

## Freedom Of Conscience And Religion in Schools PL

<b>BOOKS'</b> <b>Krzysztof</b> <b>MANUALS</b> <b>DURING</b> <b>FOR A</b> <b>FOR A</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b> <b>A</b>	<b>TO</b> <b>TUTORIAL</b> <b>"PREPARATION</b> <b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>BE</b> <b>FOR</b> <b>"CIVIC</b>	<b>REVIEW</b> <b>Kiciński</b> <b>USED:</b> <b>CLASSES</b> <b>LIFE"</b> <b>EDUCATION"</b>
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### General remarks

The review is divided into three parts. In each one we tried, first of all, to cover all the issues related to freedom of conscience and religion in public schools that use the reviewed materials as manuals or auxiliary materials recommended by school authorities. In this context we analyze ideological contents present in these materials, how the contents are presented and what are possible dangers. We mean indoctrination-type threats, but not only — the problem is covered in a broader way: a low scientific level of the material, primitivism, awkward presentation of the ideas or important values can also be harmful.

### Materials to be used during tutorial classes

A book by Wanda Elżbieta Papis „Growing up in wisdom" (Wzrastam w mądrości) (Trawers, 1993) is a quite distinguished item in this category. In her work the author tries to shape elementary cognitive structures of a child and its system of values into such direction to build a base for perception of the outside world in the categories characteristic for religious views, namely for Catholic views.

In the first chapter covering a basic ontology, a child learns that „everything that exists can be visible or invisible. Although we cannot see the air, we know it exists because we breathe it... In the world there is an enormous number of beings. They are not made-beliefs, they are REAL (page 14)". So far, nothing is said about God — it will happen later — but a child has to realize that one must not question the existence of beings that are difficult to perceive directly (the assumption, as such, is quite right), but their consequences can be felt. Such beings have to be separated from "make-beliefs". Similar aims are set up for the training to teach the children how to use certain terms. The example used is not a coincidence — a child has to point to wrong expressions in the following sentences: a gardener made a rose that will blossom in spring, a farmer makes hens and ducks. Then there is a rethorical question: "Is it possible to make something that is alive of something which is not alive? (Is it possible to make an alive kitten of paper or another material?) (page 16). Much later we come across an idea that a life is a God's gift and cannot be treated as something attributed to a man. The thought will fit to the already planted ideas.

In the second chapter, covering language and symbols, the sequence of thoughts is aimed at the proof that there is a close relationship between invention of writing and skills in using symbols by a man and „sacrum". "Expeditions and findings in ancient graves proved that ancient nations, like Egyptians, Etruscans etc. in their writing symbols saw not only something useful, but also — something sacred. (...) Egyptians used to say that writing is a cane with which god marks its signs. (page 21)"

In this reasoning even the word „god" spelled with small letter is not incidental — this a training to make a difference between the real God, and unreal gods, the faith in which is a testimony that from the very beginning people, almost blind-folded have been looking for the real God. An interesting introduction of a child into the world of vowels and consonants makes the child to realize that: "Consonants defined what is material, while vowels — what is spiritual. Thus, the alphabet was a symbol of god's intervention in visible world, a picture of unity between this what's divine, with those what's earthy — the unity between spirit and matter (page 220)".

An interesting sentence starts the chapter „How do we learn the world" and sounds as follows: „If a human being comes to this world — the world becomes a gift to him. The man, to be able to accept this gift, has to learn it and to understand it (page 41)". The sentence has two messages: the first one, on the surface, the second one, more hidden, spelled out in an indirect way. The first one announces a need to learn and to understand the world; the second one suggests that the world is not built for a certain purpose, but it is to serve a man, and that there is a force setting up the relations between these two beings. Only after such a vision is

drawn, the author starts to talk about more detailed questions, like how to come to know the world with individual senses. At the same time she refers to the thought expressed at the beginning of the first chapter, that the air, although is invisible, is real, because its existence can be felt by sensing the wind. It turns out that this time she is talking about more general issue, presented in a bolded and framed thesis: "What really exists, but is invisible, can be recognized by the results of its activity".

