

Agnieszka Lena Licznerska

University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław

Disability and Ethics: A Parent Action in Poland

ABSTRACT: Inclusive education is being introduced into Poland. To be successful, educators must think critically about disability and learn what the Poles think. Iris Marion Young argues that notions how to criticize a society find their background in either experience or reflection on the society. In 2014 the author read Janina Paradowska's description of an action by parents who took their disabled children to a sit-down strike in the house of Polish parliament. Paradowska, the late famous Polish journalist, wrote she had *mixed feelings* about the event. The paper argues the injustice hidden in this phrase, based on the framework of the current view described by Iris Murdoch, who suggests an alternative way of thinking about experiences extending far beyond our mind. Disabled people have always been marginalized by the European culture, and now disabled children are to be part of the inclusive education. What factors might affect their learning?

KEYWORDS: inclusive education, the disabled, parent action, current view, alternative view.

Contact: Agnieszka Lena Licznarska
olibanum@wp.pl

Jak cytować: Licznarska, A. L. (2016). Disability and Ethics: A Parent Action in Poland. *Forum Oświatowe*, 28(2), 49–64. Pobrano z: <http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/czasopismo/article/view/463>

How to cite: Licznarska, A. L. (2016). Disability and Ethics: A Parent Action in Poland. *Forum Oświatowe*, 28(2), 49–64. Retrieved from <http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/czasopismo/article/view/463>



The paper is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement number 676452.



*In ordinary life kindness counts far more
than belief in human rights*
Jonathan Glover

In July 2016 I participated in a course titled *Seeing at the Margins: On the Ethics and Politics of Sight*, developed and run by Professor Alice Crary from the New School in New York. The title reflects its author's main idea that the word 'seeing' – properly seeing – is one of the crucial virtues mentioned by Iris Murdoch, and Crary wants her students to look closely at various borderline problems. The course deals with social practices of women and issues concerning black people, the disabled and animals, which are additionally complicated by *intersections* among historical and cultural points of view (New School). The intersection on which the paper concentrates is the problems of ethics and disability. Disability and its equal treatment are the third of four strategic objectives for education and training set by the ET 2020 Strategic Framework.

Therefore, the idea of inclusion in education is strongly advocated, but Poland is not yet ready. Teachers' policies and practices and schools' operational excellence have not been either defined or implemented. Neither teachers nor schools are prepared to cope with inclusive education. The average educator does not know much about disability and has notions that follow some stereotypes. The aim of the paper is to describe and discuss elements necessary for teachers' professional development and to raise understanding of social, cultural and family factors that affect disabled students' learning. These factors are to some extent characteristic of all the disabled,

regardless of age or disability. As a starting point, the paper focuses on an event that took place in Warsaw.

SITDOWN STRIKE

On March 19, 2014, parents and caretakers of severely disabled adults and children started a sitdown strike with those children in the Sejm, the lower house of the Polish parliament. The striking people *invaded* the official governmental building, and the Sejm became filled with disabled children, wheelchairs, placards, shouting and loud arguments. The *picture* was unprecedented. The Sejm corridors were occupied by disabled adults and children either lying on mattresses on the floor or sitting in wheelchairs, from which some simply hung, as they became tired and sleepy. This striking group was surrounded by cameras and visited by a parade of politicians promising the best things imaginable as long as they were on the screen. Parents were offered political and organizational support, which they refused, saying the strike was theirs. The parents had left their permanent jobs to take care of their children and received disability benefits of 620 zlotych per month (about \$162 for each parent and a child) from the state. The state system allows either a job or a benefit, not both. In the present economic situation, the only thing the system guarantees is poverty. The system does not also help organizationally, and parents have to do everything on their own. So disabled children usually have parents who are exhausted, poor – because they cannot work without losing benefit money – and usually lonely¹.

The protest received much TV and press coverage. The famous Polish journalist Janina Paradowska, who died in June, 2016, commented that she had looked on the strike with *mixed feelings* because, instead of desperation, she had seen aggression and lack of willingness to compromise (Wiadomosci.dziennik.pl, 2016). Most Poles shared these *mixed feelings*, culminating in the suggestion that parents blackmailed the authorities to receive money for staying home with their children and doing nothing extraordinary. Yet, though nobody asked during the strike, a question hung somewhere in the air: did parents behave morally when they took their disabled children to a sitdown strike?

