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Berislav Čović (Croatia)

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb

berislavc@gmail.com

Mile Marinčić (Croatia)

College of Ivanić-Grad, Ivanić-Grad

marincic.mile@gmail.com

BIOETHICS IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES¹

Abstract

We are witnesses of an attempt to enforce the curriculum reform in Croatia, as well as a proposal of a *school for life*.² While the intent of this presentation is not to analyse the curriculum reform, it is important to mention that the curriculum reform, within the framework of the general educational group of subjects, kept the subjects like Ethics and Religion. Unfortunately, some subjects, such as History, Biology or Chemistry could lose their hours in the long run. The reason for bringing this up is simple. It could happen, and this would in no way be good, that within the corpus of teachers a devaluation of certain subjects occurs, as well as animosity among colleagues. When we take a look at the statements of certain politicians³ on some subjects (their importance and unimportance), the status of professors etc. we see just how much Croatia needs the constant repetition of the fact that a wholesome, well-rounded, mature individual is not made by brilliance in the STEM area nor excellence in natural sciences, but that very same individual also must strive for excellence and well-roundedness in the cultural, ethical, moral, and any other sense which makes up one of the

1 This paper was made in the frame of the research program of the Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics (announced on November 10th 2014 by the decree of the minister of science, education and sport of the Republic of Croatia), realized within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb as the founding institution of the Centre.

2 <https://mzo.hr/hr/veliki-odziv-skola-za-eksperimentalni-program-kurikularne-reforme-skola-za-zivot> (2019-05-05).

3 <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/ivan-vrdoljak-mislite-da-moje-dijete-ako-ide-za-zidara-treba-povijest-zasto-se-profesor-povijesti-ne-bi-prekvalificirao-i-predavao-informati> (2019-08-05).

wheels in the wholesomeness of a person. Any curriculum process, *school for life* or something of the sort, which would exclude some of the segments in the process of education in terms of the wholesomeness of a human being could only damage society on all levels in the long run.

Key words: bioethics, society, Croatia, curriculum reform, education, responsibility, school subjects

Introduction

The discussion about moral, ethical, and bioethical problems in the teaching process within the framework of high schools is, unfortunately, seemingly “losing the battle” as of late with regard to the subjects of the so-called STEM area, or rather in relation to subjects prescribed as mandatory at the state graduation exam. The label of irrelevance, redundancy, burden for students etc. is more and more given to the humanities subjects. The guilt for that kind of an attitude towards the humanities field is shared by everyone equally, starting from parents who are highlighting the importance of good grades in mathematics, physics, languages etc. and respond mildly or with a dose of ridicule to an excellent grade in art class, music class, ethics, religion etc., moving onto the subject teachers who allow themselves to superficially estimate certain subjects they deem to be “unimportant”, right up until the sectors in the social community where an accent is being laid on strengthening the subjects the pupils will need in everyday work. When the previously mentioned is overviewed, we should not be puzzled by the fact that morals, ethics, and bioethics are more and more being observed as “fashionable”, something to have in our documents (codes) because it is popular.⁴ Quite often are morals, ethics or bioethics the corrector or an instrument for disguising negativities or harm (not to use some harsher words) that man is doing through his dishonest action in regard to politics, economy, environment protection etc. We are witnesses of the fact that man is taking power over nature with a sudden and rush development of technical means and is more and more governing its processes. Hans Jonas will, rightfully, say that in the post-industrial age “*techne* has turned into an endless drive towards the advancement of the species” (Jonas, 1990: 24). For that reason, we consider it to always be necessary to again and again highlight the importance of preserving the humanities group of subjects in classes. In line with the aforementioned, we consider the development and preservation of all those humanities subjects with the aim of caring about the preservation of life and health on all levels to be extremely important. For that reason, continuing this presentation, we will especially look at the subject of bioethics, which is more and more current in Croatia and entire Europe,⁵ as well as Ethics, Religion Class and civil education

4 For a clearer definition of the terms morals, ethics, bioethics, we turn your attention to the study of Ante Čović with the title: „Pojmovna razgraničenja: moral, etika, medicinska etika, bioetika, integrativna bioetika“ (eng. Conceptual demarcations: morals, ethics, medicinal ethics, integrative bioethics) (Turković, Roksandić Vidlička and Maršavelski, 2016: 3-9).