The purpose of subsequent chapters is to show a child that all occurrences have their reasons. The given examples show that the reasons have also their reasons. The conclusion a child is to make is as follows: „Individual reasons — elements of the chain -are a transformer of the being. (...) Going back with his thoughts to the very beginning, Aristotle, an ancient philosopher, found the Primary Reason, that gives strength and power to all other reasons. This is a reason of all reasons, meaning THE FIRST REASON". Then, in the next chapter, by an interesting story about a plant that used to live and later on died, a child learns that "A man and real things take part in the existence in the world for some defined period. It means they received their existence". Soon a question is asked: „And now, after you go home, start to think from whom they got their lives?" Another story suggests that children alone will have difficulties in answering the question, but fortunately a grandpa helps them with his story. The conclusion of the story is that we own our lives „A Giver of Being", who did not have a reason for he has existed forever and although it is very difficult to imagine Him, he is much more real than other things surrounding children. The word „God" is still not used. The strategy is that children should make the conclusion „on their own". The strategy is present everywhere in the book — its purpose is to lead children's mind into a right direction, i.e. it sets the grounds for such views where the main role is played by faith. A simple man could have an impression that the author teaches children an independent thinking and independent decision making, while children have no more independence than a programmer gives to a computer.

The question: „are ideological contents present in W.E. Papis' manual?" is a rethorical question and one would like to answer: only ideological. The question are these contents hidden is more difficult. It is quite obvious that the author does not hide her outlook on life. The problem is that in the majority of her considerations the contents are a sort of hidden variable: a child, „on his/her own" is to make an appropriate conclusion. Religious assumptions and dogmas are not revealed truths here; they are the conclusion everybody who thinks right and is not immoral should make. It is such an approach that awakes the most serious objections — although quite natural from the author's point of view — because the review of the book presented as a manual written from certain ideological position, could be even positive. However, I am afraid that it would be against certain assumptions the author favours. They stress that religion expresses objective truths and defends universal values, and that related outlook on life is not a perception of reality from certain position, but the perception just right.

The dangers related to such approach can be clearly seen in the values-related chapters. A catalogue of the values is presented as a set of „all-human, basic" values. Then a question is asked: how Christian values can be distinguished from these values? Next we have an answer that „the main Christian value is to love your enemies". The conclusion: Christian values are equal to all-human values, and love to enemies is the only difference, being differentia specifica of the defined subject. Such an approach of the author can be misleading when we analyze the description of some „all-human" values, presented in the manual. „Dignity" plays especially important role here. It turns out that a man's similarity to God is a source of his dignity. But it is not clearly theological assumption that might be worrying, but specification of its nature in the subsequent parts of the manual. It turns out in the dialogue children have with a priest during religion class, that dignity is closely related to faith. To the child's question: „Does somebody who doesn't believe God has dignity or not?" a following answer is given:

"The priest reached his pocket and took out a large, metal disc. Look at this medal, he said. Does it look the same on both sides? But is this the same medal although it looks different on both sides?"

We have similar situation with dignity — it results from creation and love by God and is independent from a man and his actions. It is irrevocable. God loves us irrespectively to what happens to us. His love to us cannot change. And a man cannot stop being a man, doesn't matter what he would do. God's picture in dignity is invariable and irrevocable. And on the other side — dignity is related to a man's actions, to his conscious and free choices. If

somebody consciously chooses evil, he commits a sin — darkens and damages God's picture in himself. In such cases we say he loses his dignity".

The conclusion is — although is not said directly — that a non-believer chooses evil, so commits a sin. At the same time he loses this dignity's dimension that is related to his actions and free choices. He only keeps another dimension, being a correlate of its being. The fact that the manual stresses it discusses only all-human truths and values, while it propagates only one ideology, can entitle another danger than missing the truth, like in the above example.

In the case when a child is not sure about something introduced as an universal value, and what in reality has been defined in the categories of a certain ideological option, he or she can easily transfer the doubts to the value itself. In different words: if the persuasion is done in the categories of only one cognitive paradigm, there is a risk of failed socialization in cases when the paradigm itself rises doubts or if a certain person is not convinced by arguments in a certain case. Something like this can happen in case of a respect to human life for instance, if it is defined according to the Catholic Church doctrine (i.e. from the conception), at the same time treating the definition as not related to any ideology, but being an expression of objective truth. A situation when some important values are interpreted — in an open or covered way — always as elements of a certain system, that gives them a meaning, without which they are suspended in axiological or even ontological vacuum, might be a threat to effective socialization. One has to admit that, in many cases, such an approach can increase their attractiveness, persuasive power; but in case of somebody who is not convinced by the system — the results will be opposite: the chance for socialization will be weakened.