In Poland, the topic of morality is mostly connected with religion. Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej (Public Opinion Research Center) (CBOS, 2013) research studies show that religious faith has become less and less important in everyday life, and more Poles accept divorce, premarital sex, concubinage and homosexuality. CBOS studies also show the changes for the worse in three areas in the years 1989 to 2009. The first is connected with the labor market and the phenomena of unemployment and workplaces' closing down. The second describes the lack or inadequate amount of money, poverty and rising cost of living. The third focuses on worsening quality of health services and the benefits system (CBOS, 2005). Poland fluently uses the vocabulary connected with economic liberalism: private property, invisible hand, contracts. These and other phenomena stemming from liberalism became known in 1989, when the country gained its freedom on the basis of human rights and the

people of Poland elected their first post-communist government. For decades the notion of freedom had been spurring a series of strikes with their typical elements: shouting workers, young men throwing stones, torrents of pressured water, overwhelming clouds of gas, and policemen equipped like Darth Vader. So Poland of 2014 was a country where people had learned how to protest to get what they want. Most strikes were organized for political or economic reasons. Parent action was different: it was not violent; its strikers were mostly sitting or sleeping; and though Paradowska reflected that “neither Sejm marbles are fit for sleeping in, nor does closure in the edifice help sick children in any way” (Wiadomosci.dziennik.pl), parents achieved their goal and obtained 1300 zlotys per month (about \$342). They won because their problem had become latent. This raised questions about ethics and disability. What people think about disability is absolutely necessary to *properly see*, if we want to implement inclusion into education successfully. As disability is a borderline problem, it is difficult to find a good framework to reflect on it. In this paper, the reflections are based on Iris Murdoch’s text (Murdoch, 1998). She describes the pervading way of thinking and names it as the current view. The view might be easily used for modern Poland, though she presented her project in 1956. In it, Murdoch criticizes the current way of thinking and supplies its main four plots (vices).

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING: FIRST PLOT

The first (1) plot is the behavioristic treatment of the inner life (Murdoch, 1998, p. 78). In everyday language, the expression *inner life* is well known and considered valuable. A person who only lives his or her outer everyday life is dangerous to others, as this person seems to be empty, devoid of any humanity. Inside we have psychological experiences (feelings, desires, passions), intellect (thoughts, ideas, concepts) and volition (decisions, resolutions). Artists with their inner life look at the world, nature and people and change them into works of art in an imaginative way. Murdoch mentions the notions of personal attitudes and private psychological expressions as belonging to the inner life. However, the current view has no confidence in personal vision, so it also discredits psychological introspection. Consequently there is no inner life in the current view model. The current view concentrates the analysis on the mind and its activities. The mind, which assembles data for the moral agent, becomes *the inner life*. The mind sets aside all the examples of personal vision, speculations, speeches or images not strictly connected with solving moral dilemmas. Things that cannot be observed, including sentiments, inner monologues and personal attitudes, are eliminated. We study behavior, what the moral agent does. The data for morality are only overt acts and choices.

Personal stories

In Murdoch’s view, apart from overt acts there are overt data (conversations, images, inner monologues) expressing a person’s feelings, showing what *a person is like*

(Murdoch, 1998, p. 80) and presenting a person's inner life. By looking both at overt acts and data, we pick up something elusive that we might call *vision of life* (Murdoch, 1998, p. 80). Paradowska's text presents parents as people without the inner life. She accuses them of lacking desperation. The theory defines the desperation as such an intense feeling that we are ready to try anything to change it, but according to Paradowska taking a disabled child to a strike is not an act of despair. As far as parents are concerned, they have long been trying to negotiate with the world and tell their stories and their understanding of desperation, but nobody has been truly interested.

And parents' stories are desperate. These people have a 24-hour job under never-ending stress. They have become slaves, but neither the state nor society wants to admit/see there a whole caste of serfs among them. Pezdek and Rasiński present how the state disciplines families of the disabled. The state wants everybody to work, and the state gives those cannot do it because of disabled children a choice: either meager money or a nursing home (Pezdek & Rasiński, 2016, p. 13). Grotowska-Leder mentions three models of the welfare state in developed capitalist countries: liberal, social market economy and institutionalized one. The first strives for intervention and helps the family a posteriori. The second considers everybody responsible for his or her own fate, and in case of social problems the state expects family, neighbors and the local community to help solve them. The third is an institutional one of universal and preventive character. It neither refers to the market and its dynamics nor is interested in its beneficiary's activities. Its basic criterion is needs. The disabled with their families live at home according to the third model. Consequently, if the disabled stay at home with their families, the state is no longer interested in their fate, and parents fall victim to social oppression on many levels: interpersonal, institutional, cultural and social³. Erving Goffman reflects that negative treatment of disabled people might stretch on the interpersonal level to other family members as *courtesy stigma* (Goffman, 1963). The stigmatized individuals hold the same norms as the *normal*, and these norms disqualify parents, Zachary Gussow and George Tracey (1968, as cited in Barnes, 2003, p. 15) suggest. The fact that parents carry the stigma influences institutional oppression and their economic status. According to traditional theories, the oppressed participate in unequal distribution of material goods and fall victim to change in lifestyle. Nowadays, the oppression might be seen in seemingly human practices of medicine, education, holidays or consumption. The striking parents wanted one thing: to have their taking care of children treated as a job that paid them salaries or to allowed them to work, and not *to punish* them for additional jobs. Iris Marion Young mentions five categories of oppression: *exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence* (Young, 1990). Constantly exploited and marginalized because of unfavorable economic status and exclusion from work distribution, parents, as slaves of their children, are forced to rely on social benefits. Parents' marginalization creates their powerlessness and their feeling they have little choice and tiny control over their own lives.