5 For as clear as possible overview of the entire developmental path of bioethics in Croatia we point to worthy contributions of prof. Ante Čović, whose works are taken as the basis of this paper, not neglecting the valuable studies of other authors who contributed to the development of bioethics in Croatia and the entire South-East Europe.

which, each in their own way, attempt to promote the protection and quality of life on all levels.

Ethics and bioethics

On the contribution of the development of philosophy and ethics in Croatia, a comprehensive and important contribution was given by Bruno Ćurko in his study “Education and teaching in the activities of the Croatian Philosophical Society” (hrv. “Odgoj i nastava u aktivnostima Hrvatskog filozofskog društva”) (Ćurko, 2008: 665-695).

Ethics, from its point of view, wants to estimate and norm human behaviour. It is, therefore, necessary for ethics to have its own certain *meaning* and that it moves within some securities.⁶ Along these lines, ethics is the thinking about human behaviour which is the subject to norms and has three basic assumptions: 1) that man possesses the ability to choose between executing and rejecting the norm; 2) that human activity is autonomous i.e. that man is not only free in regard to the serving of norms, but that he freely adopts them and forces them on himself; 3) that ethical norms, unlike legal and technical ones, are unconditionally valid and, as such, have unconditional and constant basis (Accomando, 1995: 151).⁷ Here it is necessary to point out, as L. Tomašević writes, that those assumptions, especially the third, are not generally accepted and that today there are ethical theories being developed which create the criteria that are more similar to Kant’s rules of common sense (Gracia, 1993: 387-402, according to: Tomašević, 2007: 91). For the best possible general image of bioethics, we wish to highlight that, according to the Christian viewpoint, the human being and its dignity should be placed at the centre of things i.e. the person must always be at the centre of each choice. Such questions need to also be asked during personal research i.e. we must always have in them the image of the wholesome advancement of the human being. The great sins of human actions in previous centuries encourage us towards this and we would like to only highlight some of them here, such as a nuclear catastrophe (from Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Chernobyl), genetic engineering, atomic energy, ecological pollution, unsustainable economic growth, omnipresent terrorism, up to the overexertion of raw materials and the pollution of water, air, plant and animal world.

6 As stated by Luka Tomašević (2007: 91), for Christians that is the Scripture, while for others it can be conscience or some other values.

7 Here, Tomašević calls upon the research by C. Cianci titled: „Etica e cristianesimo” (Tomašević, 2007: 91).

Such disastrous actions for human life and survival are also pointed out by A. Čović when he wrote that it was precisely the scientific-technological advancement which enabled man to rise into the divine. Man has now taken over the role of lord over life and death unto himself (Čović, 2004, according to: Rinčić, 2011: 25).

We can rightfully speak, as L. Tomašević notices, about the endangered nature of life on Earth. This is precisely the reason why we consider that bioethics should in no way remain exclusively tied to the area of human health, medicine, and newer biotechnical achievements. It must become *the ethics of life and responsibility* considering the ambient, ecology, ecosystems, the society being urbanized and globalized, as its creator, Potter, had imagined it to be from the start (Jurić, 2008: 12).⁸

This is the direction in which H. Jurić argues when he states that “The birth of bioethics is interpreted from the synergy of action of two factors: extraordinary technical advancement in the area of biomedicine and a gradual raising of awareness of ecological risks caused by the human hunger for economic progress and domination over nature” (Jurić, 2007: 83).

In such dehumanizing conditions, the importance of the question of responsibility is raised, in all areas of action.⁹ We can say that this term supersedes man’s aspirations to acquire absolute power over nature. A moral relevance is awakened from responsibility i.e. there is a change in the question of attitude towards other creatures sharing all the natural wealth of the world with man. When it comes to science, A. Čović points to the fact that there has come a time of loss of authority of science, a mistrust and scepticism and that in relation to transcendence there is a practical necessity of Super-instance for the survival of man and nature being forced (Čović, 2004: 10).

We can rightfully say, as an encouraging statement, that bioethics has appeared as a new orientation framework, an area in which the signs of the time began to manifest and in which a general new epoch could be founded. This is also confirmed by the document of the Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics: “that based on self-understanding present in bioethical discussion, but also with the help of philosophical-ethical categories, some light can be shed on the creation and the development of bioethics until now, its nature,

8 More on this in: Potter (2007), Matulić (2001), Čović (2000 and 2004), Čović, Gosić and Tomašević (2009). On the new cognitions in matters of development and rebirth of bioethics, there are worthy contributions by Rinčić and Muzur (2012 and 2015).

