that ethics should be related to ideas, theories, doctrines, statements indicating the basis for distinguishing good and evil, moral. In contrast, morality relates to specific human behavior, conditioned by certain ethical beliefs or driven by a specific ethical doctrine” (Chodkowska, 2010, p. 18).

Adopting this point of view a clear context for educators’ work emerges in the field of moral education, which is one of the most important areas of educational practice, because to a large extent the style of functioning of an individual in the social environment depends on its results. A teacher finds the educational reality and meets a student. Although he has been given a task to care for and educate, he also operates on different surfaces and performs specific behaviors, which in turn are subject to certain ethical beliefs, or is directed by the specific ethical doctrine.

For many people the existence of moral values without a religious system is impossible (the ethical orders would lose their binding power because they are included only in religious ethics) while others believe that morality can exist in its full form only when freed from religious sanctions (guarantee of autonomy and human dignity). Moral values recognized by the followers are, in general, also the values shared by non-believers. On the other hand, the community of believers, as well as their beliefs and moral attitudes, has undergone changes separate from the influence of religion. They have taken on a lot of values widely followed in their social

environment even by those that are contrary to the traditional system of morality and religion (Mariański, 2006, pp. 250–251). Contemporary adolescents perceive the issue of morality more freely, without obligation, a large portion of young people treat religion as a school subject independent of their moral attitudes and not associated with faith. A similar position was presented by educators who emphasize the secular nature of the school institution and do not want to connect their religious beliefs with their work.

It is worth mentioning that the explanation for this state of things is the reasoning that the secularization of morality is related to the secularization of religion. In the theory of secularization the processes of transformation of moral values are explained as a crisis. Secularization is defined as “separating from the church” and less church participation, the importance of religion in everyday life is disappearing. According to J. Casanova secularization theory is composed of three separate allegations: disconnecting and emancipation of the secular spheres from religious norms and institutions, the decline of religious patterns of behavior and beliefs, as well as a shift from the religious to the private sphere (Mariański, 2001, pp. 45–47).

School, alongside family, is one of the main environments where rules and moral standards are passed on. Thanks to family, a person permanently functions in the social consciousness of values and cultural norms. Through the education system the young generation must be properly prepared to function in society and properly fulfill specific social roles (Gruca-Miąsik, 2010, p. 213).

Regardless the teacher’s preferences, the education process takes place according to commonly accepted standards and shall be subject to moral evaluation. There are standards only for educators, which prohibit physical punishment, abuse of a child, using his ignorance to his own advantage, giving bad examples. Moral standards establish barriers of conduct for educators, teachers, and are described in the Labour Code so that a child can develop properly and cannot experience any harm from adults. Moral issues in the educational activity of the school are not only limited to determining the content of the course, consequences of this process and its social and moral determinants. Some pedagogical concepts indicate that the role of educators has been limited to strictly implementing the objectives laid down by ideologues or data groups. An educator is a kind of intermediary between the decisions made by higher instances of social life. He sets his own tasks according to relevant guidelines, which is why many of the tasks that have to be executed may not agree with the educator’s own ideology. The teacher often experiences moral dilemmas, since he carries out tasks without being convinced about their effectiveness and social value (Górniewicz, 2008, pp. 111–113). Experiencing moral dilemmas raises a lot of moral dilemmas in the educational activity of individual teachers, but sometimes even whole groups of educators who are afraid of losing their job follow the orders of

supervisors or current trends. This is a serious problem not only for educators, but also for young people, because “it is extremely important to understand and realize that the moral backbone of man will depend on the environment in which he has been brought up and from people which has met on his way” (Gruca-Miąsik, 2012, p. 235).

### **Contemporary challenges for educational activities**

In John Paul II's opinion the most important value of a man in his humanity. A particular person is associated with the circle of culture, religion, a nation, is a man of a family, a country. It is a person with dignity, which is the highest value, absolute in the world of created beings. The Holy Father underlines the fact that “values are the foundation that not only determine life, but also define the lines of conduct and strategies that build life in a society. Personal values and social values cannot be separated from one another” (Chalas, 2003 pp. 49–51). Therefore, it seems that the transmission of values, education of values, the choice of values in the educational process, presenting living people according to the values are the challenges for educators whose task is, among others, to support young people in determining the line of conduct and assisting in the selection of strategies to achieve their goals. Unfortunately, teachers face moral dilemmas because young people can either have a completely different belief system or hierarchy of values. What is a value for educators is not necessarily a value for adolescents. Similarly, the matter which is dangerous for the educator may not be important for a student. Such a situation is conducive to conflicts, forces educators to show the highest level of empathy and look at the problem through the eyes of a student, which may cause moral dilemmas in the educator himself.

Changes in politics, economy and education have brought significant changes in the sphere of customs and morality. Adolescents no longer accept and nurture traditional patterns of life, which have been passed on from generation to generation. Young people look for fun; want to satisfy their needs, here and now, immediately. Therefore the basic duties of every teacher are: moral education, appealing both to the intellectual sphere of a pupil and his feelings, emotions and will, shaping social skills and empathetic behaviors above all, valuable socio-moral attitudes, expressed in a student's relationship to other people, the world of culture and nature. A teacher should ask himself the question – which value do I want to pass on to the children entrusted to me? There are many answers to the question: Love, happiness, God, work, to be a good man, to start a family, to have children, a career, to achieve dreams. Potential responses can be multiple. However it is worth considering which the most important are for us since through it we show our educational goals and indirectly the hierarchy of values.

There is no doubt that education, which does not introduce children and young people to the world of values, is usually incomplete and less effective, and sometimes socially harmful. First of all, it deprives pupils of the ability to distinguish unquestionably good from evil, and thus of vital decision-making in accordance with the fundamental principles of morality. Very often the fact that values define mankind's code of conduct in the right direction is forgotten. Kazimierz Denek identifies value as a compass the task of which is to determine the right way. Depriving children and adolescents of this compass is synonymous with exposing them to unfortunate and morally reprehensible choices. Consequently that brings damage both for the individual and society (Łobocki, 2006, p. 77). One of the first areas of the completion of values is educational activity. Taking considerations in this area, one must constantly refer to moral values in axiologically and their central role in educational practice. The teacher must also pay attention to what is valuable and serve the public, because a lack of moral consciousness, sensitivity, indifference to universal values leads to disregard and even denial of universal values.

Moral values play a special role in moral education, which is facing many threats in the modern world and in terms of a pluralistic society which suffers from deficiency of moral renewal. In such a society there is a constant struggle to convince people of different values but those that are not always worthy of acceptance, since they are neither socially nor morally desirable. Such a fight takes place against people with different views. Quite often it is carried out by imposing one's views on the other person in order to maintain popularity and reap the various benefits, including money (Łobocki, 2006, pp. 78–79). Education for morality poses educators real goals. Taking Adolf E. Szoltysek as a starting point we can say that such an education is based on revealing, extracting and formulating the moral sphere in a man including:

- The formation of conscience, as moral power of judgment, and thus the creation of a criterion which allows him to distinguish good from evil,
- Formation and extraction of a moral character, as a group of relatively solid moral competences (Szoltysek, 2009, p. 270). Moreover, moral education should also take into account gender differences, since on the basis of neuroscience we are sure that a sign of equality cannot be put between men and women. As Dorota Czyżowska writes "moral philosophers (Augustine, Descartes, Kant, Rousseau, Hegel) for centuries pointed to the differences in the morality of women and men, seeing men as those who have a more rational, and women a more emotional sense of morality" (Czyżowska, 2012, p. 9).

