

KRZYSZTOF PILARZ\*  
Nicolaus Copernicus University

## Contemporary questions about faith and culture. The pedagogical context

**Abstract:** The article presents in the pedagogical argumentation the relationship between culture and faith, analyzing the mechanism of treating them dichotomously and pointing to the consequences of such an approach. The author's opinion is that the widely understood phenomenon of faith is an integral element of not only culture, but in particular all educational activities, all disputes about a man, his identity and development. He argues this by referring in the discussion of faith to the issue of truth in pedagogical teleology.

**Keywords:** faith, belief, teleology, pedagogy, education

For a long time now, attempts have been made to reflect systematically on the relationship between faith and culture. What until quite recently seemed obvious, i.e. the culture-forming role of faith, is no longer taken for granted: even within the circle of the so-called Western civilisation, which grew rooted not only in Greek humanism and Roman law, but also of Christian religiousness (with all its colour and complexity), faith is denied a positive cultural-forming role, and is even put in opposition to culture as a limiting and pathology-yielding factor. In the light of the increasingly common and definitely inconsistent secular paradigm, derived directly from post-modern assumptions, faith, and especially certain concrete manifestations of it, is becoming a culturally undesirable phenomenon. In this article, we will not limit ourselves to presenting an attempt to push the dichotomy of faith and culture, which is noticeable today, but we will also take into account the pedagogical context of asking questions about these two spheres.

## Formal (hermeneutical) aspect

In the discussion on faith and culture, it is necessary to clarify the formal understanding of these two concepts. They describe complex realities, hence the term “faith” and “culture” of many phenomena, sometimes even contradictory with each other, e.g. the term “faith” is used to describe the entire Christian faith, and the unspecified faith in the existence of an abstract Higher Being, and an attitude of trust in fate, chance, and faith in magical influences – these phenomena are connected with different world views, often completely different anthropological assumptions and relations to the spiritual sphere. This, of course, is related to the post-modern paradigm and the reluctance to formulate absolute definitions of truth (or, more generally, the reluctance to any definition). Therefore, in order to avoid entering the difficult philosophical and theological areas (which may be burdened with a certain amount of subjectivity) at the very beginning of the article, we will begin to look at the definitions of culture in which, regardless of its understanding, faith finds its environment to exist. Moreover, culture, unlike faith, does not experience so much pressure to deny it socially, which also justifies reflecting on it first as a phenomenon in relation to a broader and more universal faith<sup>1</sup>.

## Culture

Of the many definitions of culture, one of the most famous is the concept by Heinrich Rickert, who juxtaposes culture with nature. While nature (from Latin *nasci*) means something that originated in itself and as such did not require and does not require the participation of people for its existence, as it can exist without them, culture (from Latin *colere*) is already what is nurtured by people, the development of which is subject to care and to some extent, modelling<sup>2</sup>. In Rickert’s understanding, there is no permission for free development in culture, as this is a domain of nature. The reference to the sphere of values is significant in this respect. In the realm of nature, this reference is small or non-existent. In the cultural sphere, on the contrary, what we cultivate is nurtured with the goal to realise certain values or produce certain

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\* Nicolaus Copernicus University, ORCID: 0000-0003-1959-5617, email: pilarz@umk.pl

<sup>1</sup> Of course, this is a controversial assumption in itself, but sociology seems to have strong empirical arguments that culture is necessary for faith to exist and that culture is primary in relation to faith. Yes, even a small child shows some elementary trust towards its mother, but it is difficult to speak of faith as a mature phenomenon and subject to a conscious, personal attitude to the world. In turn widely described examples of so-called “wild children”, growing up amongst animals, prove that inculturation and socialisation deficits make impossible to achieve the mental and spiritual development necessary for the existence of faith.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. Rickert, *Człowiek i kultura*, B. Borowicz-Sierocka (trans.), in: *Neokantyzm*, B. Borowicz-Sierocka, C. Karkowski (ed.), Wrocław 1984, pp. 71-75; the same text by Rickert in: *Antropologia kultury. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów*, A. Mencwel (ed.), Warsaw 2005, pp. 23-25.

goods. A good example is the image of a garden and a meadow beyond its borders. The garden, as a planned and purposeful space, requires constant treatments towards its care. Valuable elements are strengthened, while the undesirable ones (such as weeds) are removed. While the gardener is not disturbed by a meadow outside the garden and is as indifferent as possible to the weeds, he or she follows a pre-established plan for what, when and where to grow in his or her own garden. Of course, he or she takes into account the laws of nature (for example, concerning soil amelioration), but does so in order to be able to realise their idea. Without the gardener's action, the garden would start to wilderness and after some time the laws of nature would take possession of what is cultivated by people. Such an understanding of culture presupposes the conscious creation of culture and the responsible participation of all individuals submerged in it, otherwise we would be dealing with social engineering that would shape culture in order to realise not the goods common to its participants, but the goods of the individuals responsible for the application of manipulative social engineering.

