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Title: Po co etyka pedagogom ? - recenzja

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Po co etyka pedagogom?, ed. Wiktor Sawczuk,
378 pp. Toruń:
Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2007

The book *Po co etyka pedagogom?* [What Do Educators Need Ethics for?] has been financed by the Rector of the University of Warmia and Mazury, Poland. It consists of three parts. The first part is dedicated to “pedagogy and ethics in the face of new doubts and new openings” (pp. 21–124). Part two presents the issues of “pedagogy and ethics in the face of various perspectives and multitude of outlooks” (pp. 125–265). The third part concentrates the recipients’ attention to the issues of “pedagogy and ethics in the face of the teaching profession” (pp. 267–370). What is missing in this quite an exhaustive analysis are outlooks and voices from the area of ethics and personalistic pedagogy. The particular elements can be found only in a several dozen presented fragments. The entirety of the lectures concentrates around the truth about “the changeable social reality” in which upbringing practice and theory currently are. Wiktor Sawczuk—the editor of the entire book—depicts it in quite a poetical way: “We live in interesting and at the same time complicated times. In many ways we experience the ‘flowing modernity,’ in which it is difficult to avoid ‘benefits.’ What is to some extent possible is to defend ourselves against them. Everyday life, paradoxically, is soaked in one very stable value—relativism—a relative approach to almost everything what is happening in social life and public debate. This situation triggered a clearly visible lack of durable reference points. No wonder then that the contemporary man might feel lost in the omnipresent tangle of meanings, contradictions, determinations, ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ reason, ‘only right’ outlook or too often binding, only in a short-term, interpretation.” Therefore, the authors of the study have to cope with a fundamental problem: what do the educators need ethics for? So, as a matter of fact, they are looking for an answer to weighty questions: “To what extent

adequately, in such a polyphony, or rather depicting it more bluntly—cacophony, educational entities are to/can function?”

It is not a new issue. From the earliest times it is well-known that, without a durable ethics, without durable ethical values, we cannot talk about sensible upbringing. Especially the high ethical, personal, and professional level in the new style must be presented by all educators/teachers as a social group responsible for their pupils and students. It is clearly visible in the third part of the reviewed study.

The entire book is prepared in the style of pragmatic ethics. It is, however, a peculiar proof of a great demand for ethical issues in pedagogy. It is the fruit of the symposium in Olsztyn. The symposium kindled significant interest; over forty scientists from academic centers in Poland—among others, Cracow, Warsaw, Wrocław, Kielce, Bydgoszcz, Katowice, and Rzeszów—participated in it. The primary aim of the symposium was to undertake an academic discussion on the pedagogical ethics in both a theoretical and a practical dimension. It is a pity that ethics and personalistic pedagogy are rarely represented in this chain of issues. However, its necessity appears almost in every statement of the particular representatives. Almost all authors express the opinion that durable ethics is necessary “in times of a dramatic blurring of moral principles and norms. It is especially important for educators. Ethics is, first and foremost, a science about morality that aims at establishing some common features, peculiar assessments and norms of human behavior, which can be morally good or bad. Ethics evaluates social and psychological sources of creation of moral outlook, its social function and a historical development of moral assessment criteria.” It is enough to add the voices about the concern for the integrity of human person. Since what stems from this anthropological assumption is also the Christian teleology (purposefulness), on which every beautiful ethics and humanistic pedagogy is based. It is indirectly confirmed by the very authors who refer to Leszek Kołakowski’s opinion: “The desire to have a moral code is a component part [...] of tendency towards security, [...] escape from decision; it is a desire to live in a world in which all decision have been already made. In its ideal form such a code is to become a set of abstract decisions, substituting a random decision with a specific one, it is to become a condition sufficient for every solution, it is to automatically locate every situation in the world of values, reduce its elements to points on a homogenous universal scale, annihilate the space of doubts and create conditions of certainty. [...] The code includes all indications, owing to which we undoubtedly know under what conditions in every situation we will be free from the feeling of guilt and makes it possible to achieve this freedom through submission to its rules” (cf. Leszek Kołakowski (ed.), “Etyka bez kodeksu,” in *Kultura i fetysze*, 156–157. Warszawa: PWN, 2000). It is enough to add the Christian ethical and pedagogical proposals concerning conciliation and sacramentality in the church.

The reviewed study shows a “multitude” of depictions, since the multitude and diversity of means of perceiving and describing phenomena in the area of education seems to be an essential condition of an honest and reliable discussion. However, we should not forget that in such a discussion it is not enough to pose ethical and educational questions (*nota bene*—very interesting and inspirational in work), but instead it is crucial to look for deep and sensible answers to such questions.

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