Outsiders are not aware of the oppression, powerlessness and marginalization. They see what TV shows: parents taking severely disabled children to the Sejm. The

famous political activist Henryka Krzywonos attacked parents by calling it *a grisly thing* (Tvn24.pl, 2016). Parents were shocked for being judged as immoral (though this word was not used). However, if we judge by looking only at behavior (an overt act), the moral problem soon appears. The current view does not include narratives in its moral judgment, but apart from sitting down in the Sejm (overt act), parents told their private stories about loneliness, promises broken by the prime minister (this was not first parents' action) and burnout syndrome. Mirosława Nowak-Dziemi-anowicz says the world of man has the form of narration (Nowak-Dziemianowicz, 2007). It is the universe of sensible structures that we must constantly interpret by decoding all the events brought by our fate and others'. We read stories or narratives and understand what is happening. The importance of reflective reading of the world of education is shown by Hana Cervinkova, who juxtaposes it with governing neoliberal rules (Cervinkova, 2012). The teacher is to be the obedient tool to reproduce the neoliberal system (Potulicka & Rutkowiak, 2010, as cited in Cervinkova, 2012). Cervinkova suggests following the category of *praxis*, critically reflecting on the world and undertaking activities to better it. Thus both teachers and students take active part in the process of teaching and learning.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING: SECOND PLOT

The second plot (2) consists of moral concepts as specifications with recommendations (Murdoch, 1998, p. 78). According to the current view, we take actions and make choices to analyze the moral agent. What criteria does the current view follow? It uses moral concepts, but Murdoch argues that if it takes only actions or choices as data, moral concepts become *factual specifications plus recommendations*. It uses words to specify the fact, discuss its background and finally provide specifications that may be different because of agent's moral code. The moral code includes an objective definition of an action that might be recommended or prohibited with moral words to formulate arguments and provide a recommendation (recommend a choice). To judge an individual's moral life, the current view checks his or her "overt choices in a series of specifiable situations" (Murdoch, 1998, p. 77); it judges the individual's moral judgment morally and mentally. However, as Murdoch reminds us, we are different in our morality because we make different choices based on facts set against backgrounds that are differently perceived. By judging overt choices, the current view treats an individual's inner life in a behavioristic way, thus following Hume's idea of visible phenomena as a source of knowledge. Here there is no place for any transcendental ideas.

Language

In the current view, private stories (like parents') are listened to but not taken as valid input. However, it might still be not so bad if journalists kept themselves to observable acts of behavior and choices as the initial data for their texts and offered no

explanation. Thus, we would have a clean situation: a journalist presents *specifications* of a strike, a reader presents recommendations. There might be a place for reader's insight drawn from his or her his/her moral code. Unfortunately, if such an influential journalist as Janina Pardowska talks about *mixed feelings*, we jump extremely quickly from descriptive criteria (facts) to evaluative ones (value). We just listen to language and its words, believe their meaning, and forget that between facts and value, a whole world of personal attitudes is expressed in the words that we choose, understanding the facts in our own way. A word has its register, and its most basic meaning might be determined even by geography; e.g., the word *snow* is understood differently by the Inuits and the Europeans. Language has its limits and extension. Its use depends on the speaker, who can either blur the meaning or shed light on it by using poetic similes, metaphors and parables. Sometimes linguistic errors are even on purpose to better get to the gist. As we constantly bend language to our aspects of life, Murdoch wonders if *linguistic philosophers are immune from such partiality* (Murdoch, 1998, p. 78) and gives negative answer. She suggests that instead of leaving the issue of language aside, we simply have to take it seriously in order not to make a linguistic error, as language is our method of communication. In the case of parents' action, the difference in vocabulary used by various parties (parents, journalists and their audiences) is enormous: the former think about oppression and slavery, the other two parties about problems the strike causes for children and the government.

