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ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF SELECTED EVANGELICAL TEXTBOOKS FOR TEACHING RELIGION IN POLAND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF RELIGION

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Abstract. Studies of Polish pedagogy of religion are most often situated in the area of the Roman Catholic tradition of Christianity, in its catechetical or kerygmatic current. This current aims at “education to faith” and “in faith”. The center of such a formula is the proclamation of the kerygma of salvation and the formation of the faithful who identify with their own ecclesial tradition. Adopting the formula in question, both Roman Catholic and evangelical religious education treats pedagogy as its auxiliary science providing a conceptual and methodological apparatus for the realization of goals primarily related to the local version of the theology, doctrine and teachings of a particular church. However, pedagogy of religion practiced in the kerygmatic stream is not the only stream of this sub-discipline. In addition to it, hermeneutic and critical pedagogy of religion or religious-information pedagogy, among others, are indicated. For critical pedagogy of religion, it is important to take care of the relationship between religious education and social reality. Its goals involve education for critical self-awareness and emancipatory competence, including the ability to unmask the forms of symbolic violence present in interpretations of religious texts and the social practices derived from them, as well as education for social commitment to equality and justice, opposing marginalization, exclusion, discrimination and symbolic violence in the broadest sense. The article presents content analyses of selected textbooks for teaching evangelical religion and attempts to situate the model of religious education emerging from them on the map of the indicated trends.

Keywords: critical religious education, pedagogy of religion, inclusion and exclusion in religious education, evangelicalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on the Polish pedagogy of religion is most often located in the Roman Catholic tradition of Christianity, in its catechetical or kerygmatic current, which aims at “education to faith” and “in faith” (Marek, 2013, pp.93-105). Such a formula is based on the preaching of the kerygma about salvation and on the formation of the faithful identifying with their own ecclesial tradition. The core concepts here are: the biblical history of salvation, the growth of the knowledge of faith, liturgical education, moral formation, teaching of prayer, education for community life and introduction to the mission of the Church. Adopting this formula, both Roman Catholic and Evangelical religious education treats pedagogy as its auxiliary discipline, providing the conceptual and methodological apparatus to achieve the goals, which are derived primarily from the local version of the theology, doctrine and teaching of a given church. The tradition of both theoretical and empirical research conducted in this perspective is

also well institutionalized in Poland – catechetical and pastoral theology units have a long tradition in Poland and operate at higher education institutions in Warsaw, Lublin, Opole, Poznań, and Katowice. Similar departments or centres operate also at universities (accredited or not accredited by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education) connected with religious minorities, i.e., the Christian Academy of Theology in Warsaw, the Baptist Seminary or the Higher School of Theology and Social Sciences in Warsaw¹.

The research on the construction of meanings of religion in Polish schools through the analysis of selected Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Pentecostal textbooks for religious education carried out by Marcin K. Zwierzdzyński (Zwiezdzyński, 2014) indicates that the social image of religion emerging from the confessional paradigm dominant in religious education in schools is nearly always linked to the doctrinal and highly ideologized message on the place of religion and religiosity in the private and public spheres.

However, the pedagogy of religion practiced in the kerygmatic trend is not the only one recognized in the literature on the subject of this sub-discipline. Apart from it, there is also hermeneutical and critical pedagogy of religion (Milerski, 2011)² or pedagogy of information about religion (Halbfas, 1972). Each of them concerns a specific research perspective, deals with the problem of one's own understanding in different ways and applies different interpretative strategies of cultural texts related to broadly understood religion. These strategies may be located within local religious and faith traditions or may arise from other traditions, including non-religious contexts, theories and philosophies. The broad, hermeneutical pedagogy of religion is oriented not so much at the return to the source interpretations of traditions but at such strategies of these interpretations (of written texts, images, social phenomena, etc.) and related ways of practicing religion which, generally speaking, are oriented towards acquiring new ways of understanding one's own life. What is at stake in hermeneutical pedagogy of religion is interpretation as “production” rather than “reproduction” of meaning.

