

PROSOPON

NR 1/ 2013

[s. 39-53]

Paweł Czarnecki

ISM Presov

Reflections on sexual ethics

Modern computational issues of sexual ethics

Key words: *ethics, sexuality*

Sexual ethics is an exceptional field in the area of ethics, owing to its close relation with extra-ethical concepts, mainly religious ones. This fact distinguishes it from such ethical disciplines as: ethics of business or eco-ethics. However you can speak about Christian and non-Christian (e. g. utilitarian) concepts within those ethics, it is impossible to speak about utilitarian sexual ethics – such ethics, as a separate field, simply does not exist. Wanting therefore to formulate and justify values and principles relating to sexual relations, one must on one side consider values and the principles based upon them formulated by Christian ethics, and on the other hand take into consideration arguments speaking for including the sphere of sexuality into "lay" ethical reflexion. In other words, one must ponder whether sexual drive and the behaviors that directly follow therefrom should undergo ethical evaluation, or whether, as a sphere of privacy, they should remain outside the interest of ethics.

Often one encounters the opinion that ethical evaluation encompasses only those kinds of actions which exert influence over other people. Of course not every action causing results which influence other people is subject to ethical evaluation, although it would be hard to unambiguously indicate such kinds of actions which do not, in any circumstances, undergo ethical judgment. For example, a house built in a city doubtlessly affects other people, as it changes the view and it can hamper movement on a certain area, but these results do not undergo ethical

judgment. However the same house built in an area which is touristically attractive can make the landscape ugly, at the same time lowering income from tourism, therefore the results of its construction one can judge as morally bad. This example shows that actions which in themselves do not usually undergo ethical judgment can become subject to such judgment, in so far as their results limit freedom of other people.

An ethical theory treating sexual drive as an integral element of the "structure" of man is for example catholic sexual ethics. However these ethics do not maintain that sexual drive or instinct in themselves undergo ethical evaluation, considering this drive as a part of man's natural biological endowment. According to catholic ethics, all actions undertaken under the influence of sexual drive, including love and having offspring, do undergo ethical judgment.

Some of the thoughts on the principles of catholic sexual ethics were undertaken by Karol Wojtyła. As a priest he thought the basic difficulty in case of catholic sexual ethics is the justification for moral norms. Such justification, according to Wojtyła, is not possible without calling at a specific concept of man. Because catholic ethics brings about personalistic concept of man, sexual ethics is also based on personalism.

The basis of personalism is the thesis saying that man is a person, that is indivisible whole composed of body and soul. From the definition of a person it follows that regardless of which aspect of man's existence we consider, we should do it with regard of this indivisible whole. Also the bases of sexual ethics should be considered and justified basing on personalist vision of man, treating the sphere of sexuality as an indivisible element of man as a person (not as a field connected exclusively with biological or psychological plane of human activity).

Another central thesis of personalism is the view that it is the person that is always the target of action and as such should not be treated as means to satisfy needs or drives of any kind. Concerning sexual ethics, Karol Wojtyła emphasizes that it is not only about the need to discharge sexual tension, but also about needs of higher rank, like for example the need for closeness, intimacy, or the need to be happy. The bond between man and woman is a bond of two persons, and thus fragmentary treatment of another person, seeing in him or her only a man or only

a woman, that is – a medium serving to justify biological and psychological needs – is against personalist ethics.

The basis of a bond of two persons should be love, that is a feeling engaging the whole person, and not only his or her sexual drive. Not every feeling, however, that would colloquially be called love can be a justified basis to enter sexual relationship – that is why Wojtyła differentiates between love in purely psychological sense from the love between two persons. Love between persons is a realization of the "personalist norm", that is the call for unconditional love of another human being, that is why it always has an ethical dimension. The basis of love in the personalist sense is the affirmation of another person as a person, which should be differentiated from the affirmation of certain values (that is: traits allowing for the satisfaction of one's own needs) residing in the other person. The value of man as a person should be particularly differentiated from "sexual value" whose vehicle can be either man as a whole together with his personality (then we speak about love in psychological sense) or only his body as a "tool" for satisfying sexual drive (desire). Without this completion, a bond between two people would be only a transaction boiling down to the giving of one's body to someone of the opposite sex, who in return would give his or her body and personality, thanks to which the two parties would experience intense sensual sensations.

