

How should we treat the disabled and maladjusted people? – The example of the sexuality of the intellectual disabled person

Special pedagogy studying by each student of the pedagogy seems to be necessary both the scientific and social reasons. Getting to know, the reasons, the symptoms and the results of the disability or maladjustment, let us understand better the conditioning of the improper functioning of the organism and psychosocial adaptation of the human- Z Sękowska explaining at the introduction of her book *Introduction to the special pedagogy* [Z. Sękowska, 2001] According to these principles, the students of the pedagogical subjects learn about the essence of the particular disability or maladjustment. They find out what the process of the treatment, the education, and the training is, they get to know the rules of the rehabilitation of the people who are in need of it-the special approach.

In brief we can characterize the process of the students' education, who within the framework of the special pedagogy or the other more detailed for example surdopedagogy or rehabilitation, broaden their knowledge and abilities to prepare to work as a teacher, a form tutor, an educator or a therapist.

But sometimes, as we could think, studying the social pedagogy-in every sense of the word does not give the students the sufficient and fundamental bases, that enable them to accept a conception of the disabled or maladjusted and on the base of it build the view that let have the definite attitude to it. The lack of this foundation does not allow to take a proper position on significant social and ethical problems such as for example: selecting the embryos in the in vitro method (selecting the embryos due to the health reasons), abortion (letting the woman have an abortion in case of the serious injury of the embryo or terminal life-threatening illness) euthanasia (allowing the disabled person or her/his family to decide about ending her/his life) the death penalty (it is considered in case of people who commit felony) or the other the same important but not so much publicized by mass media as for example the way of treating the sexuality of the intellectual disabled people.

The author of this article in the issue including in the title of the study: *how to treat the disabled and maladjusted people?* do not stake a claim to force his representing below view. He treats it as a proposal, an alternative that accepting would let the definite at-

titude towards these people and take an opinion in the popular social and ethical views. Dedicating it to the pedagogy students and also to the teachers and form tutors, he encourages them to take into consideration, during the special pedagogy lectures and exercises, special philosophical, anthropological and theological approach that allows us to put the disabled, maladjusted person in the wider context of different scientific fields, in the same moment taking into consideration interdisciplinary character of this scientific area.

Disabled, maladjusted person in the philosophical, anthropological and theological context.

The philosophy of the disabled, maladjusted person has wider context in the different fields- both philosophical and not philosophical, supporting it and completing. In this context it tries to explain the disabled, maladjusted person's problems in the profoundest aspects, so it took root in the wider anthropological and ethical subject matter. There is no way to mention the role of the theology, important for this considerations, devoting disabled and maladjusted many grounds and impulses [W. Chudy, 1998, p. 106]

That is why philosophical anthropology that constantly is trying to find the answer to the question: *who is the disabled person?* allowing for the fragments of the knowledge, that gathered individual studies about the human being, it takes care about their common frame. As that, they will not take totally separate character and that will not become useless collections of the elements. This type of the attitude seems to be necessary, especially that growing specialization on many scientific fields, makes more difficult this kind of synthesis[Ibidem, p. 143]

Undoubtedly, it means treating disabled and maladjusted people without targeted fundament of the world view, what is worse for the quantity and diversity of possibility of treating these people, which depends on the actual situational context, social bias, or changeable politics. At the same time, forgetting that the subject of these considerations every time is the human being, whose disability and maladjustment does not have anything to do with the livelihood structure of the human being.

That is why W. Chudy, using the metaphysical establishments, thinks that the general livelihood emits in each kind of livelihood both the integral and supreme elements and also their being elements. The lack of any being element, that consists for example the existence element, the being element, the form and matter element would cause annihilation of the livelihood. The livelihood is not able to exist without the being part. That is why it is not possible to talk about on the realistic ground about the livelihood handicap of the human[Ibidem p. 106].

It follows that there is no difference, taking into consideration appearing the essential elements in the livelihood structure both in the case of the disabled person (the deaf, the blind, the handicapped, moving by the wheelchair, ill etc) or maladjusted (not respecting the moral and social standards) and the "able" and "morally right" person. All these people have the being elements: the being, the existence, the form, the matter so in this aspect we can not indicate the differences between them.

Accepting this truth, let us to ask the question: *How should we treat the disabled, maladjusted people?* So we can give an unambiguous answer, namely: To treat them normally- the same as we treat anybody. It is important and allows us to accept the fundament that indicates the dignity of the human being, as the onthic value of the livelihood that is entitled to all human beings, that has the unchanging character. However, during settling very important social and ethical issue as mentioned above: abortion, euthanasia, in vitro, death penalty or the sexuality of the disabled person, let us take a stand on defending every person without the exception, regardless of his or her development and the condition in which he or she is. As paraphrasing the words of M. Grzegorzewska there is no disabled person, there is no maladjusted person- there is a human being[Z. Sękowska, 2001, p.21].