It seems that indoctrination threats resulting from such manuals like Ms. W.E. Papis' book are not related to truths, values and ideas they propagate, because they, as such, do not rise doubt — and the way of their presentations reveals narrative gift of the author. The problem is somewhere else. The book does not create any ground for discussion with representatives of other ideologies or does not give them a chance to support these values which are really universal. Of course, the disputes between liberalism and Catholicism are natural, but when socialization is at stake, they could be limited to minimum and only the main differences could be shown. Even in case of the mentioned doctrines it is possible to cooperate in propagation of a number of values, like honesty, truth, respect for individual efforts, free will, etc. Instead the manual is full of „fight for souls" spirit and reflection on values has been monopolized. The language used in the book serves the same purpose: its aim is to make the difference between „ours" and „theirs" (see: pagans). Some expressions are treated as obligatory for the members of the group: „Mary", „gift of life", „human person" (even there where a term „human being" would be more appropriate), as well as other favourite expressions, like „to enrich internally".

Because of the listed faults — even in case of other sources a teacher can use, which a main way to fight against indoctrination (and this condition is not fulfilled, for there is a lack of other manuals, representing other options) — we face a serious danger that a basic socialization carried out by school will be a failure.

### **Materials for a subject „preparation to family life"**

Because a book by Zbigniew Lew-Starowicz and Kazimierz Szczerba „Modern sexual education" („Współczesne wychowanie seksualne") (BGW, 1995) has not been included by the Education Ministry, to a category of manuals, but to a category of „other auxiliary books" — we will start with analysis of manuals of a completely different nature. These are: a book „Going to maturity" („Wedruj1c ku doros3ooci") (AND, 1993), edit. Teresa Król and a book by Marina Omach, „In search of true love" („W poszukiwaniu prawdziwej miłości") (AWK-MAG, 1994). One has an impression that both manuals are a consistent continuation of ideological propaganda set up by manuals implementing the program „Life and Love" („Życie i miłość"), like already reviewed manual „Growing up in wisdom".

„Going to maturity" is a manual for the pupils of last grades of primary schools. The authors focus on propagating such a family model that complies, in every detail, with interpretations that dominate in the Catholic Church doctrine. One has to admit that a number of this model characteristics can find its counterparts in relatively universal values of European culture — like love, responsibility for children, parents, spouses, integration of family etc. The book, while presenting these values, rather changes the accents that locks itself into the categories characteristic for the Catholic Church only. A tendency to stress the specifics of

male and female roles and relating the differences to differences in dispositions — mainly psychological — of both sexes representatives, with their different feelings, strongly stressed dissimilarity, can be an example. Some of these theses and arguments seem to be farfetched, but I do not see too serious indoctrination threats, mainly because they make a counterbalance for sex unification tendencies, present in the modern culture.

But on the edge of manipulation and indoctrination is an attempt to prove that a family is, in a natural and universal way, a phenomenon extending beyond laic categories. Had the thesis been related only to the Catholic Church position — we would not talk about manipulation. But the books tries to prove that non only in case of every religion, but in every culture, a family has been perceived in sacred categories, and has always belonged to divine world. A lot of space is allocated to this issue and the selected material and its farfetched interpretation try, by all means, to prove the given thesis. In this sense we face clear indoctrination and manipulation. The diagnosis is supported by presentation of laic family model. According to the description: „A marriage based on this model depends only on the state law. The basis for the marriage is a declaration made by both partners who wish to become husband and wife. The declaration is made in a front of a state official. This is commonly called a civic wedding. It is accompanied by "Mendhelsson March", a glass of champagne and nicely dressed guests (page 180)". Then the reader learns that such marriages are also bases on such values, like love, faithfulness, fertility and durability, but if they fail there are no obstacles to family's disintegration and related tragedies. Criticism of laic family model is quite moderate, but objectivity would demand — even from somebody who does not approve — to show not so rare positive examples of marriages and families started without Church's participation. And why this hidden sarcasm in the apparent objective description: for instance, why the description says about „nicely dressed guests" instead of solemn climate?

