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### **Towards thanatopedagogy<sup>1</sup> – the second step**

In the first article, besides wide and multicontextual defining the term thanatopedagogy, men as the main concept of this subdiscipline of special pedagogy was also characterized<sup>2</sup>. The next step would be presenting the concept of upbringing. It is crucial in order to understand thanatopedagogy in its multidimensional context such as, educational, caring and therapeutic.

Many authors such as, Sośnicki<sup>3</sup>, Muszyński<sup>4</sup>, or others<sup>5</sup>, present different views on the concept of upbringing, though all of the definitions have some elements in common. The first common element is the concept of the men. In the majority of cases the men is differently named like, pupil or subject of upbringing, nevertheless almost all authors and researchers treat him as an unclear subject. Pointing at that issue in the context of pedagogy, especially in the context of thanatopedagogy is very crucial. Problems concerning defining the concept of the men may cause many misunderstandings and therefore ideas concerning upbringing influences may also be misinterpreted<sup>6</sup>. Categorization of the predefinition of the complex notion of the men makes it's individual uniqueness be more visible. Moreover, the predefinition of the men concept shows clearly it's essence and perfection on each developmental level as well as on each somatic and psychic state<sup>7</sup>.

The second common element for the concept of upbringing is purposefulness. Authors stress that undertook upbringing activities always, though in different degrees, are characterized

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<sup>1</sup> Thanatopedagogy - Thanatos (Ancient Greek, *θάνατος* – "[Death](#)"), annotation tran. K. Żółkowska

<sup>2</sup> Binnebesel J. (2000): *Opieka nad dzieckiem z chorobą nowotworową. Aspekt pozamedyczny*, Toruń.

Binnebesel J. (2007): *Ku tanatopedagogice – krok pierwszy* [w] T. Ziółkowska (red.) *Konteksty pedagogiki specjalnej* tom II, Szczecin 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Sośnicki K. (1949); *Pedagogika ogólna*, Toruń.

<sup>4</sup> Muszyński H. (1972): *Idee i cele wychowania*, Warszawa.

<sup>5</sup> Łobocki Ł. (2007): *Teoria wychowania w zarysie*, Kraków Kunowski S. (2004): *Podstawy współczesnej pedagogiki*, Warszawa.

<sup>6</sup> Binnebesel J. (2007): *Ku tanatopedagogice – krok pierwszy* [w] T. Ziółkowska (red.) *Konteksty pedagogiki specjalnej* tom II, Szczecin 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Binnebesel J. (2007): *Ku tanatopedagogice – krok pierwszy* [w] T. Ziółkowska (red.) *Konteksty pedagogiki specjalnej* tom II, Szczecin 2007.

with purposefulness, what emphasizes the issue of upbringing purpose<sup>8</sup>. The majority of upbringing activities are also burdened with general, global and particular upbringing aims<sup>9</sup>. According to Tchorzewski<sup>10</sup>, talking about the upbringing aims goes with thinking of achievements of particular states or conditions. The other author, who pay much attention on special role of upbringing aims in special pedagogy is Grzegorzewska<sup>11</sup>. Lipkowski<sup>12</sup> however, stresses the necessity of creating hierarchical upbringing aims with special consideration of global, unique and common aim for the whole discipline of pedagogy.

Therefore, it seems to be obvious that there is a necessity of precise description of this global and unique goal. It also appears that the essence of that aim is men's dignity. Kampa<sup>13</sup>, in his work emphasizes that his is one's relation to men's dignity, which determines the matter of socio-economic order. Paraphrasing Saint-Exupery<sup>14</sup>, we can assume that men's dignity is the only way we look at the other person. Mazurek<sup>15</sup>, in her work concerning men's dignity as the basic human right emphasizes that there isn't any universal understanding of the concept of men's dignity. She noticed that all different concepts of men's dignity can be divided into four aspects; theological, law, philosophical, and socio-psychological. These aspects can be further grouped into two categories; the first, where the dignity is presented as a acquired value, which is prone to be lost and the second category, where the dignity is innate and can not be lost

The danger of the concept of acquired men's dignity may lead to peculiar reduction of men's subjectivity. Good example can be bioethical deliberations of Engelharda<sup>16</sup>, who thinks that not everyone can be called as a person, because not everyone has a intellect and self-awareness. These creatures are: human fetus, mentally retarded, people with coma or cortex disabilities, disabled and handicapped people and those advanced in age. Author stresses that everyone, who is not able to possess autonomy and moral responsibility, and who is

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<sup>8</sup> Sobczak S. (1999): Realistycznie ujęta filozofia człowieka zasadą wyboru celów wychowania. *Opieka. Wychowanie. Terapia* 1999 nr 2 s. 18-21.

<sup>9</sup> Muszyński H. (1972): *Idee i cele wychowania*, Warszawa.

<sup>10</sup> Tchorzewski A., (1993): *Wychowanie w kontekście teoretycznym*, Bydgoszcz, s. 76.

<sup>11</sup> Grzegorzewska M. (1971): *Wzajemny wpływ pedagogiki specjalnej i ogólnej*, [w] *Nowa Szkoła* 6/1971.

<sup>12</sup> Lipkowski O. (1974): *Problematyka teleologiczna w pedagogice specjalnej*, [w] *Szkoła Specjalna* 29770/1974.