Critical pedagogy of religion, however, is very much concerned with the relationship between religious education and social reality. The goals it sets itself are related to education for critical self-awareness of individuals and their emancipatory competences, including the ability to expose forms of symbolic violence present in interpretations of religious texts and social practices derived from them, as well as education for social commitment to equality and justice, opposing marginalization, exclusion, discrimination and broadly understood symbolic violence. One of the principles determining such education is the recognition of religion as a specific, historical conglomerate of interpretative traditions and the meanings given within their framework and the social practices considered desirable or undesirable. In this perspective, therefore, religion is a socially constructed phenomenon and category. In this context, the task of a researcher dealing with education should be to reconstruct and analyse the meanings “inscribed” in it and the concepts of man and the world created on the basis of them, the concepts subsequently adopted and consolidated by local, quasi-religious theories and pedagogies.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

I place selected themes of analyses presented later in this article in the field of critical pedagogy of religion. Polish literature on the subject contains at least a few studies on this subject. A critical reconstruction of Józef Tischner's thought was carried out by Szymon Dąbrowski in his book *Pedagogika religii Józefa Tischnera W poszukiwaniu nowego modelu edukacji religijnej* (Dąbrowski, 2016). Rafał Włodarczyk in his book *Ideologia teoria edukacja Myśl Ericha Fromma jako inspiracja dla pedagogiki*

¹ The last two are universities which educate teachers of communities associated with the Evangelical denomination, including those associated with the Baptist Church and churches identifying themselves with the so-called charismatic trends, such as Pentecostals.

² These trends are strongly present mainly in German Protestant religion pedagogy. They are extensively reconstructed, with references to an extensive body of texts, by Bogusław Milerski (2011).

współczesnej presented Fromm's concept of religion as a general theory of ideology (Włodarczyk, 2016). Mirosław Patalon analysed the work of American researchers involved in the theology of the process, making attempts to critically translate their findings into the realities of Polish religion pedagogy (Patalon, 2007). In the article devoted to the Christian anarchist Jacques Ellul, I myself attempt to apply the concept of this poorly known Polish theologian-activist to the Polish critical pedagogy of religion understood as a subdiscipline of general pedagogy (Humeniuk, 2018). Unfortunately, however, the perspective of feminist pedagogy of religion, which is important for critical research and has a recognized position in German, Dutch or American research traditions, is still rarely taken up in Poland, on the margins of reflection in the field of pedagogy of religion, usually as a kind of "overspill" from other disciplines, such as theology, literature studies, sociology or cultural sciences. I have devoted an article to attempts to systematize such research and to selected examples of the use of critical perspective in interpretation strategies of religious texts: "Między katechizmem a biblioteką – w stronę inkluzyjnej pedagogiki religii" (Humeniuk, 2017). Despite the above examples, it seems that the critical perspective in the research on the Polish pedagogy of religion still needs to be systematically developed. The following analyses of selected contents of textbooks for teaching Evangelical religion are to contribute to this type of research.

The main research problem of my analyses boils down to the following question: *Do Evangelical religious education textbooks address and solve problems related to such categories of critical pedagogy as knowledge, power, self-awareness, empowerment, emancipation, and emancipatory competences?* (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2016)³? In the article I will present the general tendencies observable in the relevant context from textbooks for teaching Evangelical religion in Poland (Humeniuk-Walczak, 2017)⁴. A detailed analysis of the issues raised will be provided in a separate, broader research project. The themes referred to here are only to map out a certain tendency in the presentation of topics. As such, they do not constitute a comprehensive study of the content on the basis of which I reconstruct them. The choice of textbooks was made at random from among those recommended by persons involved in educational practice in Evangelical environments and materials available on the market published after 2007.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Exclusion and exclusivity in religious education (Humeniuk-Walczak, 2017)

A characteristic way of showing the "spiritual" and social reality in the analysed textbooks is its dichotomy (e.g., *holiness* versus *sinfulness* or *salvation* versus *condemnation*). The theological rationale for this strategy is provided by the following fragments expressing the metaphysical and anthropological concepts of God and man contained in the textbooks: "People are stained with sin. If the whole sheet were dirty, no one would notice the stain. The same goes for us - in the company of other people, our sin is not so visible. But when we face the Holy God, we can clearly see our sinfulness. Even if you do a lot of good deeds every day, it doesn't change the fact that you are stained with sin. (...) God is holy, separated from sin, has nothing to do with sin, so a man stained with sin must be separated from Him" (Kłapa, 2015, p. 13). "(...) This applies to you, too. You are also in a dreadful situation because of your sin. Sins separate you from God and death awaits you, which is the punishment for every sin" (Kłapa, 2009, p. 102).