It is obvious that the ideological option, represented by the authors, to the highest degree reveals in their approach to abortion and contraception. And again, the way of presentation and a possibility to use, by a teacher, other materials representing other views, decide to what extent we face indoctrination and manipulation. We are afraid, however, that the teachers treat the books not only as manuals representing only one of possible views and that the teachers do not use other manuals. The way of the book by Lew-Starowicz and Szczerba has been treated seems to prove this statement.

In case of abortion the focus is given to a human person definition, whose existence starts at conception. There is no information about more complex approach to this issue in the Christian doctrine of past centuries. Information about consequences of an abortion is presented in one-side way and very selective. The book, in a very intensive way, influences emotions of a reader and his/her associations. Arguments of the other options are never quoted in a correct way, and if they are mentioned at all, it is done just to disrepute them. Contraception and family planning are also shown in an ideological way, according to the Catholic doctrine, but two facts have to be mentioned. First, the manuals discuss some basic contraception techniques and provide a number of information. Secondly, also in this case the information is selective and farfetched, although not is such a drastic way like in case of abortion. However, manipulation is so obvious that its intellectual deprivation of a student can become its side-effect. This is a training in thinking that lacks criticism, characterized by a tendency to jump to conclusions without deeper analysis of facts-assumptions.

What a mess a student can have, we can see by analysing the following fragment: "Each measure that damages reproductive functions [this is how the author describes contraceptives — K.K.] has side effect on other organs, which are the stronger the higher contraceptive effectiveness is. Just like with medicines in general: there is no totally harmless medicines (page 138)". Two sentences and two untruths, because in case of contraceptives there is no such a simple relation. As well, it is not true that the more effective a medicine is, the stronger its side-effects are.

A manual „In search of true love" represents a similar way of approach to the issues, as the above mentioned book. However, in some part it is even more biased by ideological option of its author. It is expressed in the language, terms, expressions and, in general, in some poetry that cannot be described in the review without long quotations. A question rises I am not able to answer univocally: does this poetry entail a main danger? I mean the danger of not acceptance the contents by those who can not accept the form and level of exaltation, typical for large parts of the text. Individual expressions, like „womanhood is both a gift and a task" or „even a house full of people can seem empty. This is what happen when there is no love in

it!" can make the text even more colourful, but if a larger part of the book is written in such a language, there is a danger that the language is not an effective tool to recommend the values, also those that should be promoted.

The tendency to stress differences between women and men is also exaggerated. Extensive characteristics of representatives of both sexes have nothing to do with professional knowledge and are full of stereotypes. The book is saturated with sentences like: „a man all the time has to prove something to himself and to the others", „female sensitivity and intuition always lead her to another person", additionally a woman: „makes other people more sensitive to beauty of the world", thanks to her features „has enormous influence on people who surround her", „every woman gets a certain role to play, a certain task" etc. Without even analysing the contents in a category of truth or values, we can suspect that the form, the language and poetry can create a barrier for young people who will not be able to accept the whole message, together with everything that could be valuable. It might happen especially when a young person will not be willing any more to accept some religiously principal statements that clearly differ from opinions and practices quite common in today's world, for instance: "I stress once again that only a marriage gives two young people a right to start sexual life (page 73)".

Some examples of manipulation with the arguments and such a selection of facts that are to serve justification of a given assumption can also be found in the manual, like theses that prenatal examinations create much more threats than benefits. Such practices are not only misleading for the reader, but, as already mentioned, there are destructive for the whole culture of independent thinking school should develop.

Finally, the characteristics of the manual I have already analyzed while discussing „Growing up to wisdom" book should be mentioned. I mean the polemic attitude towards any attempts to discuss the given problems on the ground other than the manual itself; towards other views. In summarizing abortion, the author states: „Discussion that accompanies the law on legal protection on unborn child led to understanding that abortion is not stopping some processes in woman's body that lead to creation of a child, but that it is killing of the unborn child. Killing unborn children is a shame for humanity of the end of 20th century" (page 108). Such a language can not be accepted even in serious critics, not mention a school manual.