Our remarks correspond to the definition of culture given by Stefan Czarnowski, according to which it is "a whole of objectified elements of social achievements, common to a number of groups and, due to its objectivity, established and capable of spatial development<sup>3</sup>". According to Czarnowski, the highest manifestation of culture will be civilisation, thus he continues August Comte's thought about the existence of the so-called *consensus universalis*, which determines the existence of complex social structures.

In contrast to the above, contemporary Western culture, saturated with consumerism and hedonism, does not seem to create favourable conditions for the development of individuals so that they shape the common good. Instead, we observe a phenomenon characteristic of the so-called "instant culture", in which an individual loses himself in a crowd, who is given a low-quality cultural slurry just to shape them into an ideal, possibly thoughtless and socially passive mass consumer. This is by no means a new phenomenon, as José Ortega y Gasset, for example, had already noticed at the end of the 19th century, but in recent decades, mainly due to the dynamic development of electronic media, it has become very important due to the possibility of a wider and more comprehensive and attractive impact on society through the mass media and intelligent content management and distribution systems. While according to Rickert, culture differs from nature by striving for fulfilling values in an organised manner<sup>4</sup>, Ortega y Gasset observes

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<sup>3</sup> S. Czarnowski, *Kultura*, in: *Antropologia kultury*, pp. 26-33 (citation: p. 33). According to A. Szyjewski, this definition of culture, by no means definitive, is treated as a "convenient starting point" for, among others, contemporary anthropologists, although the author criticises its anthropocentric context. See A. Szyjewski, *Etnologia religii*, Kraków 2008, p. 22-31. There is also an interesting argument about culture from the anthropological point of view.

<sup>4</sup> H. Rickert, *Człowiek...*, op. cit., p. 23-24.

that the crowd, the human mass are “all that which sets no value on itself — good or ill — based on specific grounds, but which feels itself “just like everybody”, and nevertheless is not concerned about it; is, in fact, quite happy to feel itself as one with everybody else”<sup>5</sup>. This “being like others”, however, is not related to social inactivity, but to the crowd achieving full social power. Ortega y Gasset writes about it that the crowd suddenly became visible, took a privileged place in the society. Previously, even if it existed, it remained unnoticed, it was somewhere in the background of the social scene; now it has moved to the very centre, it has become the main character of art. There are no more protagonists, just a choir. Just like almost 100 years ago, when these words were written, it is now difficult to talk about heroes who, on the one hand, are paving new paths and, on the other, uphold the values that are the foundation and foundation of social life. This does not mean that they are not there, but they are not promoted by and for society, as their attitude is contrary to that of consumers.

Here, again referring to Ortega y Gasset, one can point to the existence of the so-called hyper-democracy, in which the masses impose their aspirations and tastes on everyone, their way of looking at the reality<sup>6</sup>. As the aforementioned thinker writes, “average and trivial minds, knowing their condition, demand the right to be average and trivial and to impose these qualities on everyone else”<sup>7</sup>. Let us also recall that according to Ortega y Gasset, the “mass man” has two basic features. First of all, he is aimed at the free expansion of life’s demands and needs, especially with regard to the individual. Secondly, he has a strong lack of sense of gratitude for those who made this comfortable life possible for him. Such a claiming attitude resembles that of a spoiled child, “dissolving means not limiting demands and needs, that is to say, instilling in the individual the conviction that he is allowed everything and that he is not obliged to do anything”<sup>8</sup>. In this way, culture begins to be identified with nature and treated as something natural, which does not have to be sought after, and which in a way belongs to every individual “beforehand”, regardless of the degree of participation in its creation. The human masses “are not interested in anything but their own prosperity, and at the same time they have no sense of connection with the causes of that prosperity”<sup>9</sup>. Understood in this way, the masses are easily managed by shaping and then satisfying the needs of the lower order and systematically depreciating the needs of the higher order, especially those related to responsibility for others. The theses presented by Ortega y Gasset

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<sup>5</sup> J. Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt Of The Masses* (1932), [https://archive.org/stream/TheRevoltOfTheMassesJoseOrtegaYGasset/Philosophy+-+The+Revolt+of+the+Masses+-+Ortega+y+Gasset+Jose\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/TheRevoltOfTheMassesJoseOrtegaYGasset/Philosophy+-+The+Revolt+of+the+Masses+-+Ortega+y+Gasset+Jose_djvu.txt) (translator’s note).