³ The explanation of the basic concepts of critical pedagogy in its emancipatory version and the pedagogical context in which the analysis of the content of textbooks for teaching Evangelical religion is performed is based on the interpretation presented by M. Czerepaniak-Walczak (2016). The limitations imposed by the article prevent their reliable presentation. The discussion of the applied terminology will be included in the extended version of this project.

⁴ My analyses provided in this article will of necessity be limited. Comprehensive analysis of the content requires a more comprehensive monographic elaboration, which is also a further aim of my work in this area.

The consequence of these concepts is the inclusion of educational goals in the strategy of the oppositional categories of *inclusion* and *exclusion*, i.e., inclusion of the saved into the community or exclusion from it. And so, for example, in the guidelines for the use of the *Poznanie Boga. Program do systematycznego nauczania dzieci rok 1*. [Knowing God. A curriculum for the systematic teaching of children year 1], the author defines and categorizes the learners as: "Those who have already trusted in the Lord Jesus (have accepted the gift of salvation) are saved; those who have not yet done so (have not accepted the gift of salvation) are not saved" (Kłapa, 2015, p. 7), stressing that the principle of the handbook will be the differentiation of the so-called "application" of the "principal biblical truth" taught in the lesson for "saved children" and "unsaved children" (Kłapa, 2015, p. 8).

The key task of this religious education is understandably to "lead" to *salvation*, understood as the need to *turn away* from the "world" ("non-Christian world", from "non-believers" and their "lifestyles") and to trust in "the Lord Jesus" as "Saviour": "Now you know that you can only be saved by turning away from sin and by placing your trust in Christ" (Mayhew & Muhr & Crutchley, 2009, p. 46); "If the Lord Jesus were to come now, millions of people would hear these words: 'I don't know you'. What would you hear? (...) Have you accepted the forgiveness of sins through faith in the Saviour? Do not postpone your salvation for some other, more convenient time. Do not risk that the door to heaven will be 'slammed shut' forever. Trust in Christ today to be able to wait for His return with joy" (Kłapa, 2015, p. 63).

Formulating class topics, defining goals and designing the course of individual classes and educational tasks orientated *towards* "salvation" and *against* "condemnation" becomes the dominant principle of the entire process of religious education. Education understood in this way is a formula of kerygmatic education, strongly connected with theological normativity and entails consequences in the social sphere.

These consequences are well explained by R. Szarfenberg in the paradigm of a group monopoly (Szarfenberg, 2006), which is upheld by inner status groups, sharing a common culture and identity, having a strong sense of distinctiveness, following their own patterns of world and lifestyle perception, reluctantly sharing privileges with those who come from outside their circles (Szarfenberg, 2006, p.44). The cornerstone of this logic of *marginalising exclusion* (Szarfenberg, 2006, p.45) is the perception of religion as an anchor of stability in the universe obsessed with the imperative of change and as synonymous with traditionalism (Hervieu-Legér, 2007, p. 124). Religious education will serve to consolidate and reproduce this opposition of the social worlds, affirming homeliness and strengthening distrust towards what is alien (Humenuk-Walczak, 2015). Access to the goods of the community, to a proper understanding of the truth, to ways of valuing reality, to loyalty and solidarity practices towards one's own, etc., is constantly monitored. Preventive and exclusion criteria for *the others* are established. An external "aspiring" group can be identified with the negative characteristics of the privileged community, with the wrong vision of reality, erroneous beliefs, sinful attitudes and lifestyles, which makes it impossible to be accepted into the privileged circle (Humenuk-Walczak, 2015). This approach is expressed in the following textbooks, which encourage young people to adopt a conservative attitude that is distanced from those who think differently / believe differently: "keep wholesome relations [with nonbelievers]. But you should also make sure they don't have a bad influence on you. (...) If you are a Christian, it is important that your friend is also a believer. You will then have similar interests; you will want to go to church (...) Be especially careful with the friends you have met during the summer. Establish relationships that are pleasing to God (...) If you meet a girl or a boy and go out with them, make sure they are Christians. Not ordinary Christians, but Christians by God's choice" (Mayhew, 2009, p. 48).

At the same time, the "believing" youth is encouraged to "evangelize" "non-believers", to make a commitment to be missionaries to save "lost souls": "Do you realize that reaching out to others with the Gospel is the responsibility of every single Christian? Serving the Lord is not an option, but a command! You too should serve Him with love for the many lost souls around you. You are not young enough to warn others about the danger of life without Jesus" (Mayhew, 2009, p. 49).