### **Manuals to be used during civic education classes**

The analysis of manuals for „Civic education" carried out from a point of view of presence of ideological contents transferred in a way that rises serious suspicion of indoctrination, leads us to a surprising conclusion, that it is not easy to find anything to support such statement. The remark relates to the whole set of analyzed books, irrespective of a school type or class they are designed for. It seems that in spite of the fears that accompany ideological struggle in Poland, the fight for young peoples' souls has not been transferred to civic education area.

Maybe it happens because none of the existing Polish political forces questions the basic assumption of democratic state. Of course, this fact does not have to be decisive, for there are serious differences in favouring some features — and not of the least importance — of the democratic state, for instance the differences between social democrats and liberals. It turns out, however, that they do not influence the contents of manuals developed by different authors who probably differ in their political views. In the review we would rather focus on some contents that are not present in the manuals. It seems that three main zones can be mentioned:

Civic education that happens in our schools — and not only schools — is going on in the country freeing itself from a political form which was contradictory to political and economic model the education is supposed to prepare people for. In this situation, to understand reality one aims at is not possible without understanding the reality one wants to break with. Here, some analogy can be found with therapeutical treatment carried out like psychoanalytical therapy, where a patient is understanding of mechanisms and reasons of his/her illness is a condition for full recovery. In my opinion, the authors do not „teach democracy" by sufficient analysing some aspects of non democratic reality. Of course, the issue is closely related to settling out all accounts with communist past, from the moral and intellectual point of view.

The main feature of the programs and manuals for civic education is, in my opinion, that not enough much focus is given, using the examples of model countries for „real democracy", on negative phenomena and problems that democracy failed to solve or will never be able to

solve. A sentence attributed to Churchill, that democracy has a lot of faults but it is impossible to find something better, is repeated quite often, but then everybody dismisses the first part of the sentence too easily. In result, a person we want to convince to democracy by idealizing it can easily lose his/her sympathy after realizing how far is the ideal model from the reality. Such an apotheosis of democracy, without mentioning difficulties and pathologies accompanying real democracies, should be criticized not only because of the element of indoctrination, but because of lowering impact of the civic education effectiveness.

The third area is related to the issues discussed above. In this case I mean the fact the problems of transitional period in Poland do not have enough coverage in the manuals. In the analyzed materials the focus is given to formal and legal dimensions of democratic system, which already exists in Poland. But civic education in the state and in the society undergoing transformation should strongly stress transitional period specifics and analyze threats on different steps on the way to democracy. Such an analysis should include description of such countries which, from a formal point of view, have joined the democratic family and which formally apply democratic principles, but which, in fact, are far from being democratic states. Unfortunately, only some manuals and only casually (for instance a book by Maria Gentler „Wiedza o społeczeństwie” [Education on society], WSiP, 1995) mention „facade democratisation” and signalises threats related to deformations of such systems.

### **Teresa Hołowska**

#### **Manuals recommended by the Education Ministry as „auxiliary materials” for philosophy, ethics and tutorials**

Three of them: „Filozofia. Przewodnik dla początkujących” (Philosophy. Guideline for beginners) by J. Teichman and K. Evans (PWN 1955), „Spotkania z filozofią” (Meetings with philosophy) by A. Sikora (WSiP 1995) and „Przyjaciel mądrości” (Wisdom friend) by T. Płużański (WSiP 1993) meet the criteria set up both for introduction to philosophy (they objectively and promptly present type of problems discussed by this subject, revealing benefits and faults of individual concepts), and for good school manuals (they approach difficult problems in easy, clear and interesting way). One should only be surprised that having the listed manuals the Education Ministry has not decided to recommend any of them as a minimum and has qualified them into a group of „auxiliary materials”, thus creating a situation that some school subjects exist without manuals.

There is a similar situation with a book „Etyka. Świat wartości moralnych” [Ethics. The world of moral values] by J. Jarco, Z. Kalita and M. Sempa (PWN 1994). This is a collection of texts by classical and contemporary authors, divided into certain groups of problems, each preceded by a short introduction and ended with a set of questions to be discussed. The collection quite faithfully realizes some specific features of „the world” in its title, in which: a) versatile concepts appear — sometimes competitive ones and even not measurable: concepts of „good”, „virtue”, „happiness”, „justice” etc., b) quite often there are collisions and conflicts of equal values; c) they create dilemmas difficult to solve; d) there are no „ready to make” recipes, and at the same time it is necessary to make choices; e) traditional codes do not follow the pace of civilization development, and at the same time are engaged into a complicated fabric of customs, social expectations, cultural patterns, professional obligations etc.