From the above remarks it does not follow, that love in psychological sense is not important for a bond of two people. K. Wojtyła stresses however, that love in psychological sense must be subordinated to love in the ethical sense, because only then man is capable of controlling his or her own sexual drive. Moreover, according to Wojtyła, love in ethical sense is not only a kind of a controlling body, but also it is complementary to love in psychological sense. Love which is an affirmation of the other person, that is, in other words, treating the other person as a person, Wojtyła calls integral love. The purpose of this love is not the body of another man – in that case we would be speaking about desire – neither is it man as representing the other sex, but man in all the aspects of his or her existence – that is, a human person. Love so understood does contain an element of sensual love (eroticism), which however in no way is the most important element and should be subordinated to other elements.

The above statements have important practical consequences, because from the fact that love in personalist sense is the basis of a bond of two people follows the rule commanding control over one's own drive. Wojtyła points namely to the fact, that a drive as a force, which in some way "drives", that is somehow directs our action, is in conflict with freedom. At the same time, sexual drive is given to man, it constitutes a part of his nature and although it does not directly influence his actions, it causes something to "happen" to man. Exactly this difference between something "happening" to man (or in man) and acting under the influence of the drive is, in Wojtyła's opinion, a key one from the point of view of personalist responsibility.

Wojtyła speaks also about "natural sequence of events", meaning that sexual union is a consequence of "integral" love as well as of the sacrament of marriage. In other words, what happens first is psychological and spiritual union of two people, whose outer expression is the sacrament of marriage, which in turn creates the frames for sexual union. Only reciprocal love between man and woman as persons creates the space for realization of sexual drive. The purpose of the bond between man and women is not, however, mutual satisfaction of the need for happiness and love, but having offspring, that is why a bond based on personalist love involves a necessity of sacrifice.

The acceptance of the views presented above depends, of course, first of all on the view of the world we purport. This personalist perception of love is possible to be accepted entirely by believers, to who this problem presents itself in a relatively simple way: sexual contacts are acceptable only in marriage¹. Whereas all those, who would indeed be inclined to accept some of the basic theses of personalism (like the principle of human dignity) do not have to accept at the same time all the consequences which follow from those theses for the personalist ethics of K. Wojtyła.

Lay ethics, as I have mentioned, is reluctant to speak about the sphere of sexuality, treating it as a sphere which is not subject to ethical evaluation. Still, one can encounter attempts to settle some norms having to do with human sexual behav-

¹ From the definition of person it follows also, that it is unethical to use contraception, artificial insemination or sterilisation. Cf. *Encyklopedia bioetyki. Personalizm chrześcijański*, pod red. A. Muszali, Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, Radom 2007.

iors understood from the stances which are neutral from the point of view of opinion or religion.

One can also point to some ways of justifying the opinion, that sexual activity should not be excluded from the realm of interest of ethics. In relation to sexual relationships one can first of all assume, that the possibility of formulating ethical evaluation depends not on the deed alone, but on its results, which in turn can depend on circumstances which are not directly connected to the sphere of sexuality. However such treatment does not allow to include into ethical thought sexual relations as such, it enables analyzing the results of this kind of relationship for the persons involved and telling whether there is a need to formulate separate ethical norms protecting from those negative results (e. g. principles concerning betrayal, rape, prostitution etc.)

It is not, however, the only possible approach to sexual ethics free of opinion. Sexual relations can also be treated as a realization of one of the essential rights of all men, that is the right to satisfy sexual drive. Assuming that the need of satisfying this drive belongs to basic human needs, and its suppression can lead to serious negative consequences – social as well as psychological – we are facing the necessity to answer two questions: the question about acceptable forms of satisfying this drive and about the limitations in its satisfactions (to the latter we are going to come back later in the course of the hereby considerations).