Underestimating values, particularly in moral education, leads to the increased brutalization of life, the disappearance of the sacred in favour of the profane, or simply absolutizing temporality, as well as various other manifestations of social pathology in the form of aggression, drunkenness,

drug addiction, arrogance, etc. On the other hand familiarizing children and young people with moral values fills their lives with meaning. The evidence of this is found as a result of research into the lowest sense of meaning in life through, among others, drug addicts and alcoholics who probably suffered from an unbalanced value system. Therefore it can be concluded that a lack of meaning in life is sometimes directly proportional to a loss of faith in values. Every man needs values that will give his life meaning in order to function properly in the world.

Throughout ten years of research on the moral reasoning of young people I and my seminar groups, whom I provided with my research tools, have conducted my belief that young people need support in developing moral character has been reinforced and this can be done by moral education conducted by specially trained educators. As an example, the results of pilot studies conducted during a seminar, which examined a group of 120 young people from high school between the age of 16 and 18 years, will be mentioned. The results, in contrast to my own achieved results, are more optimistic. There were two first grade and two second grade high school classes. The selection of the research group was random. The aim was to investigate which environmental factors determine the level of moral reasoning. It should be noted that the ability to reflect on moral issues, the ability to draw moral conclusions and make moral decisions are the factors which prove the level of moral reasoning. The studied adolescents in the vast majority (70%) have an average level of moral reasoning, while 29.2% have a high level of moral reasoning. It is worth noting that only one person had a low level of moral reasoning. The factor conditioning the level of moral reasoning is gender. Research has shown women are at a higher level of moral reasoning than men (evidenced by research hypothesis verification, which has been confirmed using  $\chi^2 = 3.839 > 2.772$  for  $df = 2$ ,  $p > 0.25$ ). The highest level of moral reasoning was achieved by achieved students from families where a full democratic parenting style predominates. For the development of morality the authority that shows how to incorporate moral values in life is also very important. . Man operates in a particular environment and it often happens that besides various experiences, the environment also provides him with difficulties which he is not always able to cope with. This applies especially to young people who are often unable to meet socio-economic demands, are helpless to complicated reality. Therefore, they treat drugs (alcohol, cigarettes) as an escape from their problems. The reason for resorting to these kinds of stimulants is also the strong influence of peer environment and the lack of assertiveness of a youngster risky situations. Whether the youngster takes such actions depends on many factors including the level of moral reasoning. The dimensions of moral reasoning among high school students were also investigated. A moral attitude towards socio-moral phenomena determines the intellectual attitude. The study group was classified as exceptionists –



people who apply moral principles as criteria for the evaluation of others, but very easily accept exceptions to these rules. The ability to make moral judgments is very important, but equally significant is an adequate assessment of oneself and one's actions. The studied adolescents are characterized by a high level of self-criticism and a realistic opinion of themselves. High levels of self-criticism were found in 60% of men and 47% women among all respondents. Both religion and morality are important spheres in the lives of Poles. There is no doubt that our moral standards are grounded in religious systems. As my research proves, morality does not always come from religion. In the whole group, exactly half of the respondents (60 people) had a high level of religiosity, but within that group 65% have an average level of moral reasoning. Research has shown that secondary school students appreciate artistic, moral, theoretical and social values. It is important that all of these values determine the level of moral reasoning. It is encouraging that, among the most important places in educational environments, the family environment occupies first place. Being born in a particular family determines the chance of developing future life goals. It was proved that there is a correlation between the education of parents, their financial situation, ties with parents and the level of moral reasoning. The better the parents' education, financial situation, relationship among family is, the higher the level of moral reasoning present is in the respondents. In contrast, the more frequently alcohol is consumed at home, the lower the level of moral reasoning is among adolescents (for example, I give the results of the statistical calculations: because  $\chi^2 = 26.876 > 21.954$  for  $df = 8$ ,  $p > 0.005$ , contingency coefficient  $C = 0.43$ , therefore, in accordance with interpretation the power of the designated compound should be determined as an average). It has also been assumed that results at school affect the level of moral reasoning. Students who achieve higher scores in science are also characterized by higher levels of moral reasoning and that hypothesis has been confirmed as  $\chi^2 = 7.889 > 7.840$  for  $df = 6$ ,  $p > 0.25$  there were no grounds to accept  $H_0$  and therefore  $H_1$  has been accepted which assumes that the results of the study determine the level of moral reasoning.

As it is clear from the research the level of moral reasoning depends on many factors including environmental ones, it is difficult to designate one particularly significant factor. Being aware of the complexity of the problem we should attempt to determine the role that school plays, taking into consideration its atmosphere and moral climate, as well as the teacher, since academic performance plays a significant role in the development of morality. Therefore the educator's role is even more important – as a guide through the world of values, who supports the moral education of his students, and also helps to acquire knowledge and skills in the educational process.

Of course, due to the limited size of this article only some of the variables and the results were presented, but even this part of the overall picture shows that educators must face many challenges of a moral nature.

### **Ethics and ethos in the work of educators**

The moral capacity of man is certainly not determined solely by compliance with laws established by the authorities in the country in which he lives. The universal and timeless values recognized internally by man and complied with in accordance with his conscience decide about the moral capacity of people. Thus, during the education process it is worth remembering that, for a pluralistic society, it is not indifferent what values are considered by its members to be the most important, which are less important and whether the recognized system of values is compatible with human values. That is whether they prefer material, cognitive, moral, religious values or concentrate only on vital and hedonistic aspects. For example, in a society in which the highest rank would be attributed to economic and technical values and spiritual aspects would not be appreciated, it would quickly be observed that the recognition of human rights mainly depends on the market. In case of a clear preference of spiritual values there is a danger of creating a society of backwardness in economic development. So in the process of education it is necessary not to diminish any of the listed values (Łobocki, 2004, p. 27). The most important influence on the formation of moral attitudes is exerted by school education and its moral education, which should be done in planned, not accidental situations in which individuals react in a socially acceptable way, have the opportunity to discuss different points of view, listen to others without contempt or attack. Young people should also compare, make decisions and make sure that their point of view is correct. Unfortunately, the teachers' work faces many difficulties even at the beginning of their actions. This is due to bureaucracy; teachers face a maze of documents that they need to be familiar with and obey. Certainly this is not a positive influence on the promotion of the moral development of children and the youth by educators. "The task of a teacher as a developer of young people is to avoid marginalizing young people. However, in many cases we deal with different forms rejection of a child by an adult" (Gruca-Miąsik, 2011, p. 24). This situation requires referral to the ethics and ethos of the teaching profession and educators.