We cannot always understand other agents' moral concepts. Parents were criticized for taking their children to the strike, but was their behavior immoral? Henryka Krzywonos said yes. (Parents were deeply wounded by her words, and some mothers cried on screen.) Some said no, and we may have problems with understanding each other because of language. Cora Diamond describes problems verbalizing ethical discussions and ascribes them to cultural deprivation. She mentions its three types. The first is connected with inability to describe one's experience: *it goes unnamed*. The second happens when we describe an experience with the wrong words: "significant things [...] are misnamed" (Diamond, 1988) because we are no longer able to use certain words, suffering from a loss of tradition and inability to use older vocabulary properly (Duke, 1985 as cited in Diamond, 1988; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, & Tipton, 1985, as cited in Diamond, 1988). In the third type, the moral agent uses moral words but is unable to reflect on this usage (Cavell, 1979, as cited in Diamond, 1998). The first type of cultural deprivation afflicts parents of disabled children: they do not know how to describe what they have been experiencing. As a result, they are treated like anybody unable to communicate with society and rejected as irrational and overemotional. They use vocabulary that is *out of joint* to describe their particular and inexhaustible fate. Naturally, the world prefers to reject them.

By looking at parents' behavior, we have to assume that they have a strong conceptual background for their activities; otherwise they would not do anything. Yet it may turn out that it is we who have no concepts. As Murdoch reflects, "any attitude may be made to look absurd if its conceptual background is removed [...]" (so) key concepts of our social morality [...] have become practically unconscious and are

taken for granted” (Murdoch, 1998, p. 89). Alasdair MacIntyre suggests that key moral notions do not have the context as “the integral substance of morality has to a large degree been fragmented and then in part destroyed” (MacIntyre, 2007). In Murdoch’s view, the background does not provide information necessary to understand old moral concepts. We use words that have different meanings. We are not sure of our vocabulary and language. In MacIntyre’s view, we follow our volition – treating ourselves as centers – and get lost, falling victim to “moral fictions such as those of utility and [human] rights” (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 76). The notion of human rights was the great ideal for liberalism, and utility was great in the time of Enlightenment. And now? Stanley Cavell (1979, as cited in Diamond, 1998) reflects that “we have lost the concept of morality and have been left with nothing but simulacrum, an illusion of moral thought and discussion”. Following this pessimistic view, we are left with morality equaling propaganda only.

Discourse

The Poles are subjected to two main plots of propaganda. The first is connected with economy, liberalism and the concept of being responsible for oneself. The second plot is connected with Catholic notions. In fact, we have commotion in our heads and wonder if we can reflect at all. Nobody has critically wondered why parents took their children to the Sejm if they had earlier sacrificed everything for them, or why they were aggressive. We have subconsciously dropped the questions unanswered as if we had listened to our Polish tradition: *don’t discuss, don’t philosophize*. So we have not been philosophizing or asking any questions of either the liberal or the Catholic sort, and go to the next choice in a *series of situations*. However, a good journalist, a good educator, a moral philosopher should look for an answer. In such cases, as Murdoch says, we have to come back to initial delineation and data. Let us come back to the inner life; do not treat it with a behavioristic eye and look at personal attitudes as data. Parents’ private stories are introspectable data that can be used to assess something elusive: a person’s *total vision of life*.

We have already learned that parents have little or no choice, but Janina Paradowska had a choice: she might have reflected a bit. After 1989 Poles were given freedom of speech, yet it has been superficially understood. We say what we want, but we do not feel obliged to take part in a discourse and reflect. Theoretically, we know that human rights also include freedom from slavery, but we do not perceive parents as slaves. Slavery or serfdom belongs to history books, and in 1989 Poland joined the modern world, supporting liberalism and its economical shift towards business. Later the viewpoint changed a bit, but the middle class still supports liberalism, with its concepts of private property and free market. The middle class believes in individualism and being responsible for oneself, thus allowing and making place for income stratification. This is the class that most objects to helping the poor and accuses people in trouble of being crafty. Parents just want to have control over their lives and be independent. By denying them the right to choose, we become oppres-

sors. As food for reflection, Paradowska and parents are given the same data (the same facts), but as they have totally different visions of life, they see different worlds and make different decisions. “There are those”, Murdoch (1998) argues, “who would suggest that morality is understanding, interpretation and reflection as well as choice. [...] Whereas I would argue that we cannot accommodate this aspect of morals without modifying our view of ‘concepts’ and ‘meaning’; and when we do this the idea of choice becomes more problematic” (p. 82).