<sup>13</sup> Kampa F. (1995): *Antropologiczne i społeczne podstawy ładu gospodarczego w świetle nauczania Kościoła*, Lublin.

<sup>14</sup> de Saint-Exupery A. (2006): *Twierdza*, Warszawa.

<sup>15</sup> Mazurek F.J. (2001): *Godność osoby ludzkiej podstawą praw człowieka*, Warszawa.

<sup>16</sup> Engelhardt H.T. (1988): *Foundations, persons, and the battle for the millennium*. J. Med. Philos., 1988; Engelhardt H.T. (1996): *The foundations of bioethics*. New York, Oxford.

Engelhardt H.T. (1984): *Viability and the use of the fetus*. [w:] Bondeson W.B., Engelhardt H.T., Spicker S.F., Winship D.H., (red.): *Abortion and the status of the fetus*. Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers.

incompetent to participate in social and moral community, is not a person. For this author even child in his early life period is not a person, because it does not have any personal value, which would be the basis for moral rights. Another researcher Singer<sup>17</sup>. states that *10 days old child is neither rational nor self-aware being. There are many nonhuman beings, which have much more developed perceptiveness, self-awareness, intellect and empathy than one week or one month or even one year old child. Therefore the infant's life has less value than the life of pig, dog or the life of chimpanzee.*

The concept of dignity as an aim of upbringing may have a priori character. Tischner<sup>18</sup>. finds out that the real *source of our ethical experiences is a man*. He emphasizes the matter of inviolability of a priori man's dignity and says that *it is not the case that norms and values are in the first place, but it is about man who is in the second place*. Fromm<sup>19</sup>. however, writes that; *our main moral problem is one's volume towards oneself. It means that we've lost the sense of individual meaningfulness and uniqueness*. Another opinion concerning man's values and dignity states Jaspers<sup>20</sup>. who points out that human being is not a peculiar material, which can be shaped according to some common patterns. Researcher points at the fact of isolating the aim of upbringing. It seems necessary to characterize the man's dignity as the top of hierarchy of upbringing values in clear and objective context, without any ideological-religious background. Only this superior aim could further assess secondary aims within various dimensions, e.g. in religious or patriotic dimension. The superiority could guarantee that religious upbringing would not lead to fanaticism and patriotic upbringing could not cause chauvinism. Paweł II<sup>21</sup>. wrote stunningly in his encyclical „*Redemptor hominis*” that the man is the Church's course. Unamuno<sup>22</sup>. however, wrote that *the man is the aim itself not a mean for achieving aim*

The problem of dignity in upbringing, therapy and care process is always two-directed. The pupils experiencing dignity in the process of upbringing, therapy and care always have to learn how to experience and feel respect for dignity of others; tutor, therapist or carer. Experiencing one's dignity may only occur in respecting and experiencing dignity of others. These words came from Aniela Domino who was a prominent special pedagogue from Torun. She was a student and friend of Janusz Korczak and she was always trying to present

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<sup>17</sup> Singer P. (2003): *Etyka praktyczna*. Warszawa, s. 165.

<sup>18</sup> Tischner J. (2003): *Etyka wartości i nadziei* [w] Jan A. Kłoczowski, J. Tischner, *Wobec wartości*, Warszawa s. 85.

<sup>19</sup> Fromm E. (2005); *Niech się stanie człowiek*, Warszawa, s. 201.

<sup>20</sup> Jaspers K. (1990): *Filozofia egzystencji: wybór pism*, Warszawa.

<sup>21</sup> Jan Paweł II (1979): *Redemptor hominis*, Warszawa.

<sup>22</sup> de Unamuno M. (1984): *O poczuciu tragiczności życia wśród ludzi i wśród narodów*, Warszawa, s. 16.

him in unusual and unknown way. As a very modest person she was able to open new horizons of special and caring pedagogy through her work and shared wisdom. She used to say that: *“I had never doubted in the dignity of my pupils. The only problem was me, the challenge for me was finding my own dignity, because without it respect for others is not possible”*.

The matter of dignity and human's subjectivity are often brought up in philosophical, psychological and pedagogical literature, thus it should become a basis for assuming the dignity as a superior aim. This issue is very important for special pedagogy and tanatopedagogy, where questions concerning invasive therapeutic method are very often asked.

These questions, very often concern dilemma whether the matter of therapy is actually achieving partial and specific aim like, for example, boosting some skills or functions or if the matter of therapy concerns superior rule of dignity. Dramatic form of mentioned issue occurs within the context of therapy and care of the terminally ill people, in the case where there is a suggestion of ceasing persistent treatment and starting care and palliative treatment. *Very important here is also issue concerning invasive treatment methods and diagnostic methods. As a good example can be a despair surgery, which lasted 13 hours. During that surgery a patient had alimentary canal intersected and jointed with skin and intersected urinary canal was made into new bladder out of a piece of intestine. Aorta was jointed with main veins and spine was amputated. Even the skin from stomach was sewed with he skin from one's back. The operation was undertook without any positive prognosis. The patient was exposed to suffering caused by extensive amputations. He survived only 13 days<sup>23</sup>.*

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<sup>23</sup> Binnebesel J. (2000): Opieka nad dzieckiem z chorobą nowotworową. Aspekt pozamedyczny, Toruń, s. 28.

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