9 More on the term of responsibility in: Ingarden (2012: 57-116) and Bubalo (1984: 51-70).

and methodological innovations which the bioethical approach enters into the overview and solving of moral and general civilizational questions.”¹⁰ This new epoch is now being called “the bioethical epoch”¹¹ and it represents an innovative way of moral orientation in situations arising from the application of scientific-technical achievements in the area of medicine. A. Čović highlights that the integrative diversity in the system of first bioethical bodies will be pasted into pluriperspectivism (Pavić, 2014: 577-600; Čović, 2006: 7-12) as a basic methodological determination of bioethics (Čović, 2004).

We are of the opinion that a critical approach to this field is much more important than the determination of the subject of bioethics. Saying that, one must have in mind all the undeniable benefits bioethics enters in the scientific/expert and public discussions. The importance of encouraging a critical discussion on bioethics itself is being forced through the questioning of different concepts, thematic areas and the very methodology of bioethics i.e. to critically discuss the scientific status of integrative bioethics.

Bioethical education in Croatian schools

When dealing with the very enforcement and the specific application of bioethical education in schools in Croatia, it is important to highlight that it is extremely important that bioethics, as such, is recognized and placed into the syllabus in ethics class for high schools in a way that bioethical topics are done in the third grade and the very textbook for third grade carries the title of bioethics (Reškovac, 2009).¹² A good portrayal of the aforementioned subjects was done by Nataša Vulić in her presentation published in the JAHR publication (Vulić, 2012: 23-28).¹³ Ethics syllabus in third grade¹⁴ is clearly divided into five units: Man in the totality of the living, Bioethics as a response, Ecology and environment protection, Bioethics and biological sciences and Medicinal bioethics. These

10 According to the document: *Obrazac za prijavu znanstvenih projekata* (version 6.0.02.03.99.) (eng. *Form for the application of scientific projects*), from the documentation of the Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics.

11 We are here referring to the presentation of Ante Čović titled: „Kraj novoga vijeka i bioetička epoha“ (eng. The end of the new age and the bioethical epoch), which the author held on the 9th *International Philosophical Symposium Days of Frane Petrić* (main topic: Philosophy of time), organized by the Croatian Philosophical Society, June 25th to 28th 2000.

12 On the development of bioethics in Croatia: Zagorac and Jurić (2008: 601-611) and Jeličić (2016).

13 Available at: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/87420> (2018-10-24).

14 http://dokumenti.ncvvo.hr/Nastavni_plan/pmg/etika.pdf (2019-08-20).

units lead pupils through the basics of bioethical considerations. The aim of bioethics class is to familiarize pupils with the potential moral problems of today and to enable pupils to differentiate in moral judgments and prepare them for creative and dialogue participation in ethical articulation and solving of moral dilemmas. Pupils should gain insight into how those problems and dilemmas afflict all people (universality) and how it is not possible to solve them in selected groups of experts, but only in a creative dialogue of all relevant approaches and standpoints (pluriperspectivism).¹⁵ Bioethics has taken on itself a huge task of, firstly, making man aware of his speciality (anthropocentrism) within the world he is living in, and then the task of pointing out the value and importance of everything around us (Jurić, 2005: 303-307; Krznar, 2016).

“Promoting quality of life, which should become the primary task of bioethics, greatly depends on the will of the ruling casts or parties, ideologies and various social conditionalities today. And life cannot simply be taken into your own hands or abandoned to ideologies and social conditionalities because life, if it truly wishes to be autonomous, necessarily becomes the “common good”. It is a fact that life does not go on according to a paradigm of freedom and autonomy, but rather the paradigm of love and solidary care for the other” (Tomašević, 2007: 100).

L. Tomašević will say that bioethics, in that view, becomes *social ethics* in the development of the civil society today, but also the *ethics of responsibility* before the future of man, ecosystems and the quality of life, in a sense of solidary and careful *concern* for the other (Ibid.).