The perspective of exclusion in religious education, derived from the theological assumptions

adopted, becomes a paradigm that preserves the binary vision of the social world, in which good and evil are identified with the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man, while the criterion of privilege is linked to the status of someone who *believes* and *is saved*. The *unbelievers* and the *unsaved*, while remaining on the margins of the system, are perceived as unable to understand the mechanisms governing the operation of the centre, unable to join the circle of values recognized in the centre (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2016). The only way to gain access to the privileged centre is to accept salvation, which is comparable to initiation and a kind of rite of passage.

3.2 Transmission and objectification in religious education

B. Milerski points out that the model of religious education expressive of the educational process almost exclusively in terms of theological normativity associated with confessional obligations and the apologetic tasks of one's own religious group (Milerski, 2011, p. 140), leaves out pedagogical normativity which highlights the individual and communicative development of the students. Transmission methods are based on memorisation and uncritical assimilation of information by learners, without the need to pose problematic questions and without attempts to formulate answers to them on their own. Such methods do not give a chance to cast doubt on the discussed issues, to freely search and experiment with solutions. Additionally, not proposing confrontation with other points of view or positions which represent different world views, they block reflection and intellectual autonomy, creating an illusion of absolute objectivity of judgments about the world. This is expressed in the specific, directive language of textbooks, in the choice of topics, in the way of formulating educational goals and in the formula of the frequently used "applications" of the lesson. *"He sees all your sins. Come to him like a tax collector and ask for forgiveness, and you will be cleansed of sin"* (Kłapa, 2015, p. 16). *"Treat God's Word as your daily bread, not a holiday cake. 'Nurture' on the Bible every day and do what it says. If God's words fill your heart, you will see changes in your life, for example, in relation to others"* (Kłapa, 2015, p. 93). *"Is the Lord Jesus in the boat of your life? You cannot cope with your problems on your own. The waves will flood your 'boat' and you will be helpless. Satan's point is to drown you. (...) You need a good 'captain' in your life, full of power. Is Jesus in the boat of your life? If not, invite Him today!"* (Kłapa, 2009, p. 98).

In the light of research into the learning processes in the knowledge society, the ability to understand is now recognised as one of the key skills. As A. Pobjewska points out, the process of understanding involves several competences. These are, first, the selection of the data received, eliminating irrelevant information. Second, giving meaning to information considered important. Third, capturing and evaluating manipulative techniques inherent in a given message. All these elements require knowledge of the standards and values serving as selection criteria; having a broad pool of culturally important wholes and interpretative patterns; abstract thinking that goes beyond operational thinking; intellectual plasticity that allows one to go beyond familiar patterns; critical thinking that allows one to see the explicit and covert assumptions of a given message (Pobjewska, 2019, p. 42). In the light of critical and emancipatory pedagogy, understanding has a decisive influence on the subjective world of life, i.e., the intersubjectively constructed structure of meanings in which human thinking and action take place.

The individual experiences it as his own and familiar; it becomes his field of consciousness, which determines the limits of possible freedom. In it, situations are defined and interpreted, and there is also a whole interaction between material elements and the symbolism of the world of life on the one hand and the individual on the other. This is the most important space and "territory" of the subject, where the shape of everyday existence is moulded (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2016, p. 103). The world of life depends greatly on the context. Context, as M. Czerepaniak-Walczak explains, is the "subjectively construed set of elements of reality meant to adequately 'interfere' with it in technical, ethical, aesthetic and political terms. The reading of the structure and dynamics of the context determines the course of the transformation of the relation between the subject and its individual elements. In the emancipatory theory of education, knowledge and understanding of the context of speaking and acting is a prerequisite for independence" (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2016, p. 104).

Thus, this understanding largely determines the empowerment of the individual, the understanding of one's own position and limits of freedom, but also the recognition of one's own cognitive and interpretative limits and their consequences. An education that aims to expand the fields of freedom of the subject and to support transgressive and emancipatory processes would be particularly interested in the processes of understanding, reflection and critical thinking. Meanwhile, the authors of the analysed textbooks, rather than to understanding, devote much more space and attention to the transmission of information, the transfer of poorly thematised messages, as well as to the category of obedience. It is the question of obedience that occurs in most of the lessons in the analysed textbooks. *"People who honour their parents are pleasing to God and receive the promise of obedience from Him. (...) God can empower you to do these things. But if you confess your disobedience to Him and give Him control over your life, you can count on Him"* (Mayhew et al., 2009, pp.20-22). *"God wants us to always tell the truth. (...) Always tell the truth, even in a difficult situation, because this attitude will be rewarded by God (...) Do you want to experience God's blessing? If so, follow God's command to always tell the truth!"* (Kłapa, 2009, pp.43-44). *"Choose what pleases God in your daily situations and you will experience a blessing (...) God expects you to obey (...). Obedience to God is not always easy! But God in His Word emphasizes that people who obey Him are happy (...) Obey as Mary, and then God will be able to use you (...) God makes use of obedient children"* (Kłapa, 2009, p. 46).