Paradowska’s readers and TV audience were not presented a new vision or any social discourse (which in that situation would be just fine, liberal or not). The arguments offered by TV commentators and journalists were political in nature, referring strictly to government activities. If parents had been treated as a party in a discourse, they could have easily explained Paradowska’s *misuse* of the adjective *sick*. Their children were not sick, but permanently impaired and disabled. None of the children in the Sejm was sick in the meaning understood by everybody when we feel sorry for people suffering from flu, runny nose or sore throat and do not take them anywhere. Parents’ mediation on language, conceptions of lives that shaped their “general conceptual attitude and day-to-day being thus influencing more obviously moral acts” was neglected, omitted, forgotten, (Murdoch, 1998, p. 85). All the other specialists in the world seemed to know better how a moral parent of a disabled child should have behaved. Murdoch (1998) reflects that “[...] a moral attitude which lay emphasis on ambiguity and paradox is not for everyday consumption. There are, however, moments when situations are unclear and what is needed is not a renewed attempt to specify the facts, but a fresh vision which may be derived from a ‘story’ or from some sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure, and represents a ‘mode of understanding’ of an alternative type” (p. 91).

Alternative solutions

Murdoch suggests alternative solutions for unique moments. However, the truth is that disability is not such an extremely unique phenomenon, and its problems have a long history. In ancient Greece the body was idealized; hence disabled infants could be killed without consequences. The Bible’s interpretations depicted disability as a curse and punishment for disobedience, unbelief and ignorance. Martin Luther called disabled newborns *devil’s foundlings*. Disability used to be associated with the evil and bad deeds (Barnes & Mercer, 2004). Generally, disabled people have always been set aside as the other. Logically, if they are perceived as the other, other solutions should be used to judge them, and yet this has not happened. Murdoch (1998) explains the need for alternative solutions by saying,

I have in mind moral attitudes which emphasize the inexhaustible detail of the world, the endlessness of the task of understanding, the importance of not assuming that one has got individuals and situations taped, the connection of knowledge with love and spiritual insight with apprehension of the unique.

Such a description would in fact roughly fit types of moral attitude in other ways very dissimilar; certain idealist views, certain existentialist views, certain Catholic views. (p. 87)

Taking into account the long European tradition of looking for the new and interesting, or the history of exploration of new lands and their mysteries, it is strange that Murdoch has to remind us about the inexhaustibility of the world. In addition, though for centuries explorers were driven by their desire to discover the unknown, they tended to judge new lands, people and customs through the eye of their cultures. The British Empire left its political, cultural, linguistic and legal legacy over half the world. Other colonial powers did the same, and the same process has been constantly taking place. The same thing happens with morality: we judge new *exotic* problems using moral rules we know well. However, Murdoch reminds us that there are people who believe we live in one empirical world and people who believe in transcendence. To include these two views, we have to have “a point of extreme abstraction” (Murdoch, 1998, p. 88). To get there, we have to generalize more, and thus we come to the idea of universality. Richard Hare, proponent of the current view, says “we steer a middle course” (Hare, 1972, as cited in Murdoch, 1998, p. 88), but it is Murdoch who reminds us that choosing a middle course is a moral act, and it is we, with our experiences, beliefs and attitudes, who make a choice.

Such an inexhaustible extreme point might be found in the discourse of disability. The problems of living with a disabled child are unimaginable for a person living with a healthy one. Parents or caretakers of the disabled have problems that a healthy person does not expect to be an obstacle. They have to overcome such unusual problems that taking a disabled child to the Sejm might not even be a problem, but an adventure (at least for a child). Some children in pictures of the strike, though tired, are smiling and laughing – because something is going on, something is happening, they are in a new, exotic place. For the normal, to think of disability as an unexplored source of novelty and excitement requires an effort to imagine, to understand, to be prepared for constant mental work, but it is rewarding. Of course, if the normal do not want to explore, nothing can be done, as has happened with journalists. They have got *the individuals* (children and parents) *taped*, meaning that children should not be taken advantage of. Such an assumption is obvious, but the question is, did it really happen? Murdoch suggests connecting knowledge with love and insight. Nobody doubts that parents left their jobs to take care of their children out of love and duty. However, are love and duty valid input to pass judgment if later parents took their children to the Sejm? The fact is that parents' experiences convinced them they had to go even further and dutifully undertake other actions.

In her text, Murdoch mentions that the current view's representatives criticize *existentialists'* talking about duties but being unable to explain them. In fact, the issue of any parents' duties towards their children is not widely discussed now. Many blog posts about parenting concern how to make child-rearing more rewarding for parents and children. As a blog for successful parenting mentions, “parents have legal

and physical responsibilities and duties to their children, so that the children will grow up to be productive, healthy adults who contribute to society” (Oureverydaylife). Basic duties are providing a safe environment, to fulfill physical needs and to educate. However, modern social studies prove that parents do not spend much time with their children; they substitute toys, gadgets or numerous after-school activities for love. Modern parents seem to have forgotten what it is to love and sacrifice for a child. It looks as if we cannot recognize a truly parental attitude. We cannot recognize love, and even if we can, we think love does not excuse taking a disabled child to a sit-down strike.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING: THIRD PLOT