In his considerations, E. Erikson suggests that the formation of the development of children was even affected by the tone of voice of an adult talking to a child. It was the tone of voice heard during the childhood that marked the boundary towards certain behaviors. The development of morality is also influenced to a large extent by the relationships which exist between individual people. However, the author points out that morality is not a so-called innate feature. It is created within a person's life due to all

sorts of observations and experiences of the individual. Thanks to morality, the individual is able to act and make decisions, knowing where the boundary of moral and immoral behavior lies. Consequently, the actions of a person are directed on known principles, the moral norms in force in society which he derives his morality from. The author described the moral principles that are present in a human life as “*basic morality*” or “*moralistic orientation*”. E. Erikson emphasizes that due to known moral principles a person is capable of independent observation, deciding about himself, as well as determining the penalties for misbehavior. Regarding the moral development of a man the author distinguished two types of threats – external and internal – due to the fact that a child, during adolescence, is very susceptible to the influence of other people, not necessarily acting morally and correctly. Among external threats the author includes “abandonment, punishment, public unmasking or exposures” whereas among internal threats he lists “guilt, shame and isolation”. E. Erikson also states that “the moral ethos, defining a way of experiencing the world dominated by prohibitions, is the first of the three types of ethos, the transition from childhood through adolescence to maturity” (Groth, 2007, p. 18). Speaking of ethics and morality in the context of a teacher’s work it is worth quoting the words of the researcher, because they allow one to understand the work ethos of a teacher. I believe that an adult during the meeting with a youngster can offer him a lot, elevate him to new heights, but can also humiliate, manipulate, destroy.

The above-mentioned author emphasizes that the period of adolescence in the process of moral development plays a very important role. At that time the current system of moral values of the individual is modified. What so far has been regarded as undisputed now raises a teenager's sense of opposition to some moral values.

As a result of examining all the moral values that a person learns and experiences during their whole life, another ethos of moral development emerges, one described as *ideological ethos*. *Identity formation process* also appears which assumes that past experiences of a person will be confirmed in subsequent stages of his life in relation to his skills and abilities. The author, in his analysis, also points out that a person during adolescence can feel a sense of moral confusion. Namely, it refers to the lack of a sense of harmony in the system of values by which the separate spheres of life would form together a specific unit. Therefore, the actions of a person are dependent on the influence of other external factors. This statement is linked to being a part of a particular social group. Erikson also claims that the entity in the period of adolescence looks for a group, which in a similar way perceives certain moral values. He also rightly notes that in this period of development an individual willingly looks for and experiences new things. Therefore adolescents eagerly search for groups that are distinguished by a specific ideology, which creates a sense of belonging to the group, as well

as develops a sense of trust and loyalty to the group (Groth, 2007, pp. 19–20). Leon Dyczewski presents a similar position (Dyczewski, 2001, pp. 36–39). He argues that a world with clear beliefs, ideas and values strengthens a student, prevents him from a failure to learn to appreciate and enjoy small successes. Values, as a framework of thoughts, behaviors and attitudes, create a single system, allowing a man to achieve both personal and social happiness in life. Adopted values determine the direction of our aspirations and relationships with other people. Values play an extremely important role in a human's life. They stimulate and shape the consciousness for any activity, impose objectives of the action, unite people, integrate the public and stimulate and guide the development. The values allow you to specify the meaning of life, without them a man would not be able to function in the normal way in the world. The values are therefore an organizing factor in the future of both individuals and entire societies. Every person throughout their life makes evaluations. This process takes two paths. Initially, it is to build your own, subjective hierarchy of values, and then evaluate the extent to which these values are internalized by us.

Acceptance of certain values namely: equality, justice, truth includes a specific conception of the world and a certain way of thinking about the world. Józef Tischner proclaimed that thinking rejects cynicism, utilitarianism, which dominates the modern world. According to Tischner, the world in which we live is not what the world should be (Zaborowski, 2001, p. 180). And although many people are acutely aware of this, in their private life or career they follow trends, fashions, pressure while forgetting about their identity and at the same time giving a terrible example for young people.

### **Conclusion**

The “moral destruction” that can be observed nowadays justifies the need to implement the axiological model of education, which would be based on the implementation of ethical values. Passing objective values should be exposed, leading to the development of a student's personality and preparing him for self-development and self-realization (Śniegulska, 2013, p. 51). At the same time it is important to prepare the executor of this task in a good, professional way and combine it with his personal experience and ideas about the development, professionalism and image of him as a specialist (Onufriyeva, 2013, p. 503). All the above must be implemented in the context of values, morals, ethics.

The modern educator is aware that the world brings a lot of conflicting worldviews and ideas. He knows that young people need values in their life and that he is responsible for passing morals on to them. He is also aware that the youth needs moral education, not to get lost, to live in accordance with their capabilities and aspirations. A teacher knows that he should support and help, look for good and do good himself. But at the same time a

teacher is aware of what can be read in an article by Janusz Mariański – that changes in the behavior and moral attitudes of young people vary between rigor and moral absolutism (the impact of the Catholic Church) to the tendency towards utilitarianism, permissiveness and moral relativism, in which the individual's right to independence and autonomy is particularly emphasized which should lead to the realization of personal happiness. “These changes and transformations become the horizon – especially for young people – to every day experience, moral and political challenges and dilemmas about material security, a career, a relationship with a partner, having a family, the evolution of hopes and fears ... ” (Mariański, 2010, pp. 26–27). A teacher himself also takes part in that, as a man, a citizen of the community.

Moral education is a process that enables man to gradually explore the world around him, allows him to acquire skills to find his own place and transform it into a place friendlier to him and to the environment. This is not an automatic process and does not take place in axiological emptiness. It requires a lot of effort and measurements to prepare a graduate to be able to create and live according to his own particular hierarchy of values based on accepted ethical ideals (Mariański, 1990, p. 403). Therefore, discussing this issue is very important from the point of view of ethics, morality and educators, because we should also ensure that young people know how to distinguish good from evil.

In the media, you can read Polish Press Agency information regarding Poles' opinions about morality. It shows that we lack basic knowledge about ethical issues. Many people treat morality as a matter of the individual; believe that morality can be abandoned or modified depending on the situation. Therefore, we can say that the level of morality has not changed over the past centuries, man still desires the same unbridled instincts that lead him to conflicts and wars. It is difficult now to change the way of thinking and behavior of the adult generation, but we should pay particular attention to the young generation who are finding their way in society. As the studies show, young people have a high level of moral reasoning and they only need the appropriate guides in life in order not to lose those values.

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# **Consequentialist and non-consequentialist overtones of the Code of ethics of an academic staff member in light of ethics of social consequences**

**Paulina Dubiel-Zielińska**

## **Abstract**

The article there examines the Code of ethics of an academic staff member. The Code defines the concept of science and common feature of all sciences. It focuses on the main inspiration for academic work and the primary duties of the academic community. It indicates the basic, general principles of ethics, on which it is based then tackles specific values. In the next part it discusses in detail examples of good practice. Ethics of social consequences is shown as a new expression of professional ethics. A model of reasoning consistent with that theory is presented. The two dimensions – consequentialist and non-consequentialist – are discussed. The article concludes with a synthesis of consequentialist and non-consequentialist features of ethics of social consequences present in the Code of ethics of an academic staff member. Conducted analysis of the Code in light of ethics of social consequences clearly indicates that non-consequentialist theories are not the only ones to be used in codex ethics (deontological or virtue theories) but also consequentialist theories should not be ignored.

**Keywords:** code of ethics, ESC model of professional ethics, ethics code, non-consequentialism, theory of the lesser evil

## **Introduction**

The Code of ethics of an academic staff member is an annex to Resolution No. 10/2012 of the General Assembly of the Polish Academy of Sciences of 13th December, 2012. It was developed by the Commission for the Ethics in Science of the PAN (the Polish Academy of Sciences) on the basis of Article 39, paragraph. 3 of the PAN of 30 April 2010.