Obedience in the above excerpts is a kind of individual, indisputable call to the person, a prerequisite for his well-being and "God's care". The need to be obedient is a kind of metaphysical discipline; "God" commits himself to support a person only in exchange for obedience. Moreover, in return He promises the reward of a unique ennoblement: "to make use of a person" and to use a person in "His own affairs". It seems, then, that the "God" of the Evangelical religious education textbooks is not interested in human wisdom, maturity, independence or understanding of oneself and one's life, but rather in absolute and unconditional subordination and acquiescence. "God" is the hegemon, and man is the subordinate, obedient servant. For emancipatory pedagogy, this will mean colonisation and objectification, as well as false awareness of the individual locked in the narrow field of oppression and fear. Religious education, based on the coercion of obedience resulting from the fear of threatening consequences, is an education that is oppressive and violent, uninterested in the learner's development and freedom.

Obedience is also connected here with the realization of the necessary vocation, with the duties of the "Christian" and with the necessity of defending one's own faith. Interestingly, the reconstructed model of exclusive religious education does not discuss its own confessional perspective. It is not included in the categories of a cultural, social or historical phenomenon. Such an approach could not guarantee the objectivity of the truths considered revealed and universal. This can be seen in the following messages, often presented in this way, addressed to young people: *"Christ made it possible for us to be saved from our sins and reconciled us with God. How can you be saved? Coming to the Lord Jesus, trusting in him and turning away from sin. Have you already done so? If so, your sins have been forgiven and you have a proper relationship with God. Perhaps you don't care what Jesus did on the cross. Or, perhaps, you've heard about it many times before, but you've never responded. Come to the Lord Jesus Christ today"* (Mayhew et al., 2009, p.38). Educational outcomes are formulated in a similar manner: *"We'd like teenagers to understand that God should take first place in their lives; (...) to understand that Christ's resurrection is a fact and that other theories are inconsistent; (...) to make sure that they have the right priorities and nothing stands in the way between them and God; (...) to be ready to explain to others why they believe the Lord Jesus is alive and why it is important; (...) to remember and give the first place in their lives to God"* (Mayhew, 2009, p. 11).

The tasks to be faced by the individual do not require inquisitiveness and understanding, but only the acceptance of the knowledge transferred. They do not refer to competences described as emancipatory, i.e., innovation, criticism, creativity, which are related to e.g. the ability to think questionably or critical self-reflection (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2016). They hardly provoke reflection, inference, association or search for the right answer. The answer, whether the solution usually already exists, has been established in advance and the student is only meant to recreate it. The closed character

of the formulations makes the teacher lead the “intellectual activity of the students as if on a leash”, i.e., the teacher navigates them to reach the “right” and desirable answer. The students “fit in” with the teacher's thoughts, trying to guess what he or she means (Pobojevska, 2019, p. 46). The passivity of such an educational process must result in limiting the cognitive development of students' perception competences: learning to think and teaching through dialogue is replaced here by listening and reproduction (Milerski, 2011, p. 148). The following excerpts from the textbooks illustrate this strategy well: [notes to the teacher]: “*Teenagers need encouragement to put theoretical lessons into practice every day (...) Tell them about difficult situations: “Daniel is a Christian. He talks to his schoolmates and one of them swears using the Lord's name. What would you advise Daniel to do? Read the solutions below (...) After reading each advice, comment on it appropriately. Give a few tips and tell them how important it is to take a firm stand on the Lord's side, even if it is a tall order”* (Mayhew et al., 2009, p. 16).