The third plot of the current view (3) Murdoch criticizes is that moral judgment can be universalized (Murdoch, 1998, p. 78). In the current view, moral principles can be universalized, which means that if the moral agent has to make a moral choice, he or she must think anybody in a similar situation ought to behave likewise. This suggests we all live in the same empirical world and share the same principles, and our moral decisions are based on universalizable reasons. However, we have already learned that the model of universalizability cannot be applied to moral judgment of parents’ behavior. Paradowska could not decide how to judge the whole situation and talked about *mixed feelings*. Her readers (mostly middle-class) liked the idea of *mixed feelings* because everybody felt there was something immoral in taking disabled children to a sitdown strike. However, nobody has reflected theoretically on this borderline problem.

Schemata

As the model of reasoning used to comment on the parents’ strike is universal, it follows the current view. To explain her criticism on the idea of universalisability, Murdoch mentions fables, which are usually based on social patterns. Following the path of universal reasoning, they present a problem, practical implications and universal rules to sort it out, and the solution generally works. Society and its culture provide standard scripts for everyday life stories (maturation, love, family events, death); fables, parables and myths present them to us. Trzebiński (2002) explores the process of narrative construction of reality. We interpret the data picked up by our senses and categorize it by using prior knowledge about some part of the reality. Step by step, we build cognitive schemata in our mind. The brain interprets the reality as events or stories, and narratives become mental forms of understanding the world. Like any schema, the narrative schema limits the structure and the content. Even if the content is not completed, the mind subconsciously adds default values (Bowen, 1976, as cited in Trzebiński, 2002).

Parents and caretakers of the disabled subconsciously refer to this tradition by telling their personal stories, but we refuse to listen to them, as they do not follow

the pattern. Generally in case of inadequacies, we have to reinterpret the stories, and the mind is prepared for such an action. Some elements become more important and some less important, but it is still one schema changing into an alternate schema. Yet the solutions good for universal and even less universal stories do not fit, and we need truly alternative solutions. The stories on disability are unique, and though parents have been trying to universalize their experience, they are doomed to stand apart by “unique destiny.” The model of universalisability does not apply here, and there is no point in forcing their experience into the model. If we keep trying, we will lose the difference between moral visions of the world, the possibility of understanding the problem and work out the solution (Murdoch, 1998).

We want to understand the problem universal stories do not describe. If we cannot understand something because it goes beyond our everyday experience, we enter the world of inexhaustibility. This unfathomable world has always been a driving force in social anthropology. In *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* Edward Evans-Pritchard (1976) tries to understand the way of thinking of the Azande³; in a documentary about his field studies we learn he wanted “his account to be a description than a bare record of facts (documentary).” However, for Evans-Pritchard, the use of witchcraft, oracle and magic was totally irrational because it was not “in accord with objective reality,” which follows St. Thomas Aquinas’s philosophy *Verum est adaequation intellectus at rei*. As Peter Winch argues, this is our European truth based on a scientific universal discourse that follows the European schema of inference (Winch, 1964). We observe a phenomenon using our experimental methods, establish criteria and finally test gathered data by juxtaposing with something independent. Europeans tend to associate this need with science only, but it is not peculiar to science (Winch, 1964, p. 308). Murdoch suggests looking into alternative ways, including Catholic ones; Winch (1964) quotes the Bible: “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? . . . Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it (p. 308). The concept of God exists in religious tradition independent of what we say in scientific discourse.

CURRENT UNDERSTANDING: FOURTH PLOT

The fourth element (4) of the current view is the freedom of the moral agent who is “free to withdraw, survey the facts, and choose again” (Murdoch, 1998, p. 83). The moral agent chooses words to describe something and can change the description if he or she wants. The agent should be impartial and non-dogmatic (independent of concepts). If the agent is not free, it is only because he is careless. If he is attentive, there is nothing to stop him from reflecting on overt acts (facts). The agent perfectly communicates and reflects on facts in an disinterested way before making any choice and passing a moral judgment. The freedom present in the current view is connected with liberal values and their “don’t be dogmatic, always reflect and argue, respect the attitudes of others argument” (Murdoch, 1998, p. 93). However, if we take into