At the same time, bioethics is the one pointing out the traps that human progress carries with it in any way, starting with science, then industry and, in the end, technic and technology. Bioethics points to a need of systematic care and responsibility for life, a relationship toward nature, as well as a responsibility in regard to the future and future generations (Jurić, 2007: 16-16).¹⁶

L. Tomašević will say that, apart from health and medicine (medicinal ethics), there is a vast area of life, bioethics as well, deserving of our thoughts and considerations. This is an area of social life under various views, from social organization to politics and economy. This is the problematic and never

15 For the terms *integrative bioethics* and *pluriperspectivism* see more in: Čović, A., „Integrativna bioetika i pluriperspektivizam” (eng. Integrative bioethics and pluriperspectivism) (Borovečki and Lang, 2010: 23-32). On the difference in terms: ethics, morals, bioethics, medicinal ethics, integrative bioethics: Čović and Radonić (2011: 11-24) and Čović (2000: 97-116).

16 Available at: <http://www.matica.hr/vijenac/340/sto-je-bioetika-6356/> (2019-08-02).

moderated area of the so-called *public administration of life* (Russo, 1999: 5-7., according to Tomašević, 2007: 99-100).

Furthermore, and we can freely say this is the most important point, if our life does not transform into responsibility and care for man, the world and life within it, all our talk about bioethics will remain a narrow, catechetic speech and a voice of a crying man in the desert.

Only in that sense can bioethics become Potter's "bridge towards the future". The future depends on our care and promoting the quality of life, which is always a *dialogue, interpersonal i.e. social*. Scientific and juridical laws should be superseded by the creation of a "social unison" about life and its value with the awareness that my own life only has meaning if it is true that the life of everything surrounding me that is living has meaning (Tomašević, 2007: 101-102).¹⁷

By critically seeing the general picture, an individual can ask: is there not enough school examples and papers on this topic? These are rhetorical questions. Each contribution to this view comes directly by the readers and what they feel is missing from the discussion in both principles and details. If we only take for example the definition of the term bioethics i.e. integrative bioethics, we will see that they are in no way yet adequately defined concepts, and that goes for the differentiation between the terms ethics, ethos and morality as well. Judging by Ronald Dworkin, moral norms prescribe how we should treat others, while the ethical ones are based on how an individual should lead their personal life (Shingleton and Stiliz, 2015: 9-).

Bioethics introduces scientific, cultural, religious, traditional and other suppositions into its horizon and does not advocate either of them, only encouraging that, in the variety of different views, the best solutions for the survival of the world and man and the protection of life in general can and should be found.¹⁸ In that direction, the ethical-bioethical education is necessary on a

17 On the possible contribution of integrative bioethics in the area of dialogue among religions, faith and science: Marinčić and Čović, (2012: 107-121).

18 Along this line, looking at the task and role of bioethics, Hrvoje Jurić will argue that "even today, in bioethical discussions there is a narrow, humanist-biomedical understanding of bioethics present, which mostly assumes reviewing problems concerning human life and health. Even though this tendency is still strong, especially in the Anglo-American world, there is an insight that bioethics is not (anymore) just the same as the new (bio)medical ethics, but that it encompasses a much wider spectrum of questions, from clinical-medical ones to global-ecological ones. However, even with those who advocate a wider understanding of bioethics, there is a narrowing of another kind present. Namely, many simply considering bioethics a sub-discipline of philosophical ethics, more precisely a branch of applied ethics." (Jurić, 2007: 16).

wider social field, starting from family life, continuing into kindergarten age and lasting until the entrance to the field of the social-political community. Only by the integrative approach can bioethics find its place and accordingly contribute in the protection, development, and survival of man.

H. Jurić highlights that “the main goal of integrative bioethics is to give orientation to respond to some of the key problems of humanity and the planet and to nurture and articulate a growing bioethical sensibility; therefore, not scientific management and construction of pretty theories but a far-reaching consideration of survival under biocentric principles and action which can encourage specific social-political movements”¹⁹

It has, therefore, become apparent that solutions should not only be sought on the technical plan, but that also a warning about the wrong politics of development and a careless application of technology should be expressed. The ecological problem, as L. Tomašević notices, before being a political and a technical, is primarily a deep ethical problem of the contemporary world, which also sheds light on its deep anthropological crisis (Tomašević, 2007: 66).