The rationality generated and reproduced in the discussed model of religious education, a rationality which adapts, transmits, infantilises and suppresses criticism, may contribute to the strengthening of ethnocentric and isolationist attitudes and result in the formation of a dogmatic (closed) mind (Kruszewska, 1991, p. 84) or else contribute to a fundamentalist mentality, unable to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty, seeking simplified solutions to life's problems (Motak, 2002, p. 183). Thus, the educational model discussed becomes synonymous with anti-educational thinking, reducing the educational reflection to the area of dogma of one's own religious group as a depositary of the only truth, negating different points of view and describing them as forms of existential falsehood. As such, it is poorly suited to the reality of a pluralistic, post-secular social world.

3.3 Towards reflection and inclusion

According to D. Hervieu-Legér, the process of secularization understood as the privatization of faith leads to the dispersal of the religious element, which is significant for reflection on the place and function of religious education. It becomes an impulse for the construction of individual sub-worlds of meanings connected with the new version of the sacred, the essence of invisible religion, which does not require the mediation of any religious or public institution. As the author observes, “It leaves room for manoeuvre for a combination of topics inherited from historical religions and modern topics of freedom of speech, self-fulfilment and mobility, which correspond to the social privileges of individualism. (...) There is a shift from the 'great transcendencies' - associated with the vision of another world - towards one of the 'middle-range transcendencies' (e.g., political), and above all towards the 'mini-transcendencies' oriented towards the individual, which give the [post]modern culture of the 'self' a sacred character (Hervieu-Legér, 2007, p. 61).” This is where the monopoly paradigm ceases to apply. It is replaced by a vast reservoir of values, meanings and senses, which can be freely constructed not by an adaptive and non-reflective object, but by a mature, morally responsible subject of religious experience.

The perspective of *inclusion* and the model of religious education of *inclusion, recognition and dialogue* generated by it, poorly but still present in some textbooks for Evangelical religious education provides such a context. The foundations of such thinking about religious education can be found, for example, in the following formulated topics of religion lessons: “*Each of us can come closer to God in a different way (...) Faith manifests itself differently, but it is the need of every human being; (...) In Poland there is a freedom of religion, preaching and worship; (...) Divisions are an indispensable element of human life*” (Stępień 2011, pp.117-135). The inclusive model of education aims at interpersonal solidarity and cultural sensitivity, readiness to transcend the narrow limits of one's own vision of the world. Moreover, it aims at continuous exploitation of the dialogue potential inherent in every religion and conducting dialogue to the point where, after L. Kołakowski, one can say: “Faith is legitimate. Lack of faith is legitimate. (...) Both are needed for our culture” (Kołakowski, 1959, p. 13).

The dialogic potential, the core of inclusive religious education, is two-sided. On the one hand, as P. Sikora observes, “Each participant in the dialogue must be a committed participant in his or her tradition, and the encounter is possible because of the universality of the need at the root of every religion. The discussion must start from this universal need and return to it as often as possible. The criteria for evaluating

religious traditions are somewhat pragmatic: one must ask about the discourse's ability to integrate the widest possible spectrum of experience and how life's practice responds to the desire for eudaimonia" (Sikora, 2004, pp.312-313). In dialogue, therefore, one does not have to abandon up-front one's own "mini transcendence". Equal legitimacy of all narratives values *difference*, makes private mental traditions an object of full attention and interest, seeing them as a manifestation of the autonomy of the subject. As S. Obirek states, "Who in a poly-mythical manner – living and narrating – participated in multiple histories, will always owe to one history his or her freedom from the others, and vice versa" (Bauman & Obirek, 2013, p.129).

However, by entering into dialogue and "risking" the encounter, one can expect an internal change (this is the second dimension of the problem). Genuine dialogue should entail consent to change. It is one of the principles of inclusive religious education. Here the faith of others (difference) appears not as a threat, but as a chance to enrich one's own faith. Including others in one's own narrative of experiencing religion, one can not only learn something about others, but also get to know oneself better. It is difficult to imagine an encounter of different views of reality without their initial presentation. This "first step" is expressed in the selection of educational content below: *[a description of introductory classes for the lesson on selected world religions] "The teacher displays a multimedia presentation of different buildings and objects related to the five largest religions. (...) These are: a fish, prayer in a mosque, an image of God Siva (...), the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, the image of a holy cow in India, a Buddha statue, the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, a Tibetan monk, a Muslim woman, a yarmulke, a Golden Stupa in Burma, a menorah, a cross, a swastika (...)* [students write down their own definitions of the term religion]. Then they [read them out and] create one common definition of religion. Subsequently, the teacher hands out the *Encyclopaedia and the Polish Language Dictionary* so that the students may find the correct definition of religion and confront it with their own" (Stepień, 2011, p. 129).