account the importance of someone's vision, as Murdoch suggests, then we might not be so free to "withdraw and reflect" in judging overt acts. The current view follows the idea of individual freedom and will, but these are not possible, as Murdoch argues. It is wishful thinking -- one of moral vices. We cannot completely get rid of deeply rooted attitudes. In the current view, the moral agent can treat moral differences as differences of choice against "a discussable background of facts" (Murdoch, 1993, p. 81). Yet moral arguments can take place only if interlocutors share similar criteria (standards, tests, rules, i.e., "descriptive meaning of moral terms" [Murdoch, 1998, p. 81]) and discuss what facts are. Winch says an anthropologist is expected to present such an account that will fulfill "criteria of rationality demanded by the culture to which he and his readers belong" (Winch, 1964, p. 307). Ideas are part of a culture, and our culture is scientific. To check anything, we check if it is "in accord with objective reality" (Evans-Pritchard, 1934, as cited in Winch, 1964) an independent outside reality. We can also check this independent reality, but we will always use our criteria because we do not know any other. Evans-Pritchard describes criteria for himself, checks the Azande with them and then argues the Azande are irrational. People expressing their opinion on the striking parents take criteria they like and describe the parents as irrational and immoral. Parents have different criteria, and the onlookers have their own; if the criteria are different, there is no argument, as they are incomparable and it is a category mistake. If we consider all the arguments mentioned in the paper that constitute parents' reality, we can see their overt acts are logical and rational.

Winch also wonders "how to make intelligible in our terms institutions belonging to a primitive culture, whose standards of rationality and intelligibility are apparently quite at odds with our own" (Winch, 1964, p. 315). We can use his schema to understand the world of the other. Winch argues that a description is important for the notion of human acts. To understand a new description, Evans-Pritchard suggests comparing it to an independent outside source with other descriptions (Winch, 1964). However, as Winch argues, this source has been created according to our criteria (Winch, 1964). If we cannot understand a description, it suggests we do not have a criterion, and therefore the description is alien to us. Winch asks who should strive to find and understand this criterion. In case of the Azande, Evans-Pritchard wants us to understand, so it is the Europeans who have to undertake the task of finding and understanding, but what about the disabled and their parents? Obviously normal people are not interested, so the real onus falls on the disabled and their families. The history proves how Vic Finkelstein, a disabled activist for the disabled, developed the social model of disability. Not all the disabled can fight for themselves; sometimes their parents have to do it.

SUMMARY

The inclusion of the disabled in education raises a lot of questions. There is no definite answer whether it is good or bad, though one has been widely sought. To get

closer to the solution, we have to know how the modern world treats *the disabled*. In 2014 parents of disabled children organized a sitdown strike. The Polish journalist Janina Paradowska used the expression *mixed feelings* to describe the event. The author feels the injustice hidden behind this expression and argues that nobody has had a critical discourse about *parents' action*. As a framework for reflections on modern Poland, the paper uses the text by Iris Murdoch, who describes *the current view* and its four main plots: behavioristic treatment of the inner life; moral concepts as specifications with recommendations; universalizability of the moral judgment; freedom of the moral agent. All the elements of the current view are of long standing and, Murdoch gathers and presents them en bloc. She argues that the current view does not work for borderline situations and does her best to show how unrealistic (though based on a seemingly realistic basis) is an attempt to judge morality on hard data alone. More difficult problems like disability require a new profound, consistent vision.

We have to put aside judging only by overt acts and take personal stories into account. Otherwise we face ethical dilemmas evoked by watching parents' oppression, powerlessness and marginalization. The disabled and their families suffer from structural violence (Galtug, 1969), but society neither knows about it nor is interested in parents' stories. While interpreting this action and other events, normal people follow standard schemata of understanding. Nowak-Dziemianowicz suggests taking narratives as structures to see the reality properly. Stigmatized parents try to negotiate with the world and find solutions, but Murdoch mentions the crucial ailment nagging the present world: the loss of concepts. She does so only sweepingly, but Cora Diamond develops the idea of loss further. Many thinkers write about the loss of concepts: Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Cavell, Charles Stevenson, Duke Maskell, Robert Bellah. Diamond accounts for the loss of concept because of cultural deprivation, and Ursula K. LeGuin, in her fantasy novel *The Farthest Shore*, describes a world without words because they have lost their meaning. Propagators of the current view might also share this feeling and this base their morality on overt acts and choices to avoid being totally lost.

Not to be lost and left only with Cavell's propaganda, Winch looks for solutions in the world of the primitive and argues that Europeans do not have a category to discuss experiences going beyond the scientific universe. We tend to describe everything according to our categories, ending in a *category mistake*. Murdoch suggests finding *alternative* solutions to judge borderline problems: belief in the richness of the world; thinking hard; not taking anything for granted; remembering about love, uniqueness, idealism, religion. Sometimes we cannot understand these solutions, but as Jonathan Glover (who had an autistic friend) says, kindness counts more on an everyday level.

Poles need a discourse about disability referring to philosophy, politics, the economy and education. The average educator does not know much about disability, and his or her notions follow some stereotypes. We must raise understanding of social, cultural and family factors that affect disabled students' learning. All students of education should have professional development workshops on philosophy discussing

borderline cases. Thus teachers would, theoretically, be prepared to cope with the otherness of their students.