The need or awareness for bioethical education

If the awareness for bioethical education was to cover the aforementioned field, it would surely be easier to connect philosophical theoretical basics with contemporary interpretations of moral dilemmas through the classes in bioethics at the level of high school education with a contemporary method of teaching. This would be done with the inclusion of a cultural-technological aspect of moral action, which would be apparent in the multidisciplinary and pluriperspective approach. In order for the awareness to be as great as possible, it is necessary, through expert communities within primary school and high school classes, to develop value and importance of bioethical education for all segments of society. A good example of spreading the bioethical paradigm and the questioning of its importance and significance for the educational system is surely the regular

¹⁹ Jurić highlights that Potter was “encouraged by his own experience working in the field of biomedicine and the ethics of the land by Aldo Leopoldo came to an insight into the networking of the micro and macro levels of life, but also to an insight that life, as a complex system of interactions, implies the need to network approaches i.e. a wholesome view of the problems of health and survival of man and other living things, and nature or life as a whole. This, first of all, meant the integration of biological knowledge and the knowledge of human value systems, because ethics, according to Potter, can no longer be separate from biological facts.” (Jurić, 2007: 16).

organization of bioethical symposiums such as the days of bioethics in Lošinj and Osijek. An example of good practice is Germany, which is already working in this field. For instance, Ulrike Manz edited a collection of papers connected to bioethical education in school (*Bioethik in der Schule*) (Manz, 2009).²⁰

Religion class

When talking about theology, and especially Religion Class, Luka Tomašević highlights that “its contribution cannot remain neglected because it must give its own vision of man and the world. It must exit the narrow space it brought itself in because of a known conflict with the modern science, where it dedicated itself more to the salvation of souls and the kingdom of heaven and have left the world and culture to the influences of science and philosophy.” (Tomašević, 2007: 99). Furthermore, Tomašević will say that “the very cognition that technical science is unable to offer real sense to essence and life must force theology to re-examine its anthropology, as well as the very relationship between man and God (traditional themes of theology) and then the relations between people in light of Gospel values (social bioethics), as well as the relationship with nature and life in general (physical bioethics). Finally, the Greek notion of defining everything should be abandoned and the world should be seen with Biblical eyes, and that is a world in which the Biblical man speaks of himself and his relationships.” (Tomašević, 2007: 99).

If we focus our critical thinking on the current situation in our school system, we will surely notice that in Croatia there are often various questions on whether or not Religion Class should be in our schools. This is certainly not a topic we wish to discuss here (even though it would be interesting and desirable to lead one such research, because we are sure that the very data obtained with the research would say enough for themselves), but we can also mention that some of the forms of confessional religion class or religion culture²¹ exist in almost

²⁰ Available at:

https://books.google.hr/books?id=Hrivru0A_wEC&pg=PA113&lpg=PA113&dq=bioethik+im+religionsunterricht&source=bl&ots=t1XuL89K02&sig=kdYOqhjktx4IkSXSbn81wi9HMiI&hl=hr&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj97pSgyqneAhULiSwKHUc6A4YQ6AEwBXoECAAQAQ#v=onepage&q=bioethik%20im%20religionsunterricht&f=false (2019-08-18).

<https://www.crol.hr/index.php/zivot/7496-vecina-europskih-zemalja-u-skolama-ima-neki-oblik-vjeronauka>,

As well as (Filipović, 2011: 137-152). Available at: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/72421> (2019-08-02).

²¹ <https://www.crol.hr/index.php/zivot/7496-vecina-europskih-zemalja-u-skolama-ima-neki-oblik-vjeronauka>,

As well as (Filipović, 2011: 137-152). Available at: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/72421> (2019-08-02).