The inevitability of change and Gadamer's perspective of fusion of horizons neutralise the potential of violence contained in religion (Bauman & Obirek, 2013, p. 91), and it ceases to threaten with exclusion or execution. The exclusive pedagogy of dogma which follows an established path and is closed to risk and uncertainty, is replaced by an inclusive pedagogy of ecumenism which grows out of excitement with novelty (*difference*), a fundamental motivating force for human cognition (Patalon, 2007, p. 183), instead of the kerygmatic model of religious education. B. Milerski points to the hermeneutical and critical pedagogy of religion, subject to the logic of subjective rationality and emancipation.

Their objectives will be to develop the ability to understand religious content in the context of self-understanding and culture. In addition to the Holy Book, religious education can be based on other texts, both religious and secular. Through their interpretation one can gain not only an understanding of existential issues, but also a firmer stand in the surrounding social, cultural and political reality. These texts contain the truth about human dilemmas, values and possible dimensions of existence (Milerski, 1998, p. 184). Traces of such sensitivity are present in the following examples: *"Suffering people are a separate, often closed world. This world opens up to us when we suffer ourselves or when we come to suffer with our loved ones. Physical suffering is a sign of helplessness in the face of pain. All the more so because severe pain can be a symptom of approaching death. P. Ricour (...) states that existence and suffering are inexorably intertwined: 'I suffer therefore I am'. In physical suffering, man experiences his existence to the very core. (...) Suffering awakens man from daydreaming (...) it can also help man to experience what the taste of life is and what its value is. (...) Summing up his reflections on suffering, T. Gadacz states that it is an enigma, something beyond good and evil. The problem of suffering remains a mystery, which man is incapable of knowing. The question about the meaning of suffering brings various answers, which are not always satisfactory"* (Bednarz & Tomaszewski, 2009, pp.122-123). Inclusive pedagogy of religion will privilege understanding as the key didactic category, thus breaking free from the model of transmission education and leading towards existentially oriented religious education.

4. CONCLUSIONS

People teaching Protestant religion in Poland, unlike in the case of Catholic catechists, do not need to

receive so-called canonical mission, i.e., a personal authorization from the bishop with the indication of their place of work, nor do they always need to use textbooks approved by the local diocese to teach religion.

The practice of teaching religious education to children and youth in Evangelical environments has the character of a deregulated profession. Taking over from the traditions of American Evangelicalism the formula and the terminology, religious lessons as a "Sunday school" usually takes place in local churches, often parallel with the Sunday service, in separate common rooms, differently prepared for educational purposes. Sunday schools (sometimes also called "Bible schools" or simply "Bible lessons") are a kind of cooperatives of goods and services. Teaching is conducted by community members who often have no pedagogical background, which is not strictly required here. Usually they are volunteers with (and sometimes without) relevant experience - most often parents of children from the age group in which the activities are carried out. They work pro bono, with no remuneration, which is connected with the formula of unpaid community "service", popular in these environments and being a moral obligation of all the faithful.

The choice of textbooks is usually a discretionary matter; the degree to which the form, content, and methodology of religious instruction are formalised depends on the size of the congregations, local laws, customs, and practices. In larger congregations, there is a coordinator-leader, answerable to the minister and responsible for teaching children and youth. This person takes care of e.g., the selection of textbooks, the program of possible internal trainings for teachers in Sunday schools, organizes meetings of the teaching staff with other parents, etc. In smaller schools, the minister is the formal coordinator of all "services", including Sunday school.

It seems that it is the relatively low degree of institutionalization and professionalisation of Sunday schools in comparison to e.g., Roman Catholic catechesis, the fact that the activities of such schools are based on the work of amateur volunteers, as well as the clear precedence of theology over pedagogy and other auxiliary sciences that influence the character and contents of textbooks and methodological guides for teaching Evangelical religion. They are often very meticulous guidelines for the teacher, lesson scenarios, in which the teacher is offered not only the structure of the lessons, their objectives or the course of activities within each class, but also ready-to-use formulations, questions, anecdotes, and comments. Textbooks and lesson plans may differ slightly as to the degree of use of these open or closed learning and transmission formulas. For example, in the series of textbooks *Zielone światło and Ja i Bóg na co dzień*, open or semi-open questions addressed to students are far more numerous than in the textbook series *Prowadzeni przez Boga* or *Bóg mówi*, where the sentences directed as guidance for teachers and as tasks for students, show a clear predominance of statements or commands (e.g. "Choose what pleases God in your daily situations and you will experience God's blessing" ; "Come today in faith to the Lord Jesus who was nailed to the cross and ask Him for forgiveness of your sins, and you will be saved, reconciled to God" ; "Don't do things that sadden the Holy Spirit. If something in your actions saddens the Holy Ghost, ask God to help you change it"). Possibly, more detailed and precise lesson plans are meant to support amateur educators in their implementation. Unfortunately, however, in the light of the current knowledge of general didactics and creative pedagogy, such a strategy means training in rigid thinking and reflexivity, suppressing cognitive curiosity, blocking critical thinking and creativity in both religion teachers and their students. This leads, then, to mere reproduction and "regurgitation" of what one has learned.