The first question does not seem to pose greater difficulties: as unacceptable we regard such sexual behaviors which in any way hurt the other man. As an example of contacts which are impossible to accept ethically one can mention rape or sexual contacts with people under age. It is worth stressing that these actions are morally bad regardless whether they lead to objectively negative results for the victims: rape on a person under the influence of intoxicants undergoes negative ethical evaluation regardless whether this person realizes that he or she was raped. Negatively evaluated are also intentions of entering sexual contacts (e. g. sex in exchange for material benefits).

Finally, it is possible to say that sexual ethics does not relate exclusively to relations between two people. Sexual drive residing in the individual is a drive directed towards other people, at the same time however it can become a basis of certain attitudes or ways of living which also can undergo ethical evaluation.

A man consciously resigning from getting involved into a lasting bond based on deep feelings takes a definite stance towards life, which has influence not on him alone, but also on his closer and further social environment. Resignation from a lasting relationship usually means resignation from having offspring. The influence of this kind of decision on the society is not felt as long as such person constitute the margins, but the moment they become common (and it seems that presently we are facing exactly such situation) their effect on the future of the society becomes obvious. Often we can encounter a popular opinion that this lifestyle is "selfish". This opinion seems to be based on the conviction that if this lifestyle was embraced by all, society would be in danger of annihilation.

Obviously one can answer here that in fact this conscious choice is only an appearance covering emotional problems disabling one from entering lasting relationships. Besides the very increase in the ratio of people deciding to live a lonely life one can just as well consider the cause of social crisis as its result. In the latter case one should rather speak about objective processes occurring in society, and not about moral responsibility.

It is also worth noticing that norms of sexual ethics can also serve as justification for negative ethical evaluation of certain behaviors or attitudes not immediately connected with sexual ethics, such as contraception, AIDS, homosexuality or even abortion.

Relatively close to sexual ethics is the problem of ethical evaluation of contraception. Using contraception is strongly rejected by personalist ethics, as this kind of ethics assumes that the sexual act is a purposeful act, which however does not aim at satisfying the partners but at calling into being a new life². This point of view is however impossible to accept by all those who evaluate the sexual act exclusively with regard to its consequences or intentions. It is also worth noticing that evaluation of contraception from the point of view of sexual ethics to a certain extent overlaps with its evaluation from the point of view of medical ethic (that is, sexual ethics is up to this extent an element of medical ethics). The problem of both these ethics is e. g. the right of patients to use contraceptives, including the contraceptives preventing pregnancy up to 72 hours from sexual inter-

² Cf. J. Orzeszyna, *Antykoncepcja*, in: *Encyklopedia bioetyki. Personalizm chrześcijański*, chief ed.. A. Muszali, Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, Radom 2007, pp. 43 and onwards.

course. Moreover the problem of contraception belongs to the range of competence of medical ethics because contraceptives are available mostly on prescription. Thence for example during the discussion concerning the novelization of the Codex of Medical Ethics in 2003 the proposition was refuted which proposed that the doctors have the right to provide information about contraception only to those patients who would ask about it themselves.

The problem of ethical acceptability of contraception gained special importance in the face of AIDS epidemic. In many poorly developed African countries, popularization of contraceptives might significantly contribute to the decrease in the number of cases of HIV contamination. According to the proponents of availability of using those measures, maintaining the ban on contraceptives has important practical consequences: the opposition of religious organizations, especially catholic church, makes the distribution of contraceptives among poorly educated inhabitants of poor countries difficult. The opponents of the availability of contraception, however, point to the fact, that the same effect could be achieved by abiding the rules of sexual ethics, that is simply by limiting sexual contacts to one person. There is also a middle stance, according to which using contraception is indeed evil, but a bigger evil is the spreading of AIDS, and one should simply choose the lesser evil. From that point of view using contraception still remains an "intrinsically bad" deed³ and it is possible to accept only under exceptional conditions.