The book does not suggest any options, but encourages the reader to make comparisons, to think and to be inquisitive. It does not hide controversies, on the contrary — shows them without limitations. It does not suggest the answers, but rather multiplies questions to encourage young readers to „shape their own moral judgements”. It is difficult to understand why the item that tries to teach students critical and independent thinking (being something very rare among „production” for schools) was not recognized by the Education Ministry and sent to the „auxiliary materials” category. Inevitable hypothesis is the Education Ministry simply does not understand what philosophy and ethics are about and can not accept as a school manual a book where no ready answers are given, where is no ideology and which avoids to take sides on disputable questions. The other works could be divided into three groups:

- a) useful auxiliary materials, which can not be used as manuals,
- b) materials to be used to limited degree,
- c) materials that can be used only during Catholic religion classes or during tutorials in a religious school.

The first group included a book „Etyka. Poradnik dla nauczyciela szkoły podstawowej” [Ethics. Guideline for primary school teacher] by J. Stanisławek (WSiP 1993) and „Etyka. Główne systemy. Podręcznik dla uczniów szkół średnich” [Ethics. Main systems. A manual for secondary school students] by U. Schrade (1992).

„The guideline” has the same spirit as „The world of moral values”: it reveals ethical problems by questions rather than by answers and encourages to think rather than to jump into doctrinal conclusions („Why some people are better off than others?”. „What's the difference between a human being and an animal?”, „Troublesome consequences of incidental occurrences”, „God — mystery and hope”, „To whom should we be grateful?”, „Why are we selfish?”). The author recommends the teachers to take a position that would be characterized by: a) sensibility and sobriety (We are helpless in face of coincidence. A coincidence can ruin all our plans. Under such a situation, do any decisions make sense? Yes — because there is nothing else we can do. A man in his life is like a soldier during the war, page 39. ... The point is to make them [pupils] realize that 1) a human being is nothing important for the nature, although he is something exceptional, 2) that he can rely on himself only. He has to take care of his existence and to plan his life on his own, page 25; While discussing reform ideas, we always ask who is going to implement them and on whose costs. In other words, we ask who is going to sacrifice to make everybody else to be better, page 49); b) „psychotherapeutical approach” — to make the pupils familiar with the idea that intellectual and moral dilemmas are a part of our being; c) to take into account a growing child's mind (... in this age an issue of truth means whom should I trust, page 48; ... especially a child needs justice. Injustice paralyses its efforts, page 43; Like every weak creature, a child experiences evil in a very painful way. The fact that people are not against evil seems to be an absurd, page 42); d) to treat the findings of natural and social science as „hard data” the ethical systems have to take into account (Intolerance has three reasons. First, because of biological aversion to strangers... Secondly, because of economic reasons. The stranger is usually a competitor. Thirdly, because of deep need to be better than the others, page 56; Under individual competition an egoist and his offspring have more chances to survive. Hereditary mechanism strengthens inclinations to selfishness, page 60); e) propagation of pro-social values (humanity owns it (persistency) everything it achieved.. An animal is not persistent. Acts due to impulses... A man has to be persistent. Each his creation needs time and work, page 67; Our choice [to be guided by ideals] has at least this benefit, that because of it the world is more beautiful, page 34); f) distance towards religious visions of the world (Religion rejects this thesis [random justice]. In its approach, a) people are guilty of most of ill fortune, b) ill fortune allows people to fight sin, c) God has a right to distinguish whoever he wishes to and besides, d) after death everybody will get a fair judgment, page 44; instead of scholastical discussion on God's existence or non existence, it is much better to make a decision about potential usefulness or harm of his existence for people's life, page 26; ... even believers are not free from the necessity to make choices. Not only they have to decide whether the commandments (and in which version) are an true word of God, but under which situation they have to make a moral decision, page 58; .. we suggest to treat the issue (mortal or immortal nature of spirit) as an intellectual news: as a dispute of two positions, none of which can be finally proved, page 16). In the distance one can notice some contempt or nonchalance. But usually the manual is a result of rational suspension of judgments and does not turn out to be an open criticism or mischievousness.