The members of that commission, in the years 2011–2014, were outstanding representatives of Polish science and provosts of prestigious universities. Its chairman is Prof. PhD. Andrzej Zoll, its deputy chairman – Prof. PhD Maciej W. Grabski (a corresponding member of the PAN). Other members of the commission are: Prof. PhD Osman Achmatowicz, Prof. PhD Andrzej Białynicki-Birula (a permanent member of the PAN), Prof. PhD of Medicine Andrzej Górski (a permanent member of the PAN), Prof. Doctor of Medicine, Janusz Limon (a permanent member of the PAN), Prof. PhD Eng. Tadeusz Luty, Prof. PhD Peter Węgleński (a permanent member of the PAN), Prof. PhD Franciszek Ziejka.

The then Minister of Education (2007–2013), Prof. Barbara Kudrycka in her letter to the Polish provosts of universities as of 22th February 2013 stressed the importance of the published document in the following words: “I am delighted that the work of members of the Commission resulted in the issuance of studies so important for Polish science highlighting, that reliability, diligence, honesty and respect for the truth should always be accompanied by scientific and research activities. The practice of science

based on the fundamental ethical principles presented in the Code guarantees its development” (Kudrycka, 2013, p. 1).

### **The Code of ethics of an academic staff member**

The document begins with the Preamble, which in nine points presents the all if the intentions of the creators of the Code herein. First of all, it defines the concept of science and common features of all sciences – reliance on rational arguments and presenting verifiable or rational material evidence (The Code of ethics of an academic staff member, Preamble, subparagraph. 5, p. 1). It talks about the main inspiration for academic work namely improvement of knowledge, widening its horizons, sharing it with others (The Code, 2013, p. 1). This motivation must be accompanied by honesty, trust, cooperation, strive for progress (The Code, 2013, p. 1). The Code tackles the subject of a fundamental obligation of the academic community, thus respect for the rules set by them and the virtues of academic work (The Code, 2013, p. 1). The Code points to the basic general principles of ethics, on which it is based, namely: respect for human dignity and life: “[R]esearch relating to a living creature can be carried out only when this is necessary and always with respect for human dignity and animal rights, on the basis of consistency expressed by the relevant ethics committees” (The Code, 2013, p. 2), truthfulness, honesty, duty to comply with their commitments, recognition of the right to freedom of opinion and ownership (The Code, 2013, p. 1), and then: selflessness and impartiality (The Code, 2013, p. 1). The Code emphasizes the unique responsibility of academic staff to society and the public good. It focuses on the need for fair and responsible conduct of research (The Code, 2013, p. 1), which is to serve “the general welfare of humanity and the good of society” (The Code, 2013, p. 1). The Code accentuates the social and ethical context of research, problems of reliability in the field of science and their causes. The most dangerous phenomenon in accordance with the Code is corruption, which is a consequence of exerting pressure (ideological, political), implementation of interest (economic, financial) (The Code, 2013, p. 1).

The second part of the Code – *Universal principles and ethical values in academic work* –describes in detail the eleven moral values and, identical with them, ethical standards of “representatives of all, without exception, scientific disciplines” (The Code, 2013, p. 1): conscientiousness, reliability, objectivity, impartiality, independence, openness, transparency, accountability, integrity, care, courage (The Code, 2013, p. 2). Values and standards are also valid for employers (universities, institutes, other research units and colleges). Those who do not take appropriate measures to prevent infringements of these rules of ethics in science are guilty of dereliction of duties (The Code, 2013, p. 2).

The Code is “to help maintain the integrity of science, by applying the principles of good scientific practice” (The Code, 2013, p. 1). This concerns

the rules of ethical conduct relating to “conducting, present[ing] and evaluat[ing] research to ensure compliance with ethical requirements” ((The Code, 2013, p. 2). The general categories of good practice include the following seven: 1) handling of scientific data; 2) research procedures; 3) authorship and publication of research results; 4) reviewing; 5) formation of young staff; 6) international cooperation; 7) avoidance of conflicts of interests. The Code requires that each research unit created its own set of best practices and required their employees to comply with them (The Code, 2013, p. 2).

The Code describes in detail the practices relating to the management of scientific data, research procedures, authorship and publication of research results, and review. The rules of reliable operation in the field of molding a young team in a very general way expresses the moral value of caring for future generations of scientists manifested in inculcating existing standards as well as ethical standards in their students and dependents (The Code, 2013, p. 2). The rules relating to international cooperation are listed in appendix no. 2: "Practices of international cooperation" (The Code, 2013, p. 4). They were limited to tips in the conduct of the investigation in the event of an allegation of infringement of ethical principles or scientific integrity. The rules relating to the avoidance of a conflict of interests are a brief reference to the practices of copyright and publishing (The Code, 2013, p. 3), and practices relating to reviewing and giving opinions (The Code, 2013, p. 3). Contained within its words is the following; “each of the authors should disclose in advance potential conflicts of interests” (The Code, 2013, p. 3), and “the reviewers [...] should refuse to participate in the assessment process in all those cases where there is a conflict of interests between them and the assessed person” (The Code, 2013, p. 3). Non-disclosure of conflicts of interest is assessed in the code as reprehensible behavior (The Code, 2013, p. 3).

### **Ethics of social consequences as the new face of professional ethics**

Vasil Gluchman examines his theory in the context of its applying. He admits that ethical codes are very often based on deontological theories. Recently, the construction of professional ethics has often used theories stemming from virtue ethics. There is very little mention of consequentialist ethics, and if it so, it is in a negative sense. Therefore, Vasil Gluchman asks whether this means that consequentialist ethics is not useful in the field of professional ethics (Gluchman, 2012b, p. 42).

The basic requirement of any code of ethics, according Gluchman, is to determine the relationship of the profession or institution with the community, emphasizing that it meets specific social needs, striving for the general good, social welfare. In the context of ethics of social consequences values of justice and responsibility can be, for example, considered as contributing to the common good, social welfare. Consequences which play

a significant part in the fulfillment of this task can be considered marginal (Gluchman, 2012b, p. 46).

Vasil Gluchman, presenting the socio-ethical dimension of professional ethics, states that the purpose of professional ethics, in the context of ethics of social consequences, is to recognize and support the moral right to life, its development and affirmation in all manifestations, which binds the protection, respect and implementation of further values of ethics of social consequences, such as humanism and human dignity. It is about fundamental values which are to establish the specificity of each professional ethics in all its areas of external relations with the community and single clients and internal relationships for the profession, employers, superiors, colleagues and subordinates (Gluchman, 2012b, p. 53; 2012c, p. 18). In exceptional situations, in the process of thinking, decision making and action, and sometimes the process of assessment, the situational approach should be considered, based on the decision to take such action that the greatest possible extent will be compatible with universal ethical values, standards and rules, sometimes causing the minimization of negative consequences deriving from the failure to respect them. Then it is appropriate to the ESC model of thinking, decision making and actions, sometimes evaluating, because it creates the space to consider the fundamental ethical and moral values or principles which, in normal circumstances, cause a prevalence of positive over negative consequences, and in exceptional situations – minimizing negative consequences according with the theory of lesser evil (Gluchman, 2012b, pp. 42–65; Gluchman, 2012c, p. 27). In the event of a conflict between values and principles, the model of reasoning and decision making based on ethics of social consequences is obliged to find an optimal solution, which will bring a prevalence of positive consequences over negative or the minimization of negative consequences. The model of reasoning and decision making based on ethics of social consequences carries a message about the overriding purpose of professional ethics, which is to protect, recognize and support the moral right to life, its development and affirmation in all its manifestations, which connects with the respect and practice of successive values of ethics of social consequences, that is, humanism and human dignity. It is about core values that are to define the basic nature of each professional ethics in all its areas (Gluchman, 2012b, pp. 51–53). Ethics of social consequences is about respect and attaining the moral right to life (its development and affirmation), humanism, human dignity, justice, responsibility, tolerance and obligation (non-consequentialist aspect) it in the first place, causing an increase in positive consequences (consequentialist aspect) (Gluchman, 2012c, p. 40). The new methodological position of ethics within ethics of social consequences – the ESC model of professional ethics (Gluchman, 2012b, p. 46) indicates that the purpose of ethics is that the representatives of the profession, company or institution with their thinking and action