all the countries of Europe, apart from France (with the exception of the Alsace and Loren), Slovenia, and Bulgaria. In this paper, we mention Religion Class in the context of bioethics or, better yet, the integrative bioethical approach. Namely, as we already mentioned earlier, and which is apparent from the historical creation of bioethics as suggested by the previously stated authors Jurić, Zagorac, Rinčić, Muzur, Šegota, Matulić, Čović and others, bioethics in its attempt to protect life offers a pluriperspective focus. Pluriperspectivity, simply put, means to enable various perspectives, scientific, cultural, religious and others, to speak about the need to protect life on all levels. In that context, within Religion Class as a subject, according to its concept, the topics which can directly or indirectly be connected to bioethics are offered for consideration. In the third grade, through the fifth unit of classes, we have a spectrum of bioethical topics, beginning from the relationship towards life (the sanctity life), moving on to basic principles of the bioethical science, abortion, organ transplants, genetics and genetic engineering, euthanasia, until the problem of death and palliative care (Čaplar, Kustura and Živković, 2010: 109-136). The fact that Catholic Religion Class is more focused on the topics of medicinal ethics is noticeable. In the fourth grade, there is the added problem of the challenges of the scientific-technological advancement with topics on knowledge, wisdom and knowledge, globalization and informatization, talk about the culture of life, influence of technology on the future, genetic engineering and manipulation, consumer culture, ecological responsibility, sustainable growth and, finally, responsibility for society (Filipović, 2009: 117-152). We can see that in the fourth grade of Religion Class in high school, there is more talk on the general social problems, the problems that the technic-technological civilization carries with itself and then on the problems related to the informatization and globalization and up to the problems of ecological nature. It is obvious that many bioethical topics which are in the syllabus for ethics in high school overlay with the topics in the syllabus of Catholic Religion Class. Obviously, their starting points are not the same because in the basis of bioethics within the framework of Catholic Religion Class there is Christian anthropology and in Ethics the starting point is philosophical anthropology. It would be good to observe the syllabi for other confessions in Croatian schools. They surely, each in their own way, touch on the bioethical questions and problems. In their own way, these various bioethical approaches point to the possibility of a pluriperspective overview of certain bioethical, ethical or moral problems, whether it be in Ethics class or one of the confession classes. As a good example, we highlight Germany where, within the frame of Religion Class, a wide selection of references is offered for certain

ethical-bioethical problems,²² which is a more than relevant piece of data on how to take systematic care that current problems are kept up with.²³

Civil education

John Paul II, in his 11th encyclical “*Evangelium vitae*” clearly talked in favour of life and called the culture of our time “a culture of death” and called all people of good will to create and fight for a culture of life (Ivan Pavao II, 1995). He highlighted that with a loss of feeling for man, the sense for all good, especially the common, is lost. For that reason, the Pope argued that the basic education and movement for conscience are necessary. Given that health, education and water became objects of trade these days, anything could be bought and sold. Each aspect of human life is subjected to the technical-market logic. L. Tomašević will say that such a “market society” is a typical society of globalization²⁴ and a product of the Western world of today. Even though it was developed in the democracy, it is in its very essence non-democratic and totalitarian because it does not allow the development of any other social form. This becomes even more apparent if you take into consideration the fact that such a society especially values “the winner and the stronger.” Furthermore, Tomašević highlights that the “ethical problem of such a society is in the fact that every expression of humanity and humane values is measured by *economic worth*” and everything becomes worthless i.e. “the usefulness of products is seen only through the worth of their use, not in their worth as such, and the same goes for man because he is also on the market” (Tomašević, 2007: 111).

When talking about globalization, H. Küng considers that today, more than ever before, we need consideration on global ethical standards i.e. “in order for globalization of the markets, technologies and communications to become sustainable, the profit of economy connected to it would have to be realized in

22 This rich offer of references is related to various questions, from bio-technological ones, those about cloning, reproduction, up to the questions related to animal protection. More in: <https://www.sankt-german-speyer.de/images/publikationen/thematische-literaturlisten/pdf-und-flipbook/Bioethik-2018-1.pdf> (2019-08-22).

23 Available at: <https://www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com/themen-entdecken/paedagogik-soziale-arbeit/schulpaedagogik/15996/bioethische-urteilsbildung-im-religionsunterricht> (2019-07-16)

24 When talking about globalization, a large number of authors has lately thought about this important, but also controversial question, lately. Here we state only some of them: Scholte, (2005), Milardović, (1999), Steger, (2005), Beck (2003), Stiglitz, (2004), and others.

a way that is acceptable for society and environment protection” (Küng, 2007: 194).²⁵

Humanity is having the moral necessity of a new solidarity forced unto it in order for it to be able to re-evaluate its way of life. The man of today is overly fond of enjoyment and consuming and remains indifferent to the harm arising from it. It is precisely the difficulty of the ecological state which shows how deep man’s moral crisis is. If a person and human life are not appreciated, then other people cannot be, either. Contemporary virtues of life would have to become the following: modesty, moderation, self-discipline and a spirit of sacrifice, if humanity truly does not want us to feel the horrible consequences of the neglect of individuals. This means that it is necessary to educate people for ecological responsibility, responsibility towards themselves, towards others and the environment. This education cannot be dependent only on feelings, good will and it cannot be an ideological or political choice. “True education for responsibility includes true transformation of the ways of thinking and behaving. In that regard, churches and other religious institutions, the governing and non-governing organisms, all the participants of society in general, should perform their role. The first educator is again the family in which the child learns to respect their fellow humans and to love nature.” (Ivan Pavao II, 1989: 13, according to: Biškup: 2000: 49-60).