One should also mention the problems connected not so much with sex, but with human sexuality, such as artificial procreation or abortion. The prohibition of artificial procreation can follow not only from the fact that such operation involves a risk to the life of human fetus, but also from the conviction that the only worthy "place" for calling into being a new man is marriage. On the other hand, the prohibition of using the contraceptives which prevent the nesting of the inseminated egg in the uterus can be justified as a special case of the ban on abortion.

³ The expression „intrinsically bad deeds” is to be found in the encyclic „*Veritatis splendor*” (1993). The Pope writes there, that intrinsically bad deeds are: contraception, as well as „direct sterilisation, masturbation, pre-marital intercourse, homosexual intercourse and also artificial insemination” (p. 47).

The problem of ethical evaluation of homosexuality seems to belong to sexual ethics, as it concerns broadly understood relationship of two persons of the same sex, and not only sexual relationship. One can namely imagine homosexual relationship in which sexual contacts do not play dominant role (that is, they are not the chief goal of the relationship), or even such relationships where these contacts do not occur. On the other hand, sexual ethics does refer to the sphere of human sexuality, but as I have mentioned, the only possible definition of sexuality for the use of ethical discussion is the projecting definition. If we then consider emotions towards the sexual partner an element of sexuality, it will be justified to include into sexual ethics also the problem of homosexuality.

Thus the opponents of moral acceptability of relationship of people of the same sex bring by the argument calling at the fact of humans being endowed with gender. They point to the fact that because man has features not possessed by woman and the other way round, then man and woman in a way complement each other, complete each other. On this basis it is possible to formulate the thesis, that as a sexual being, man in a "natural" way turns to the other sex, strictly to some psychosomatic features of individuals of opposite sex. This way, on the ground of sexual ethics, it is possible to differentiate natural and unnatural sexual drive, accepting as morally acceptable only the first kind of sexual drive.

A separate ethical problem is the evaluation of behaviors usually viewed as pathology, such as zoophilia, fetishism, masochism and the like. A proponent of liberalism in sexual ethics would simply say that such behaviors are not subject to negative ethical evaluation under the condition that they do not involve suffering of any living being. Such a simple answer does not seem to be satisfying for two reasons. First, pathological behavior seem to be objectively harmful for the persons who undertake them and even if they do not cause suffering of people or animals, in the long run they can lead to psychological suffering of the interested party themselves. Sexual activity is doubtless a condition of a satisfactory relation of two people, starting a happy family, having offspring etc. All the "substitute" forms of satisfying the sexual drive can become the reason for which those goals shall not be reached, which to some individuals can become a reason for loneliness, lack of fulfillment, and general sense of there being no meaning to life.

Another cause, for which pathological sexual behaviors can be judged as morally bad is the lack of social acceptance to most, if not to all their forms. However it is possible to argue that if the society does not accept certain behaviors which have no influence on the third party, one should rather blame the society for lack of tolerance and undertake attempts leading to changes in attitude and not identify social lack of acceptance with negative moral evaluation. There is doubtlessly a lot of sense in such a statement, however in the case of sexual behaviors we deal with reaction based on deeply rooted sexual drive, due to which it is not certain to what extent such a change of social attitudes is possible at all. A certain hint here is the change of social reaction to homosexuality, still it is hard to hope on that basis that society would be able with equal ease to accept e. g. zoophilic tendencies. This lack of acceptance puts the persons showing this kind of tendency under the threat of rejection or even active aggression, it can therefore become a cause of those people being harmed.

For the above reasons it seems that the society has a moral obligation to give help to those people who wish either to change the direction of their sexual drive either through psychotherapy, or to diminish their drive by the use of medicine. Namely, the social health service should finance help for those people, and the society should accept the fact of carrying certain costs concerning that matter.