The faults of the book are chaos and superficial approach to the problems — in result, very often the problems become trivial and end up as practical issues. Because of it, the „Guideline” can not meet a very important requirement for ethics manuals: to make the readers sensitive to moral problems.

Into the group of books for limited usage I would include „Pogadanki z etyki” [Talks about ethics], by A. Szostak (Biblioteka Niedzieli, 1993) and „Pomóż młodzieży znaleźć wartości-drogowskazy” [Help young people to find values-directions” by B. Hiszpańska (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, 1994). Both books don't meet — each of them in its own way — the aims set up for ethics classes.

The book by Szostak is a collection of essays, with exposition of Christian personalism as the only system: a) satisfactory from the intellectual point of view, b) that recognizes „true”

nature of a human being, c) respects „true" well-being of others, d) is based on undisputable values, because written by God into creation.

As one can guess, the exposition is based on a number of assumptions, where part of them is of religious character (existence of Creator, Revelation, Catholic Church authority as a final instance interpreting Revelation; supernatural virtues), part of ideological statements, i.e. the statements that can not be decided by inter-subjective procedures (identity of good and evil, hierarchy of beings, „everything that exists is good", page 95; distinction between natural law and made law; the conscience cannot be reduced to internalized orders and prohibitions).

Thus, the book is addressed to Catholic youth at the first place or at least to believers (and the author does not hide it, by writing: and to what we refer, while discussing moral issues with non-believers?, page 33), but not convincing (sometimes even irritating) for those who can't accept its assumptions. Under the situation when no manual has been pointed out, a part of teachers can limit the course of ethics to the content of „Talks", thus suggesting their students, that: moral achievements of human kind are closely related to Christianity, especially to Catholicism. It is not possible to create a credible ethical system based on values other than religious ones non-believers, agnostics and people of other religion are steeped in some crucial intellectual mistake or have some psychical fault that makes them blind to true values.

Such an indictment would be a classical case of indoctrination. Of course, it does not minimize the value of the book which can be used while discussing tomism as one of ethical concepts, being at the same time an official position of the Catholic Church. Unlike Szostak's book that discusses authentic philosophical and moral problems (although in a way that in advance decides about their results), the teachers' guideline „Help young people to find.." by B. Hiszpanska mainly contains: definitions taken straight from scientific works (not the best ones), schemes and general statements not subordinated to any leading idea and orders that can not be translated into the language of common, daily practices. One can not notice ideological contents in the book mainly because it is fully washed out any elements that can be named as „concepts", „problems", „views". However, it contains some good ideas how to build up good relationship with a class, how to activate students, how to engage them into discussion. Such techniques can be useful during ethics or philosophy classes. Other

books: „Dzieci i ryby głosu nie mają" [Children can be seen, but not heard], (volume 1 and 2, Pallotinum 1991) is a useful material to lecture Catholic religion in primary schools. It allows a catechist to see what questions are asked by small people when they face faith, but are afraid to ask („How to love God if he is invisible?", „Are any animals in paradise?", „Are bones everything that remains after somebody is dead?", „What religious pictures are for?", „Can God protect the world from being destructed by bombs and rockets?", „Why a nun can't get married?"). Giving the answers by peers is a good pedagogical trick — it allows to avoid using unclear formulas and convince children that they are not the only ones who have similar questions.

Editor-in-chief of the series, Father J. Tarnowski, openly declares that the aim of both volumes is to transform naive and half-magical religiousness of children into more mature faith of conscientious believers. He lists the attempts how to deal with problems that accompany the first religious doubts, but rather seldom goes beyond a closed circle of traditional Catholic repertoire (e.g. dissatisfaction of a girl that can not agree with scantiness of female social roles and a large number of bans women face is answered with a firm statement of her peers „who know better": A woman is appointed by God to take care of household and to bring up children, page 117).