Civil education, as such, does not exist as a subject in high schools. Civil education was discussed in the Republic of Croatia as early as 1999, the first signs of enforcing it happened in 2006 in primary schools and a more systematic enforcement on all levels of education, from preschool, through primary and high school, happened in 2010.²⁶ According to the plan by the Ministry of Science and Education from 2017, civil education is comprised of inter-subject themes which are primarily based foremost on the thematizing of human rights, democracy, and civil society.²⁷ Civil education is done through teaching in class (by the class teacher of that class) or in a way that every teacher separates at least two classes within the framework of their subject (regardless of what subject it is) that can

25 A worthy contribution to this problem is also brought by Ivan Cifrić in his paper (Cifrić, 2015 and 1989).

26 https://www.azoo.hr/images/goo/Preporuke_GOO.ppt (2018-09-12), as well as the suggestion of the national curriculum of an inter-subject theme: *Civil education* from 2016. Available at: <http://www.kurikulum.hr/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Gra%C4%91anski-odgoj.pdf> (2018-08-20).

27 https://mzo.hr/sites/default/files/dokumenti/2017/OBRAZOVANJE/NACION-KURIK/MEDUPREDMETNE-TEME/medupredmetna_tema_gradanski_odgoj_i_obrazovanje.pdf (2018-09-17)

tie that subject to the practical needs of the students and help them to be more adaptable in everyday life. Infrequently, the topics that the teachers themselves choose, especially those who teach the social-humanities group of subjects, are tied into the field and problematic of bioethics. It is important to mention that civil education rests on the premise of interactive and interdisciplinary approach which in its very inception brings it in connection with the bioethical paradigm itself, which has advocated active interdisciplinarity from its very beginnings.

Instead of a conclusion

It is important to note that there is a certain bioethical education²⁸ within the frame of Ethics and Religion Class and some bioethical topics are broached in the frame of civil education classes. The aforementioned subjects could, through their bioethical education, be a good preparation of all students for the continuation of bioethical education at colleges and faculties. By focusing their views in this area, it is of extreme importance to maintain the stated education in the frame of what are general educational subjects and not to succumb to the pressures of taking lesson times from one subject and giving it to another. Here we can highlight informatics or robotics²⁹ (with all the elements that they, as contemporary technologies, bring) which are often addressed lately as “important” and which

28 Along with the question of bioethical education, we point to the worthy research which, within the frame of her doctoral dissertation was conducted by Nada Gosić (1999), a first in the field of bioethics in Croatia, titled: *Bioetička edukacija: sadržaji, metode i modeli* (eng. *Bioethical education: contents, methods and models*.)

29 It is especially important to highlight that the European Parliament has already posted on the question of robotics, clearly stating that, without ethics, it can do more harm than good. In that context, it is good to take into consideration the adopted texts of the European Parliament on the Rules of Civil Education in Robotics. In this document, it is clearly stated that a study titled “Ethical aspects of cybernetic-physical systems” is taken into consideration. It is also stated that humankind is on the verge of a time in which there is more and more sophisticated robots, bots, android and other forms of artificial intelligence, ready for a new industrial revolution, which will likely affect all layers of society. It is of vital importance that a legislator considers the legal and ethical implications and effects of that, without suppressing innovations. In the general principles of the document, there is a warning about the need to start working on the question of civil-rights responsibility, and then there is a discussion on the term of responsibility, as well as ethical principles. There is a special attention placed on “robots for care”, “medical robots”, and robots for organ “repair” and the “improvement” of the human body. To the benefit of the resolution, special attention is given also to the recommendations of the content of the sought subject through the Charter on Robotics, A Code of Ethics for Robotics Engineers, Code of the Committee for Investigative Ethics, along with the Permissions for designers and users. We are of the opinion that these documents may truly aid to the most ethical and transparent application of robotics in biomedicine that is possible. See European Parliament, Adopted Texts, Rules of Civil Rights on Robotics, European Parliament Resolution on February 16th