A separate problem is the moral right to enter sexual relationship. Usually it is assumed that this right is one to which every individual is entitled, whereas depriving anybody of this right is a morally wrong deed. It is obvious, however, that this right is not limitless and in some situation an individual can be deprived of the possibility to satisfy his or her sexual drive. An example can be the celibate of priests or the rules binding for example monks in a Buddhist monastery. The proponents of the view that having a sexual life is a necessary condition of psychological health speak sometimes about "forcing" celibate on priests, monks or nuns, it seems though that the very possibility of living a celibate life for years testifies to the opposite.

The possibility of living in celibate without any perceptible consequences for the psyche does not of course testify to the fact that it would be lawful to deprive anybody the right of sexual activity. Moreover, celibate is always a result of conscious decision, free choice, not force. We have no right to deprive anyone of the

possibility to satisfy hunger or the possibility to move for the sole reason that those people are on diet or they lead life within the walls of a cloister. Also the example of people convicted to prison does not really broaden our view, because in the case of prisoners the lack of possibility to satisfy sexual drive is a result of their being deprived of the right to freedom. It is because practically the deprivation of freedom ordained by the court means the taking away from the individual certain number of particular rights, such as the right of free movement, the right to use the mass media, the right to work etc. The right to satisfy sexual drive belongs, in other words, to the group of rights whose deprivation is defined as the deprivation of freedom⁴.

Still, one can indicate circumstances in which depriving someone of the right to satisfy their sexual drive not involving depriving them of other rights seems ethically acceptable. We deal with such situation first of all in the case of people mentally disabled. Some of such people feel sexual drive with the same force as the fully mentally able people do, and at the same time are not capable of realizing the consequences of sexual contacts. There is thus the necessity to settle, whether the wardens of such people have a moral right to deprive them of the possibility of having those contacts.

The rule of full intellectual and emotional maturity seems impossible to use here, since abiding by that rule would force us to prohibit sexual contacts to teenagers, who also have not reached full emotional maturity and are not always able to fully realize the consequences of their own actions. Besides, there are different degrees of disability, and thus it is impossible to formulate a norm which in the same degree would work with all persons suffering from intellectual disability. The most reasonable solution seems to be for the wardens to decide individually in relation to each of their wards, possibly after consulting the doctor and the psychologist.

An interesting notion of group fault in the case of rape has been proposed by American ethicists, L. May and R. Strikwerda. This idea merits special treatment here, as it touches upon one of the key problems of sexual ethics, namely the responsibility of men and women for the unethical deeds resulting from sexual

⁴ Some of those particular freedoms can be returned to a prisoner in the course of his sentence, including the right of entering sexual relationship.

drive. However the thoughts presented by May and Strikwerda concern rape only, one can felicitously refer them also to other deeds, such as betrayal. L. May and R. Strikwerda argue that, just as the responsibility for mass murders belongs to all societies, not only to the immediate executors, so in the case of rape the fault falls not only on the raper, but on the whole group of men. They conclude therefrom, that men should actively counteract rape and sexual violence.

In justification of their view, those authors differentiate four ways of understanding responsibility for rape: direct responsibility of the wrongdoer; lack of responsibility resulting from the fact of his following biological instinct; the co-created social environment characterized by brutality and violence, co-created by men and women; the responsibility of "patriarchal" social structure⁵.

The first ways of understanding responsibility for rape are regarded by the authors as wrong. Assuming the thesis of exclusively individual responsibility would mean the necessity to say that the group of men remains outside the scope of responsibility, which in the opinion of the authors stands in contradiction to the empirical data, which indicate that men turn out to be more prone to rape when they are in a group (e. g. the example of rapes committed by soldiers in the time of war). Empirical data undermine also the thesis of rape being biologically conditioned (more strictly, conditioned by the differences in attitudes towards sex shown by men and women, formed in result of natural selection). If this hypothesis was right, then the level of rape in different societies around the world would be more or less the same, whereas in fact there are societies where rapes practically do not occur. As concerns the idea that the whole society, thus also women, participate in transmitting patterns of behavior which are full of violence, the authors are inclined to find only partially right. They think that although indeed some women have some influence on the transmission of attitudes fostering rape and violence, it is a mistake to ascribe equal responsibility for rape to men and women.