favored protection, respect and implementation of the moral right to life (human), its development and affirmation, as well as protecting, respecting and realizing human dignity in all its forms, at all levels of human relationships in a given profession, company or institution. The employee has a task in his work to consider, protect and respect these values and principles. The model of ethics based on ethics of social consequences is applicable to the type of reflexive moral entity (i.e. the entity which in his work mainly uses cognitive competences) and in the case of professions requiring mainly manual activities. A complex and simpler form of ESC model of professional ethics can, therefore, be used. The second model should resemble, in its form, a code of ethics useful in everyday situations. Such a code must take a deontological form of injunctions, prohibitions, commands, such as: "Be fair!", or "Support justice!", "Be responsible!", or: "In your mind, elections, actions support liability!" The ESC model of professional ethics is different from the one-sided approach to professions, reducing in most cases the goal of professional ethics to manual activities, efficient and correct actions. This corresponds to the deontological perception of the issues, which tries to provide such tips that the acting moral agent knows what is right, and what is not, what can and can't be done. Human life here is more complicated and it can't be reduced to the level of simple rules and measures, including professional issues (Gluchman, 2012b, pp. 53–57). The consequentialist approach, depending on the situation, allows the preference of values of utility or satisfaction of desire in action, which is to choose the alternative that will increase positive consequences. We can see, therefore, that not only ethics of virtue or deontological ethics apply to professional ethics. Ethics of social consequences offers, in this regard, the opportunity to accept a broader basis, assumptions of consequentialism. The ESC model of professional ethics may be an appropriate methodological starting point for professional ethics, joining several other methods. Moreover, the ESC model of professional ethics shows the effectiveness of consequentialism (at least in its non-utilitarian form), in efficiently solving the problems of professional ethics, although it is more difficult to apply in practice than deontological and virtue ethics (Gluchman, 2012b, pp. 57–63).

### **Between consequentialism and non-consequentialism in ethics of social consequences**

Thomas Nagel distinguishes between two main types of standards of morality, which were further reflected ethics: consequentialist and non-consequentialist (Nagel, 1978, pp. 97–115). The consequentialist aspect of morality consists of standards, having regard to what will happen and so are focused on the action. The non-consequentialist aspect, in turn, relates to the rules of the fact of what one does, therefore, these standards are focused on the action. The standards focus on the effects indicating that one acts so that

the proceedings resulted in good as much as is possible (regardless of the type of things that include that good and the criteria by which it is measured). The standards focus on the action limit this consequentialist principle of best result in two ways. Some of them prohibit the application of certain measures, even though using them could achieve the best results (deontological prohibitions). While others release the human in certain situations with the impersonal concern for the common good and allow him to look after, above all, his personal well-being or interests of relatives (egocentric restrictions) (Galewicz, 2010, pp. 30–31). Ethics of social consequences, in the opinion of the author, is a version of non-utilitarian consequentialism and one approach attempting to find common reason among consequentialist and non-consequentialist ethical theories, emphasizing the values of humanism, human dignity and moral human rights, taking into account the value of justice, responsibility, tolerance and obligation (it's all part of an attempt to achieve a prevalence of positive over negative consequences) (Gluchman, 2012b, pp. 45–46). The basic premise of this ethics speaks of two kinds of obligation on every person. For the consequentialist dimension of the theory indicates the first obligation, which requires such procedure to achieve positive outcomes as much as is possible (Gluchman, 2012a, p. 24). The non-consequentialist dimension to ethics of social consequences shows a second type of obligation – respect in the behavior of certain rules (the basic rule is moral law) (Gluchman, 2012a, pp. 200–201), in accordance to the fact that in certain situations – in the context of professional ethics based on the ethics of social consequences (ESC model of professional ethics) – choose the so called lesser evil, causing advantage prevalence of positive consequences over negative, and the value of humanism. Humanism is humanity. Its content is the procedure for the foreign; strangers in need of help (Gluchman, 2012a, pp. 117–118). Humanism can be considered on two levels: 1) moral and biological properties; 2) moral qualities, resulting from culture-human power (Gluchman, 2012a, pp. 123–124). From the idea of humanism the basic rights and obligations relating to the support, protection and defense of those lives that man considers as a demanding and worthy are derived. However, support for strangers is going beyond the moral obligation thus contributing to a new quality of social life. This allows one to speak of universal humanism. The universality of respect for the other person proves the human predisposition to morality, to cross his biological, genetic tendencies. Thus, humanism is a typical feature of a human (Gluchman, 2008, pp. 77–87). That ethics of social consequences allows exemptions from the impersonal concern for the common good, that it allows one to seek first for one's own personal well-being and the interests of one's relatives – proves its non-consequentialist features. A codex using ethics of social consequences makes the statement that, in public (professional) life

greater (professional) importance is put on consequentialist virtues than in private life (Galewicz, 2010, p. 31).

**Features of consequentialism and non-consequentialism of ethics of social consequences in the Code of ethics of an academic staff member**

The general principles of ethics, on which the code is based, namely: respect for human dignity and life (The Code, 2013, p. 1) brings the code closer to ethics of social consequences and its non-consequentialist characteristics. The right to life is an axiological foundation of this theory. We can talk about the moral law to the life of human beings, animals, plants and other life forms (Gluchman, 2008, pp. 143–144). The Code, in the Preamble, defines the basic requirement, the same as the requirement of Vasil Gluchman – the relationship of an academic profession and academic institutions to the community: “Science has a strong two-way relationship with the outside world” (The Code, 2013, p. 1). The Code emphasizes the necessity of fulfilling specific social needs by science, the striving for the general good, social welfare (The Code, 2013, p. 1). In the context of ethics of social consequences one can consider the values of justice and responsibility as being present in the code (The Code, 2013, pp. 1–2), how they contribute to the common good, social welfare. One can speculate about the consequences as playing a significant part in fulfilling this task (The Code, 2013, pp. 1–2). Gluchman believes that the responsibility of employees can have a social dimension (the responsibility of employees in support of the common good) and individual (responsibility of employees to a single customer). Responsibility of members of a certain profession can be additionally discussed at the macro, micro and mezzo-social level. This is, therefore, an outer surface. Another level is the responsibility of internal responsibility to their profession, company or institution attributable to employees. Both types of liability are complementary, which means that they have to be together in balance. In the event of a conflict between internal and external responsibility the assumptions of ethics of social consequences can be used, in which, in first place, is the value of humanity, then human dignity, followed by moral rights. The values of justice, responsibility, tolerance and obligation are secondary. The aim is to achieve a prevalence of positive consequences over negative, which does not mean that only maximizing positive consequences is considered to be good. Any prevalence of positive over negative consequences can be considered as good action. In certain circumstances, even a dominance of negative over positive consequences might be appropriate (the so-called theory of the lesser evil) (Gluchman, 2012b, pp. 49–50) (non-consequentialist features of the theory). The consequentialist overtone of the code should be seen in the directly-formed duty of academic staff members, which is to “do everything in their power to conducted by them to serve the general welfare of humanity and the good of society” (The Code, 2013, p. 1). Furthermore, the