REFERENCES

- Barnes, C., & Mercer, G. (2003). *Disability*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bellah, R., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W., Swindler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). *Habits of the Heart*. Berkely: University of California Press.
- Cavell, S. (1979). *The Claims of Reason*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej. (2009). *Bilans zmian w Polsce w latach 1989–2009*. Warszawa: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej.
- Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej. (2103). *Wartości i normy*. Warszawa: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej.
- Cervinkova, H. (2012). *Nauczanie do zmiany społecznej: uczestniczące badania w działaniu ludzi młodych i zaangażowane badania etnograficzne: studium przypadku*. *Forum Oświatowe*, 1(46), 267–283.
- Diamond, C. (1988). Losing Your Concepts. *Ethics*, 98. Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Documentary*. (2016). Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q9Hy-ONL_10
- Duke, M. (1985). *Politics Needs Literature*. Retford, Nottinghamshire: Brynmill Press.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. (1976). *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York, NY: Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191.
- Grotowska-Leder, J. (2002). *Fenomen wielkowiejskiej biedy: od epizodu do underclass*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Gussow, Z., & Tracy, G. (1968, winter). Status, Ideology and Adaptation to Stigmatized Illness: A Study of Leprosy. *Human Organization*, 27(4).
- Hare, R. M. (1972). *Essays on the Moral Concepts*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- MacIntyre, A. (2007). *After Virtue*. Notre Dame Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Murdoch, I. (1998). *Vision and Choice in Morality*. In: *Existentialists and Mystics, Writings on Philosophy and Literature*. New York, NY: Allen Lane The Penguin Press.
- New School for Social Research*. (2016). Retrieved from <http://blogs.newschool.edu/tcds/full-program-information>
- Nowak-Dziemianowicz, M. (2007). Czy świat człowieka ma postać narracji? O możliwościach badania, rozumienia i zmiany. In *Narracja – krytyka – zmiana, praktyki badawcze we współczesnej pedagogice*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSW.

- Our Everday Life*. (2016). Retrieved from <http://oureverydaylife.com/responsibilities-duties-parents-7816.html>
- Pezdek, K., & Rasiński, L. (2016). Between Exclusion and Emancipation: Foucault's Ethics and Disability. *Nursing Philosophy*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/nup.12131>
- Potulicka, E., & Rutkowiak, J. (2010). *Neoliberalne uwikłania edukacji*. Kraków: Impuls.
- Trzebiński, J. (2002). Narracyjne konstruowanie rzeczywistości. In *Narracja jako sposób rozumienia świata*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- TVN24. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/rodzice-niepełnosprawnych-dzieci-zszokowani-slowami-krzywonos,410881.html>
- Wiadomości.dziennik.pl*. (2016). Retrieved from <http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/opinie/artykuly/454892,janina-paradowska-o-protescie-rodzicow-dzieci-niepełnosprawnych-w-sejmie.html>
- Winch, P. (1964, October). Understanding a Primitive Society. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 1(4).
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

NIEPĘLNOSPRAWNOŚĆ I ETYKA. AKCJA PROTESTACYJNA RODZICÓW W POLSCE

ABSTRAKT: W 2014 r. ukazał się artykuł Janiny Paradowskiej na temat akcji protestacyjnej rodziców dzieci niepełnosprawnych. Rodzice wraz z dziećmi uczestniczyli w strajku okupacyjnym w budynku polskiego Sejmu. Paradowska napisała, że miała mieszane uczucia na temat tego wydarzenia. Autorka rozważała poczucie niesprawiedliwości ukryte w tym sformułowaniu. Argumentację oparła na modelu współczesnego sposobu myślenia, opracowanego przez Iris Murdoch. Angielska filozof zaproponowała alternatywny sposób myślenia na temat doświadczeń wykraczających poza nasze możliwości zrozumienia. Ludzie niepełnosprawni zawsze byli w Europie marginalizowani, a teraz dzieci niepełnosprawne mają stać się częścią nauczania włączającego. Jakie czynniki mogą mieć wpływ na ich nauczanie?

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: nauczanie włączające; niepełnosprawni, akcja protestacyjna rodziców, współczesne poglądy, alternatywny sposób widzenia.

-
1. Jolanta Grotowska-Leder quotes German research studies on poverty. They focus on secondary poverty created by the state because it does not provide adequate social safety to people entitled to social benefits because of primary poverty, p. 118.
 2. The idea of parent becoming slaves of their children or the state or both of them is worth separate checking and I would like to thank my reviewer for this suggestion.
 3. Ethnic group of North Central Africa whose traditional beliefs include magic and witchcraft; when problems appear, a tribe asks an oracle to determine the source of suspected witchcraft.