The aptest thesis, according to the authors, is the fourth thesis, according to which men have "non-distributive responsibility" for rape. This kind of responsibility means that although an individual man does not carry responsibility for

⁵ L. May, R. Strikwerda, *Mężczyźni w grupach: zbiorowa odpowiedzialność za gwałt*, in: *Filozofia moralności*, ed. J. Hołowka, Warszawa 2000, p. 43 onwardst.

rape, as this, individually, is carried only by the agent of the rape, he does carry some responsibility as a member of the group of men. Within the whole of social life, the authors identify a set of norms, attitudes and behaviors obtaining only to men, defining this set by the name "male culture". This culture is absorbed by men in the course of socialization. This of course opens a field for actions aiming at changing male attitudes. The authors do not charge every individual man with the responsibility for each rape, they do think however, that the very participation in this culture and the acceptance of it puts on men some kind of responsibility and commitment regarding the phenomenon of rape as such. "We think rather," the authors say, "that in western societies rape is deeply rooted in the broader culture of male socialization. Those who are the most involved in maintaining this culture must also realize that they are responsible for its harmful aspects"⁶

Towards the views referred above one can propose a range of critical remarks. The basic mistake seems to be treating rape and sexual violence as a phenomenon caused by one factor only. What seems particularly unconvincing are the arguments against the thesis of biological background of this kind of violence. The authors repeatedly point to rapes on Bosnian Muslim women during the war in former Yugoslavia as a crowning piece of evidence that in proper conditions nearly all men are capable of rape. The example of rapes committed during wars, especially mass rapes, committed on women belonging to the nation perceived as enemy does not seem to be a telling one as there is no possibility of deciding whether rape is here a manifestation of "pure" violence or rather is a part of a broader campaign of violence, aiming at physical extermination of the enemy. Besides, the war itself is a "socialization" process, in result of which men and women lose the mental barriers disabling them to perform acts of violence in the time of peace. During the war there may be at play some additional factors triggering rape which can not be rightfully compared to phenomena proper to societies in time of peace.

Also the argument of cultural variability of attitudes of men towards sexual violence and rape does not seem convincing, as it does not contain any explanation of the reasons for those cultural differences. The knowledge of cultures remote

⁶ Ibidem, p. 63.

from the European culture is sometimes superficial, and first of all it concerns the state in which those cultures are now. That is why it is impossible to ascertain that in those cultures there are no mechanisms preventing rape, which are hard to accept in the western culture (e. g. cruel punishment of the agents of rape by male relatives of the victim), thanks to which the biological drive inclining some men to rape has been successfully suppressed.

Also treating men as a uniform group is a vast simplification (not only by the above mentioned authors but first of all by feminist philosophy). Probably not every man is in equal measure capable of rape, and this inclination may depend in equal degree on socialization, biological inclinations of all men, and hereditary and non-hereditary individual features. There are also differences in the number of rapes committed by representants of different social groups, that is why speaking of the responsibility of men as a uniform group seems to be a serious oversimplification. In western societies one can probably indicate groups of men in which violence and rape not only does not meet approval, but also is universally condemned.

Also "female culture", with which we deal in closed societies of women (e. g. in prisons) does not seem fully free from sexual violence. Because women prove capable of this kind of violence, one should think of reasons why most of the cases are committed by men. One of possible explanation is the thesis that within female culture there are factors which inhibit violence with sexual background, passed from generation to generation in the same process of socialization which makes all men potential rapers and causes women to be obedient creatures, victims of male domination.