foreword to the third point, *Good practices in academic research*, emphasizing that each researcher from the beginning of his career, should be aware of the rules of responsible and fair conduct, presentation and evaluation of research and know what consequences their violation brings (The Code, 2013, p. 2), bringing the code closer to ethics of social consequences. Practices concerning testing procedures (3.2.) have a consequentialist aspect: "All tests should be carried out carefully, observing the necessary precautions. They should be preceded by an analysis of associated risk, what effects can the results of the test have results on society and the environment; when applying for research funds real promises should be made and every effort to meet its stated objectives should be made" (The Code, 2013, p. 2).

### Conclusions

The conducted analysis of the Code of ethics of an academic staff member in light of ethics of social consequences clearly indicates that the application of codex ethics does not just have non-consequentialist theories (deontological or virtue theories) but also consequentialist theories. The Code of ethics of an academic staff member is a modern look at the job of academic work, because it is a reflection of these three theories. Consequentialist ones have been written about above. Deontological issues and those regarding virtue, are, in duty, formulated in the Code of academic staff members: "[the] primary duty of the academic community is to follow the agreed rules and virtues of academic work" (The Code, 2013, p. 1). These virtues derive from the practice of universal principles: selflessness, diligence, integrity, objectivity, impartiality, independence, openness, transparency, responsibility, fairness, caring, courage (The Code, 2013, pp. 1–2).

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## **Vasil Gluchman's ethics of social consequences and the professional ethics of a Polish Police Officer**

**Jacek Domagała**

### **Abstract**

Respect for ethics, the law and the broadly understood rule of law is essential to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Polish police. In a formation such as this, it is therefore advisable for ethics to determine the sense of its moral activities in accordance with the core values and goals. The article relates directly to the concept of ethics of social consequences, which was first developed by Vasil Gluchman. In the following text, I am going to attempt to characterize the foundation of ethics by describing its main ideas. I will then refer the concept of ethics of social consequences to the professional ethics of a Polish police officer, comparing and pointing out the similarities between the two, while simultaneously differentiating some of their rules and provisions. As a result, I will reach the conclusion that the protection of safety and public order should be based on uncompromised respect for the morality of democratic, civil society with regard to truth and law.

**Keywords:** ethics, dignity, humanism, morality, police officer, law

During their daily duty, police officers face numerous dilemmas, which they are not always able to solve independently. The implementation of duties and service activities often gives rise to questions. What to do in a situation that is not entirely governed by the law? What to do when it is necessary to get involved in an activity that is ambiguous or even reprehensible from a moral standpoint? What hierarchy of values should be assumed when choosing the lesser evil? It goes without saying that the *Rules of professional police ethics*, introduced in 2003, are a very helpful resource in making difficult decisions when in service. They are an indication of the code of conduct, particularly for young – with regard to both age and seniority – police officers, who have to deal with morally ambiguous situations in the course of their service and interpersonal relations between citizens and policemen for the first time in their careers. It appears that the concept developed by Vasil Gluchman can be, to some extent, also helpful for the Polish policeman.

In the ethics of social consequences, the most important roles are assumed by the concepts of humanism, moral law and human dignity (Grzybek, 2013, p. 16). All these ethical categories have an "impact" on lawful actions undertaken by the Polish police, which at the same time, aim to comply with moral and legal norms. This, however, begs more questions: is the law alone not enough? Does it not regulate, in a sufficiently precise manner, all areas of state and public life, including the very actions of the police? What, then, is ethics for? (Pawłowski, Róg & Wiszowaty, 2000, p. 5).

Answers to these questions may differ. First of all, law is always external in nature; it is constituted, contained within acts, codes and other legislative

regulations. In a way, law, along with the broadly understood legal system, governs vast areas of social and state life from the outside. Breaking the law entails certain criminal penalties. Ethics, on the other hand, refer rather to the inner man, his conscience. Therefore, now, it is believed – especially in democratic, well-established societies, like old European democracies, the status still pursued by Poland – that the law alone is not enough to build public peace and order of the so-called *human face*. This requires ethics, also including the concept of ethics of social consequences, which can be traced directly to the records relating to the professional ethics of the Polish police officer. Secondly, the police officer, when carrying out their professional duties, has to deal not so much with the object, but rather the subject – that is a particular person – always remaining a human, always having inalienable dignity, which they are obliged to respect by national laws, as well as numerous resolutions and declarations of the Council of Europe and the United Nations. Thirdly, the police officer does not fight against anonymous or virtual criminals, but real criminals as they are. They, therefore, risk being later assassinated by such criminal, and often live in fear of retribution. As a result, more often than other people, they face situations that will either prove them to be a hero or make them compromise their service duties. I firmly believe that Vasil Gluchman's ethics of social consequences may be of great use and benefit to officers when making these difficult decisions. Following this concept, human dignity is conceived as a tribute to another human being, regardless of their origin, race, creed and philosophy, as well as an appreciation for someone equal. The basis of this understanding of dignity lies within the ontological assumption stemming from the way of man's existence, their rationality. For this reason, man cannot become a means, but an end in himself (Gluchman, 2000, pp. 153–154).

It can therefore be assumed that human dignity should refer to any individual human being, from the moment of birth until their death. It is synonymous with humanity. It is also the basis of inalienable human rights, among which the most prominent is the right to life, which Vasil Gluchman extends to conscious and unconscious beings. The idea of humanism and human dignity is rooted in the right to life. The author notes, however, that the right to life cannot be granted equally to everybody as it cannot be the same for righteous citizens and criminals. The case is not much different when we consider human dignity. Gluchman is not convinced of the moral acceptability of a situation in which, for instance, the victim of humiliation, tyranny and bullying has the same human dignity as his or her tyrant and tormentor who has committed such an act. Gluchman recalls the example of Dr. Mengele who conducted inhuman experiments on prisoners in concentration camps. The executioner must not have the same dignity as their victim (Gluchman, 2012, p. 169). Naturally, it is difficult to disagree with such argumentation; nonetheless, police officers, under applicable law,

are obliged to impartial, objective and equal treatment of all citizens, without any prejudice of race, nationality, creed or sexual preference, even if such a citizen has committed the most heinous of crimes. Here, ethics of social consequences no longer reflect the professional ethics of police officers.

Referring to the next ethical category contained within the *ethics of social consequences*, namely moral law, Vasil Gluchman distinguishes two basic recognitions of moral law, which, upon further consideration of the founder of the concept, turn out to be insufficient to solve the underlying problems. These approaches are as follows: 1. *utilitarian* – understood as a form of social contract that implies a benefit for the participants of this contract; 2. *ontological* – understood as a concept of moral rights, where the starting point is the dignity of a person or of human existence. According to the philosopher, moral rights concretize human dignity, becoming an informal expression of moral values; whereas statutory law is an institutionalized expression of these rights. However, the purpose is not moral law itself (or law in general), but moral values. In contrast to his earlier views, that did not exclude the possibility of existence of numerous moral laws, he now believes that there is, in fact, one common moral law, but it can simply take many forms, or means of expression. Moral law is biologically and socially (comparatively: culturally) linked with the foundation of morality, i.e. life (Gluchman, 2005, p. 170).