There is no point why such ideas should be introduced into ethics, philosophy and tutorials. It is also unthinkable to involve children into the disputes being beyond their possibilities to make judgements and presented as „a struggle between God and Evil" and coloured with drastic details. I mean the issue of abortion, where the film „Silent scream" is mentioned, where such categories like „murders", „suffering of an innocent human being", „humanity of cells" are widely used. It can be compared to the situation when somebody wants children to take position in the dispute between vegetarians and those who eat meat, illustrated with pictures showing slaughter of cows, commented with sentences: „eating dead bodies", „rape on helpless creatures", „cruelty", „moral insensitiveness".

„Ethics" by P. Jaroszyński contains — like „Talks" — a systematic lecture on tomistic concept. However, it is written in a way aggressive toward theories, views, doctrines,



institutions and even social phenomena which, according to the author, are not in line with the Catholic Church. He accuses: Western democracy, which „became uprooted... coming closer to its ancestors that conquer Rome" (page 72); working class that although „is able to choose what it wants, but what's the choice, if a man doesn't realize what he is doing" (page 72); fashionable „domination of formal and technical science", which „impoverish people, preparing them to live like robots (page 65); British empiricism, under the influence of which "egoism was decided to be a main driving force of human activity" (page 97); atheism, for it had its own saints, whose „cult was built on lies" and who „walked over dead bodies" to reach its aims (page 116); other cultures „because a man is reduced in them just to be a part and nothing more" (page 11); psychology and sociology, because it „questions human freedom" (page 10).

None of these „moral certificates" is justified even by minimum explanation. It seems that the main aim of the author was to arise among secondary school students a deep hatred to the world, where something like a Global Plot against a Man exists. It seems that classes are not the best place for purely rethorical presentations, questioning the sense of almost everything that constitutes contemporary civilization. And last of the books recommended by the Education Ministry, „Wzrastam w mądrości" („Growing up to wisdom"), together with a guideline for teachers, by W.E. Papis (Trawers, 1993) is a collection of exercises, tests, talks, games and plays with the aim to convince children to the following theses (direct theses are bolded, conclusions below):

- **there are invisible things, although different from those invented by human imagination**
  - that some unknown authority decides what is and what is not fiction (Motherland and Good are not, dwarfs and witches — are)
- **each thing has its reason**
  - that it has to have the reason even when we can not show it
- **that individual reasons are only „transmitters of being" (whatever it is supposed to mean)**
- **that there is a Primary Reason — Donor of Life**
  - that already Aristotle discovered God
- **that parents are only intermediaries, not donors of life**
  - that our birth has much more in common with God than with mother and father
- **that human existence starts at conception, which is the most important moment in one's life**
  - that it is not important what would happen to us later or what would we do
- **that the „life-giving" area (not named) is a holy area**
- **that creation of human being to be God's alike is a source of his dignity**
  - that without this similarity nobody would have dignity
  - that it is not clear what about non-believers' dignity; they only „answer to God's love", so maybe it is when they gain it
- **that if somebody consciously and in a free way chooses evil, loses his dignity**
- **that if somebody chooses evil, not only loses his dignity, but also his internal freedom**
  - that it is not possible to get free of evil
  - that freedom is not the same as what is called „freedom"
- **that body is a visible sign of invisible spirit**
  - that bodily issues are of secondary importance
- **that these parts of the body that serve as life transmitters, are located in a lower part of a torso**
  - that lower part of the torso is holy
- **that in girls' bodies preparations to become a mother occur (not stated when and how), and the preparations are girls' secret**
- **that the girls' body contains some seal related to life giving, which is a some kind of protection and can't be found among animals**

- **that similar seals relate to boys**
- **that both seals disappear when a family is started**
  - that we exist mainly because of having children
  - that the question where children come from is very mysterious
  - that there is something in it that can't be disclosed
  - that it can't be a subject of open conversations or interests
- **that there are irrevocable natural laws, like gravitation, mathematical rules and commandment „thou shall not steal“**
  - that mathematics was not created by people
  - that one who steals violates something that can't be violated

And so on. There is no need to explain that such program can be implemented only during religion classes. I will add that, being a Catholic, I would take my children out of the classes where: a) religion is taught with complicated and unclear terms; b) the exercises in use would be a problem for many professionals (What belongs to reality: a thing or its name? Underline an important feature of a green frog: the fact it is a frog or the fact it is green?), c) instead of giving children true knowledge about reproduction, they are brainwashed.

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