Finally, the very concept of socialization should be considered unclear in ethical context. Socialization is a process in which a child learns the rules of social life, wanting therefore to find an answer to the question of the connection between socialization in "male culture" with the phenomenon of rape one ought to indicate the rules and ways of evaluation causing men to be inclined to rape. The view that what is at stake in that case is the image of woman as a potential victim of rape is hard to justify, if only for the reason that the number of rapes in urban societies, where the changes in social awareness are the deepest and occur the fastest, is not decreasing at all. Equally justified we can consider the view that it is

the lack of unambiguous patterns caused exactly by the speed of social changes which is responsible for the high level of sexual violence (and violence in general) in those societies.

For the fact that socialization is not capable of triggering or suppressing behaviors based mainly on a biologically conditioned drive speaks also the fact that in every society there is a certain percentage of people in which sexual drive concerns the same sex and that this percentage is probably stable regardless of repressional attitude of particular cultures towards homosexuality. It is also impossible to explain other kinds of sexual behaviors involving harm to persons, towards whom they are directed, e. g. pedophilia also cannot be explained by "collective non-distributive responsibility".

The above remarks do not mean of course that there is no specific pattern of "male culture", encompassing violence towards women. Such a pattern probably exists, and because it is passed in the course of socialization, it can probably be corrected. The existence of such pattern however cannot form a basis to burden men as a social group with moral responsibility, because it is not the only cause of acts of violence towards women and men. At most one can justify the theses of co-responsibility of men, although this thesis seems trivial: it is obvious that women as well as men learn in the process of socialization a whole range of norms and attitudes on which ground in western societies there happen innumerable unethical deeds.

Whereas the view according to which the responsibility of women and men in the case of sexual violence is not equal seems to mean only that men and women commit different number of unethical deeds, while women (accepting the existence of "collective non-distributive responsibility") as a group also would carry responsibility for crime and other unethical deeds of sexual background committed by women.

The thesis of collective male responsibility for rape seems to be exaggerated, still the above thoughts prove the importance of sexual education. Generally it is thought that sexual ethics deal mainly with the evaluation of contents included within the school subject often called "preparation for life in the family". If we assume that schools are obliged to teach youths certain knowledge about human sexuality, the question springs up about the scope of that knowledge, the way of

passing it and about who should transfer that knowledge. Even the most "objective" knowledge about adolescence or contraception is often to some extent entangled in a specific philosophy of man and it assumes certain truths about the nature of human sexuality. Because parents and teachers assuming a personalist point of view speak for almost entire "cleaning" of this subject of contents concerning sexual life, and the rest would wish for preparing the adolescent youth to undertaking sexual activity, it seems impossible to reach compromise in that matter, which in that case would mean choosing subject matter impossible to be accepted by everyone.

In Poland nearly nobody devotes attention to the problem of relations between sexes and the stereotypes connected with sex functioning in our society. Settling a common stance would not be in this area so difficult as in questions immediately concerning sexual behaviors. If then sexual ethics would be able to formulate postulates concerning sexual contacts which would be possible to use in the scale of the whole society, the postulate to include in education materials, thanks to which a change would occur in the way women and men are perceived and how their roles in society are seen, seems to be fully justified.

Summary

Ethics of sexuality is an exceptional field within the realm of ethics, due to its close connection with extra-ethical concepts, mainly religious ones. This fact differentiates sexual ethics from other ethical disciplines, such as ethics of business or eco-ethics. This is because, however one can talk about Christian or non-Christian (e.g. utilitarian) concepts within those ethics, there is no way one could talk about utilitarian ethics of sexuality: such ethics as a separate discipline simply do not exist. In my article I would like to formulate and justify values and principles relating to sexual relations. In order to do so, one has on one hand to consider the values formulated by Christian ethics, as well as the principles built on them – and, on the other hand, to look at arguments for including the sphere of sexuality within “lay” ethical reflexion. In my considerations as main research problem I pose the thesis: should sexual drive and the behaviours immediately resulting therefrom undergo ethical evaluation, or as a private sphere, they should remain outside the scope of interest of ethics.