It does not mean that, there is no difference between the “able” and disabled person. At least paying attention to the attribute of his or her disability such as: a wheelchair, a white walking stick, a deformed appearance etc. It does not mean that there is no difference between the “morally right” person and the one who breaks the law and does not respect its rules. These differences should be seen, at the same time noticing that the disability such as the deaf - hearing loss, the blind- seeing loss, moving by the wheelchair- the lack of free moving, handicapped- the lack of intellect or in case of maladjusted- the lack of “the morality” that is true of all people.

The shortage, as W. Chudy states, is the typical feature of every person (anyway is typical for all beings). It presents the base of variability of being and consequently of death[W. Chudy, 1988, p.107]. All people has some shortage of the sight, the hearing, the physical and intellectual fitness. Even if there are not revealed in this moment, they can reveal within some years or deepen in case of some illnesses or injures. Therefore the difference between the “able” person and disabled person is only quantitative. Similarly, everyone has bigger or smaller moral deficiency. Moral integrity of the man in the street distinct him from the maladjusted person, indicating only the visible quantitative difference. The fact that maybe today it does not indicate the maladjusted features, it does not mean that tomorrow under the influence of some factors or the combination of the circumstances it will not reveal its moral deficiencies.

In the light of these metaphysical establishments, it is seen that, any kind of disability or maladjustment do not reach the essence of human being, so the human dimension that decides about its personal dignity. Therefore, no matter if the person is burden on the hearing. The sight, the moving disability, has a neurosis, is handicapped, is an alcoholic or a drug addict or is a backward person- he does not have the onthic structure of the human spirit breached.

Admittedly, his disability or maladjustment is able to disrupt the intellectual functioning, volitional or moral but it does not reach for the depth of the human being[Ibidem, p. 108]. Disability or maladjustment does not breach his humanity. V. Frankl claims that “*the human is only the human –as a spiritual being- as if he is more significant than his bodily and physical being*”[V. Frankl, 1971, p.46]. Therefore, asking again the question: *how should we treat the disabled or maladjusted person?* So we can answer again: *normally, the same as all people who need the affirmation as the human beings.* Assuming such a conception of the disabled or maladjusted person, let us take a stand

on each of the listed social and ethical issue also the one about the sexuality of the intellectual disabled person. The next point will be the explanation of the thesis above.

The sexuality of the intellectual disabled people

The slogan included in the title of subsection is heated but still the problem is not solved. Many people, who both take care of intellectual disabled people and educate them, encounter this problem every day, they think about: *how should we treat the intellectual disabled people on the field so delicate, intimate and personal?* Unfortunately, the basic knowledge about the sexual development of human being which says that the human being is a sexual person, and realization of the sexual needs is a natural thing does not find its application in practice, particularly if we talk about the care and the education of the intellectual disabled people. Unfortunately, their sexuality is still determined as “unwanted” arousing the controversy, and representing the subject of the dispute. The sexuality of this group is still the unsolved problem. According to the author of this study we can indicate the reasons of a situation like that.

Firstly- the subject matter of the sexuality of human being is still a taboo problem. In our culture such a subject is unwillingly brought up, it is commonly believed that all excessive demonstration of the sexual problematic is the proof of the low social competence or the sexual obsession [W. Fijałkowski, R. Jędrzejewska-Wróbel, 2001, p. 20]. That is why among other things seeing 20, 30 or 50-year old intellectual disabled person who masturbates himself or herself is a matter that should not be noticed and not talked about, or taking any stand. Secondly, 20, 30 or 50-year old intellectual disabled person is treated as a child, wanting subconsciously to stay a child. It is more convenient to think and treat such person as a child, separating his or her sexuality-*asexual angel*-not seeing and underestimating the sexual factor for the important psychophysical development of human being. Thirdly, the sexuality of intellectual disabled people, as a subject of many scientific articles and speeches, it often limited to peeling and presenting “safe” solutions, which do not solve anything. On the one hand, the importance of the sexuality problem of this group is still emphasized, and “*the need of the thinking change*” is said. On the other hand as the solution “*the right to realization of the needs according to the development possibilities*”[A. Wołowicz, 2005, pp. 197-202]. As undoubtedly, it seems to be have, the good intentions of such solutions, present the kind of dichotomy of thinking. Since on the one hand we give the right to realization of the sexual needs by intellectual disabled people. On the other hand make their realization depend on particular factors and circumstances, in this case, on the developmental possibilities “tailored-made”. What is more, the mistake in thinking like that seems to be much more significant. Thinking about if the intellectual disabled people should have the right in the sexual aspect –automatically negating them-as the people-coming down this group only to the role of dispute’s object. The intellectual disabled person is first of all <the person>therefore as everyone has a right connected with this matter. If the “able” person has the right to realize as a sexual being, also intellectual disabled person has the same right, too. The sexuality of the intellectual disabled person is ran the risk of mentally confrontation of the human being ideal with the real view of it so