Another important issue of moral law is its relationship with the right to happiness and freedom. Analyzing the ways and conditions of manifestation of these rights, Gluchman has stated that they are not as fundamental as the right to life. Thus, the universality of moral law can be maintained when it is based on the right to life and its protection, and therefore also on human dignity and humanization of human relationships (Gluchman, 2008, pp. 143–144). In his opinion, both moral law and human dignity with humanism relate chiefly to human life. Bearing this in mind, the value of human life is a common platform for morality as a whole. Human dignity and humanism, in the context of current observations, are an extension of moral law, or rather its concretization. To conclude, it can be assumed that moral law understood thus – i.e. the right to protection and promotion of life – is the starting point for the whole of morality. In reference to the claim-related and protective function of the law, we can speak of the moral right to promoting and developing life, its protection against all forms of behavior and conduct that is a negation, or is possibly targeted at negating life in general (Gluchman, 2012, p. 221).

As part of this moral law, there are rules and regulations regarding the professional ethics of police officers. Under these provisions, the police officer, in all his activities, has the obligation to respect human dignity, as well as to respect and protect human rights, in particular expressed in respecting the right of every human being to life and prohibition of

initiating, using and tolerating torture, humiliation, inhuman behavior or punishment (Ordinance No. 805, 2003, Section 4). By introducing the rules of *professional ethics* in the Polish police force, it has been especially ensured to constantly bear in mind the particular importance of moral issues associated with the implementation of the statutory duties of officers and their subservient role to the public, as well as the need to strengthen and complement the rights and duties of police officers under the provisions of the applicable national law, as well as binding records of the provisions of international law.

To sum up the discussion on the *ethics of social consequences*, it can be said that moral law is acquired by a human being at birth, and it is the same for all humans from the very day they are born. During their entire life, a moral agent may, however, due to their behavior and actions, reach the same moral right to life that is reserved to other human beings. The right to life also applies to different forms of beings, depending on their qualitative form of life, i.e. their position in the developmental scale of evolution. By that I mean fauna and flora, which are both also under strict protection of the law. However, a question arises: to what extent, if at all, it is possible to speak about moral rights in relation to non-human entities? Neither animals nor still life are moral agents with regard to how one understands morality in ethics of social consequences. We can only talk about implementing certain moral rights introduced by humans with animals and nature being understood as certain objects of human morality. Representatives, or holders, of the right to life can be divided into conscious and unconscious bearers of such right. There are no more moral rights that we should consider, and that would have the same universal nature as the right to life in its claim-related and protective functions (Gluchman, 2012, p. 222). In effect, moral rights concretize human dignity, they are informal expressions of moral values; while legally constituted and functioning law – including provisions relating to the professional ethics of police officers – are an institutionalized expression of certain moral rights. Statutory law is, in this case, a tool for implementing moral rights within specific community or communities, in this case – a professional group such as the police.

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## Conference Reports

### Moral Theories and Disasters

On May 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, the Institute of Ethics and Bioethics (Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, Slovakia) hosted the COST Action IS1201 workshop *Moral Theories and Disasters*. It was a joint workshop organized in co-operation with COST Action IS1201 on Disaster Bioethics and the Institute of Ethics and Bioethics, University of Prešov, Slovakia. This scientific meeting took place at the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, Slovakia. The aim of the workshop was to discuss moral theories, their roles and perspectives in disasters and disaster relief situations. Researchers from different European countries, Greece, Belgium, Lithuania, England, Ireland, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic participated in the event. The program of the workshop was divided into three days.

The workshop was opened by Vasil Gluchman (UNESCO Chair in Bioethics, University of Prešov, Slovakia) and Dónal O'Mathúna from Dublin City University, School of Nursing and Human Sciences, Ireland. He is also the Chair of COST Action IS1201. After the opening remarks, two speakers presented their papers devoted to the topic *The conflict in Ukraine from the perspective of neighboring countries*. Alexander Duleba (University of Prešov, Slovakia) is a political scientist; according to his specialization he focused on the political background of the issue. The next speaker was Zuzana Fialová who works for humanitarian association (People in Peril, Slovakia) and also the project manager of humanitarian and development projects. They shared their own experience from the Ukraine. Both lecturers provoked a long discussion on the topic.

On Thursday May 14th four sessions were arranged. Dónal O'Mathúna introduced the first session and two speakers. Ayesha Ahmad from the University College London, United Kingdom talked about *The Morality of Disasters* and, specifically, about time and space in the lived experience of a disastrous event. The second speaker Ignaas Devisch from University of Ghent, Belgium presented a paper called *Victims of disasters: how to understand and approach their suffering?* In his paper he studied moral perspective aiming at the importance of victims' narrative and their lived experience. Relating to that, he used Paul Ricoeur's reflections which devises that suffering should be studied qualitatively in interpersonal and narrative contexts. Papers continued with questions and discussions.

The second session was oriented on the ethics of social consequences. Vasil Gluchman (Institute of Ethics and Bioethics, University of Prešov, Slovakia) lectured on *Disaster issues in Non-Utilitarian Consequentialism (Ethics of social consequences)*. Ethics of social consequences was proposed as one of the methodological approaches to disaster issues. Gluchman explained the role and purpose of values within its structure

which is given by their ability to contribute to reach and realize moral good. In disaster bioethics it can often be necessary to search for a way to minimize negative social consequences. Ján Kalajtšidis (Institute of Ethics and Bioethics, University of Prešov, Slovakia) talked about the *Ethics of social consequences and decision making during disasters*. The main aim of his presentation was to reflect on the difference between decision making based on intuition and on reason. This performance included interactivity with listeners. Lectures asked some questions which helped to explain examples of decision making process. The session provoked a longer discussion.

The third session comprised three papers. Dónal O'Mathúna spoke on *Ideal and Non-ideal moral theory for disasters bioethics*. He emphasized that in certain situations no choice is ideal; all options have a bad side. The goal of this contribution was to examine the benefits of using non-ideal moral theory for moral dilemmas in disasters. The next speaker was Vilius Dranseika who works at the Department of Logic and History of Philosophy, University of Vilnius, Lithuania. He contributed to the topic called *Natural Evil, Human Evil, and Moral Responsibility for Outcomes of Natural Disasters*. The last lecturer from this session was Péter Kakuk (University of Debrecen, Hungary) who introduced the topic named *Beautiful theories and ugly compromises? On the ethics of decision-making in disaster settings*. Participants had, again, the opportunity to discuss their opinions about the presented issues, because each topic stimulated questions and polemics.

The Fourth session started with a paper presented by Eleni Kalokairinou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece) entitled *Why helping the victims of disasters makes me a better person; towards an anthropological theory of humanitarian action*. In her presentation, she pointed out the duty that prescribes an agent to help victims. The author came to the conclusion that acting according to our duty cultivates the will to gradually acquire the virtuous disposition according to which the respect for the law becomes the only motive of her actions. The next speaker Katarína Komenská (Institute of Ethics and Bioethics, University of Prešov, Slovakia) presented her paper with the topic *Virtue Ethics Applied to Disaster Issues*. In her presentation she highlighted the role of virtuous acts of individual moral agents that are significant and successful in an ethical approach to disaster situations.