would make the aforementioned subjects irrelevant. Just the same, in a given moment there is a need for resisting the superficial assessment of a subject, where the informatics (technic and technology) is considered to be leading us into the future, Religion Class into the Middle Ages, or Philosophy and Ethics into Antiquity. The problem is not when such superficial assessments on the importance of one part of education are given by citizens with no notion of the educational system or those who are not academically educated. The problem is when we hear such superficial analyses from those who are regulating the system and are academically educated. At the place where a superficial estimation of the importance or unimportance of a subject or some type of education takes effect, we can, in a Jonas spirit, ask everyone a question: will we leave to the future generations on Earth at least the life conditions we have (Jonas, 1990: 8). We can say this in a different way – will morals and ethics disappear under the attacks of science, technology and technic, which are forcefully trying to exclude both morals and ethics from their horizons.³⁰ We ask the question to all of us of what type of man will we have in the future, if we systematically deprive him of the educational (ethical-moral) point, if we systematically dehumanize him, and feed him elements on the importance of success, profit, science, technic and technology (if we systematically materialize him). Maybe it is best if we use the words of Jonas in the end as a new ethical commandment, which states: “Act in a way that the effects of your action are not destructive to the future possibility of such life.” (Jonas, 1990: 28)

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³⁰ A worthy overview of European philosophy and morals throughout history is brought by Anton Grabner-Haider in his study titled “Europäische Philosophie der Moral” (Grabner-Haider, 2006: 349-398, 387. and more).

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Berislav Čović (Hrvatska)

Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište u Zagrebu

berislavc@gmail.com

Mile Marinčić (Hrvatska)

Visoka škola Ivanić-Grad, Ivanić-Grad

marincic.mile@gmail.com

BIOETIKA U SREDNJOŠKOLSKOJ NASTAVI³¹

Sažetak

Svjedoci smo pokušaja provođenja kurikularne reforme u Hrvatskoj, kao i prijedloga škole za život.³² Nakana ovoga rada nije analizirati kurikularnu reformu, ali je važno spomenuti kako je kurikularna reforma u okviru opće obrazovne grupe predmeta zadržala predmete etika i vjeronauk. Nažalost, neki predmeti poput povijesti, biologije ili kemije dugoročno bi mogli izgubiti satnicu. Razlog zašto se ovo spominje je jednostavan. Moglo bi se dogoditi, a što nikako ne bi bilo dobro, da unutar nastavničkog korpusa dođe do obezvrjeđivanja pojedinih predmeta i netrpeljivosti među kolegama. Kad pogledamo izjave pojedinih političara³³ o pojedinim predmetima (o njihovoj važnosti ili nevažnosti) o statusu profesora i sl. vidimo koliko je u Hrvatskoj potrebno uvijek iznova naglašavati kako cjelovitog, zaokruženog, zrelog pojedinca ne čini briljantnost u STEM području, niti izvrsnost u prirodnim znanostima i sl. nego taj isti pojedinac mora težiti izvrsnosti i zaokruženosti i u kulturnom, etičkom, moralnom i bilo kojem drugom smislu koji čini neki od kotačića u zaokruženosti osobe. Bilo koji kurikularni proces, škola za život ili nešto slično, koji bi isključivali neki od

31 Ovaj rad nastao je u sklopu istraživačkog programa Znanstvenog centra izvrsnosti za integrativnu bioetiku (proglašen 10. studenoga 2014. odlukom ministra znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta Republike Hrvatske), koji se ostvaruje pri Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Zagrebu kao ustanovi nositeljici Centra.

32 <https://mzo.hr/hr/veliki-odziv-skola-za-eksperimentalni-program-kurikularne-reforme-skola-za-zivot> (pregled: 5. 8. 2019.)

33 <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/ivan-vrdoljak-mislite-da-moje-dijete-ako-ide-za-zidara-treba-povijest-zasto-se-profesor-povijesti-ne-bi-prekvalificirao-i-predavao-informati> (pregled: 5. 8. 2019.)

segmenata u procesu odgoja i obrazovanja u smislu cjelovitosti ljudske osobe dugoročno bi mogli samo štetiti društvu na svim razinama.

Ključne riječi: bioetika, društvo, Hrvatska, kurikularna reforma, obrazovanje, odgovornost, školski predmeti