called the full humanity. Because of this fact, it does not obtain its approval, arousing the inside and not justified objection. Similarly, when the adult and sexually active people do not accept having sex by their parents. The awareness of the physical love between their mother and the father to put it mildly is “distasteful” not saying disgusting. Isn't it similar if we are aware of the possibility of sexual relations by intellectual disabled people? Do not we feel the fear seeing in these people only the heroes similar to the one in the novel *“The mice and the people”* by J. Steinbeck?

The reflection instead of the conclusion

Summing up, we have to claim that the fear and the anxiety of the people who take care and educate this group of the disabled, do not give them a right to pass a condemnatory sentence preaching firmly <no> to their sexuality or saying nothing what is unambiguous of the lack of the acceptance. The thinking about the physical and even mental castration while talking about this group of people is mistaken. Therefore in the first case it would be only the symptomatic therapy that would condemn these people on the existence in the loneliness without the chance to establish close sexual relations, which are important in the human life. We can understand it as the limitation, or interfering in the human being nature (the other thing is the conscious sexual life resignation). In the second case, not seeing the sexual needs or condemnation its manifestation may bear fruit in the opposite results in the excessive or even pathological erotomania of these people, finally led to in the way out-of-control will give vent to their drive. The author of the study thinks that taking the stand in the sexual case of the intellectual disabled people should be based on the personalistic conception of the human that is connected with the given conceptions about the way of treating disabled or maladjusted people. Choosing this stand give us the possibility of accepting the right direction of the action based on the given arrangements. As its commonly known personalistic view off the human forbids us to treat the people equally to the things` world and opposing the violating the rights of the human being on its account. However the value and the humanity of the person are recognized, pointing to the personal “I” in every man[M. Nowak, 2001, pp. 252, 320]. These theses in the case of the intellectual disabled are connected with accepting the optics meaning the total “agreement” on their sexuality. The personalistic conception of the human being, comes down to treat the sexuality of the intellectually disabled person in a natural and accepting way, is the model solution what means that it does not solve the individual problem of this group. We should look at this issue in a general way, not from the perspective of the individual case. He does not, far from it, promote the sexual exaggerating of the disabled people. He emphasizes the humanity, the value of each person-also the intellectual disabled- as the sexual human being. In the practice it would mean accepting the sexual relationship of the intellectual disabled people and also „the approval” for the children being born from such relationships. The author of the study thinks that the intellectual disabled people have the right to the sexual relations to the chosen partner with whom they make a relationship and sexually realize. If only they feel like, they can give birth to their children and educate them. It is not said that intellectual

disabled people are not able to educate and take care of their children. The maternal and paternal instinct does not disappear because of their disability. It is not said that the child coming from such a relationship will be also intellectual disabled. Of course there is such a risk but also high probability of giving birth to the intellectual disabled child. After all, there are a lot of people, not only intellectual disabled, who want to have a baby consciously regardless of the consequences of the possible complications, the illnesses and disability. What happens after all if from such a relationship the intellectual disabled child is born? The answer is simple: nothing happens. The intellectual disabled baby after all, whose parents are also intellectual disabled, is worse than the intellectual disabled baby, whose parents are healthy? Can one baby be worse from another baby? The answer seems to be simple—*no*. Accepting the personalistic conception of the human in practice is connected with “*the help and the support in creating the awareness < being the human being >*” [Ibidem, p. 252]—also the sexual human being. In practice it means that intellectual disabled people need some support and some help in experiencing and realizing their sexuality. The effort of parents, the protectors and the form tutors should create the proper conditions to realize satisfying sexual life of this group, the effort concentrated on helping the parents of the intellectual disabled in educating their child, supporting such a family.

The presented stand in this case about the subject matter the sexuality of the intellectual disabled people is connected with accepting the proper view of the disabled person and accepting and preceding consistently according to the chosen conception—probably just the one.

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