The last day of the conference was devoted to three presentations. Viera Bilasová and Alexandra Smatanová (Institute of Ethics and Bioethics, University of Prešov, Slovakia) presented the paper with the title *Methodological Potential of Personalization of Deontological Moral Theory and Disaster Ethics*. In their presentation, they focused on the personalistic approach to a human being, based on principles of integrity, responsibility and solidarity, aiming at the wellbeing of a person: Finally they concluded that it can be an inspirational source for the formation of such a proactive

approach. The next speaker, Wendy Drozenová (Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague), presented her paper on *Moral act sub specie temporis*. In her presentation, the author focuses on the problem of moral acts in relation to the dimension of time. Her essay considers the difference between linear homogeneous time which is measurable and experienced time with its perplexities and crises which are the crucial moments for decisive acts. The last speaker of the workshop was Lukáš Švaňa (Institute of Ethics and Bioethics, University of Prešov, Slovakia) who presented paper on *Charlie Hebdo and the lesser evil theory*. The author presented a perception of the attack on the editors of the French satirical magazine 'Charlie Hebdo' from the perspective of the theory of lesser evil. The author proposes the theory of lesser evil as one possible theoretical background for a reflection on terrorism, its causes, consequences as well as the fight against it. This concrete presentation stirred a heated debate about the topic. After the whirlpool discussion there was a coffee break.

After the break, Vasil Gluchman and Dónal O'Mathúna made a few closing remarks and expressed their gratitude to all participants of the COST workshop. Ideas about future cooperation in this project started during the workshop. The outcomes of the workshop will be published in a special issue of a journal due at the end of 2015.

*Eva Demjanová & Martina Gogová*

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### **Where is Civil Society in Central Europe heading to?**

15–24<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the Faculty of Theology (Catholic University Ružomberok) in Košice hosted participants of the *Summer School of Political Ethics*. The participants were students of doctoral studies in humanities sciences from central European countries – Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine and Russia as well as a PhD. student of the Faculty of Theology, Andrea Križanová, who gave a lecture entitled ‘The personality of a volunteer in missionary work.’

The Summer school with called “*Where is Civil Society in Central Europe heading?*” was organized by the Institute of Applied Ethics of Prof. Alexander Spesz at the Faculty of Theology in Košice together with the Exchange network CEEPUS which provides university teachers, PhD students in Central Europe with the network AT 702 “Ethics and politics in the European context” which is led by Professor Ingeborg Gabriel, head of the Institute of Social Ethics at the Catholic Faculty of Theology (University of Vienna) and includes 16 universities in Central Europe. Students who could not participate through CEEPUS were given a grant from the Association for social ethics in Central Europe and from the Foundation Pro Oriente, both located in Vienna.

Participating students were received by the dean of the faculty, Professor Cyril Hišem and the weeklong program was opened by Associate Professors ThDr. Ing. Inocent-Mária V. Szaniszló, OP, PhD. (Secular state and common good) and the director of the Institute, ThDr. Martin Uhál’, PhD. (Current political and social situation in Slovakia).

The program of the summer school consisted of lectures of one or two pedagogues which were followed by lectures by 15 doctoral students with rich discussions. Namely, there were students from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Beograd Milan Radovanović (a lecture about the Jewish exodus from Yugoslavia to Israel from 1949) and Nikola Milikič (Pictures of Yugoslavia in historical texts of former Yugoslav Republics), students from the University of cardinal Stephan Wysinski in Warsaw – Alina Gut (The role of civil society in the development of regional government in Poland), Robert Mieczkowski (Importance of remembrance in forming foreign policy in Central and Eastern Europe), Adam Raszewski (Political philosophy of the Baron de Chambord as an example of the doctrine of monarchical legitimism), a student from the Faculty of political sciences at the University of Bucharest, Roxana Marin (The superiority of political elites in the normative and descriptive approach), Iuliu-Marius Morariu from the Orthodox Faculty at Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (Future of Romanian society among Communist reminiscences and their democratic incapability), Péter Jenei from the University of Reformist theology in Debrecen (What does it mean to be an emigrant in the biblical era?), Edwin Bonislowski (Social human rights after the fall of the

communist system in Poland) and Lyudmyla Ivanyuk from the University of Vienna (Church and human rights in the process of democratization in Ukraine), Petro Darmoris from the Catholic University of Lvov (Religious pluralism in the of the community of freedom according to D. Hollenbach), Erwin Tereščenko from the Institute of St. Cyril and Methodius in the Moscow patriarchate of postgraduate studies (Society, state and the Church in post-communist Russia), Karolína Šípková from Charles University in Prague (Personal autonomy during illness and narrative approach in bioethics), Justyna Suchý from the University of Opole (A workoholic in the family – the pros and cons). In the middle of the week, presentations were enriched with lectures by other professionals such as Professor Matthias Voght from the University of Zittau-Goerlitz (Art and culture in civil society), Dr. Marijana Kompes from the University of Vienna (Conceptual history and ethical relevancy of civil society), Professor Ingeborg Gabriel (Religion in the public sphere), Dr. Adriana Jesenková from the Faculty of Arts UPJŠ Košice (Concept of the public), Professor Radu Preda – director of the Institute for study of the totalitarian era and Romanian exile at the Government Office of the Romanian Republic and Professor of social ethics at the University of Cluj-Napoca (Civil society and dealing with the past) and Professor Piotr Sula, Deputy Director of the Institute of political sciences at the University of Wrocław ((Un)Civil society in Poland). They discussed not only future politics in present day Europe but also about the role of the Church within civil society.

To conclude, we can say, that the students of postgraduate studies showed exceptional erudition in their topics of their dissertation works and the professors, themselves, took pleasure from cooperating with young, future experts. The highlight of the summer school was a panel discussion with the Vice-President of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, a Member of Parliament from the Christian-democratic movement (KDH) and former MEP Ján Figel' together with the mayor of the city district, Rudolf Bauer. Both of them discussed civil involvement in the public sphere. The discussion was embellished by an artistic performance of the Christian rock music band "Slnovrat" from Bardejov and finished with a gala dinner at the Theological faculty.

The socio-cultural activities of the summer school included a visit to the Technical museum, the Archbishop's palace, St. Elisabeth Cathedral, the Chapel of St. Michal and the opera "La Traviata" at the State Theatre, Košice, as well as visit to the Catholic church in the Roma settlement of Jarovnice and, later, an excursion to the sacred space of the old monastery "Červený Kláštor" and rafting on the Dunajec river. The trip concluded in the Orthodox church in Prešov which was highly appreciated by the one third of students who were of Orthodox faith.

It seems, that the first Summer School of the Institute was a very useful and enriching for foreign as well as domestic students who welcomed

critical discussion about individual methods of research used in dissertation theses owing to which they were able to make a new step ahead. During the Summer school a fruitful community of academics came together who reciprocally exchanged scientific knowledge and theories with practical experience. The participants expressed satisfaction and pleasure with the fact that they could share their study direction in unifying fields. The result of this is the establishment of an internet group where discussions continue.

Košice, which was the European city of culture in 2013, and (this was also the reason why the Summer School was organized here) left deep impression in the hearts of both students and pedagogues. Their enthusiasm was the best reward for the organizers.

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