The article presents selected topics of analysis of the content of textbooks for Evangelical religious education, which show the specificity of metaphysical, epistemological, anthropological, axiological, and teleological theory and attendant educational practices. The dominant, theologically motivated perspective of exclusive kerygmatic pedagogy is located in the area of transmission teaching, assuming memorisation and uncritical assimilation of knowledge treated as reliable, i.e., unquestionable and unconditional. It does not familiarize the student with strategies of problem thinking and does not train the student to express doubts and pose open questions. It makes use of closed formulas; instead of

questions, it uses statements and orders. It operates in terms of subordination, power and obedience. It refers to the behavioural model in which the hegemon has effective tools for control and discipline. It instrumentalises and objectifies the subject of educational influences, blocking emancipation processes.

The selected research material has helped reconstruct a few examples of an inclusive and dialogical formula of religious education in the analysed textbooks, where difference is treated as an impulse for development, better self-understanding and a chance to communicate with others. From the perspective of critical and emancipatory pedagogy, which would aim at the emancipation and empowerment of an individual, their personal and religious maturity, the development of their inner potential and the achievement of inner freedom and ability to exercise it responsibly (Milerski, 2011, pp. 162-163)⁵, the reconstructed themes are but a pale foreshadowing of the potential of religious education (not exclusively Evangelical). Critical pedagogy of religion could support learners' autonomy and the process of their maturation. It would link the educational process with the development of self-knowledge, understanding of one's own biography, criticism and courage which determines social involvement. As B. Milerski emphasises, upbringing can never be critical enough. In the face of great words, extolled values or propagated ideologies, critical decisions are a must. Religious education and religious education classes should make young people immune to the dominant forces and ideologies (Milerski, 2011, p. 162)⁶.

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Моніка Гуменюк. Аналіз змісту окремих євангельських підручників для викладання релігії в польщі з точки зору критичної педагогіки релігії. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 10 (3) (2023), 258-268.

Дослідження польської педагогіки релігії найчастіше перебувають у площині римо-католицької традиції християнства, в її катехитичній або керигматичній течії. Ця течія ставить за мету "виховання до віри" і "у віри". Центром такої формули є проголошення керигми спасіння та формування вірних, які ідентифікують себе з власною церковною традицією. Приймаючи цю формулу, як римо-католицька, так і євангельська релігійна освіта розглядає педагогіку як свою допоміжну науку, що забезпечує концептуальний і методичний апарат для реалізації цілей, пов'язаних насамперед з локальною версією богослов'я, доктрини і вчення конкретної церкви. Однак педагогіка релігії, що практикується в керигматичній течії, не є єдиною течією цієї субдисципліни. Крім неї, виділяють, зокрема, герменевтичну та критичну педагогіку релігії, або релігійно-інформаційну педагогіку. Для критичної педагогіки релігії важливо дбати про зв'язок між релігійною освітою і соціальною реальністю. Її цілями є виховання критичної самосвідомості та емансипаційної компетентності, включаючи здатність викривати форми символічного насильства, присутні в інтерпретаціях релігійних текстів і соціальних практиках, що випливають з них, а також виховання соціальної прихильності до рівності і справедливості, протистояння маргіналізації, відчуженню, дискримінації та символічному насильству в найширшому сенсі. У статті представлено контент-аналіз вибраних підручників для викладання євангельського релігієзнавства та зроблено спробу розмістити модель релігійної освіти, що впливає з них, на карті зазначених тенденцій.

Ключові слова: критична релігійна освіта, педагогіка релігії, інклюзія та ексклюзія в релігійній освіті, євангелізм.