<sup>6</sup> Within the framework of hyper-democracy, “the masses act directly, disregarding legal norms, with physical and material pressure, imposing their aspirations and preferences on everyone”. After: *Ibidem*, p. 537.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 538.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 541.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 542.

can of course be discussed<sup>10</sup>, however, the phenomenon of the depravity of human influence on culture and the degradation of culture itself is not difficult to notice. The *consensus universalis* by Comte no longer has the right to exist, because in the era of post-modernism, any metanarrations other than the post-modernist ones are stigmatised<sup>11</sup>. The reluctance to objectively determine the truth and the resulting social constant leads to axiological relativism and chaos. At the same time, those institutions that try to ask courageous questions about the truth or invoking the truth, especially in the axiological dimension, face many difficulties. This applies, among other things, to the Church, but also to traditional values and social structures that specifically affect the human identity.

In the light of the above, the fear of discussing culture seems justified, as its pauperisation and degeneration consistently eliminates what was perceived as high culture, setting standards and being a test of human achievements. At the same time, one must be aware of the ambiguity not only of the concept of culture itself, but also of its manifestations as such. Here, we touched upon the understanding of culture in its broad sense (albeit not the broadest one, as we focused on the phenomenological approach from the Western culture) – the more we narrow our area of interest, the more concrete the discussion on culture (national, of a specific social group, local, etc.) will be. Let us only summarise here that culture assumes conscious and intentional (planned) activity towards the common good and as such, it is integrally connected with the axiological sphere<sup>12</sup>.

## Faith

The definition of faith seems to be at least as problematic as the definition of culture. According to the *PWN Dictionary of the Polish language*, the word has five meanings: “a particular religion or belief; also: a belief in the existence of God”; “a belief that something is right, true, valuable, or that something will come true”; “a belief that there are supernatural beings or phenomena”; in the past, the word also meant

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<sup>10</sup> At this point, I recommend interesting comments made on the web blog: <http://logosamicus.blog.pl/id,5074276,title,MASOWY-CZLOWIEK-ZBUNTOWANY-rzecz-o-Buncie-mas-Josego-Ortegi-y-Gasseta,index.html?smoybtticaid=6130d6>, access: 09/07/2017.

<sup>11</sup> The phenomenon of post-modernism was aptly put forth by Jacek Kaczmarski in the song *Postmodernizm*, included on the album *Między nami*, released in 1997. The full text can be found on the page: [http://www.kaczmarski.art.pl/tworczosc/wiersze\\_alfabetycznie/kaczmarskiego/p/postmodernizm.php](http://www.kaczmarski.art.pl/tworczosc/wiersze_alfabetycznie/kaczmarskiego/p/postmodernizm.php), access: 09/07/2017.

<sup>12</sup> Let us note that even the division into three areas of culture, i.e. material culture (“technology, tools, ways of creating technical and usable environment, sometimes the ways of using the body”; according to other concepts, “all material products, regardless of their purpose and use”), spiritual (first of all “products of human consciousness satisfying his spiritual needs: beliefs, mythology, knowledge, art, literature and other forms of expression”) and social (including “social life organisation principles, customs, rituals, prohibitions, morality, law”), does not contradict our definition. See A. Szyjewski, *Etnologia...*, op. cit., p. 30n.

“faithfulness to someone or something”, while the colloquial meaning (“a group of people brought together”) does not interest us in these considerations<sup>13</sup>. A more elaborate definition is given by the *PWN Encyclopaedia*, according to which faith is “a personal, conscious and free human act (an act of reason and will) affirming the existence of God, the Supreme Being, the absolute or supernatural forces (...)”<sup>14</sup>.

The definitions given can be conventionally divided into two categories: those that generally refer to the belief in some truth (or the truthful existence of a certain aspect of reality), and those that combine this truthfulness with faith not only in something, but above all, in Someone, a Person more perfect than human beings, reasonable and powerful. At the same time, faith in someone as a concrete Person also presupposes faith in something: in their qualities, the way they manifest themselves in the world, etc. Similarly, when describing the concept of faith, K. Tarnowski speaks not only of its ambiguity, but also of the analogy that characterizes it, understanding it as “the fact that its concept [of faith – note: *K.P.*] is not only a matter of the fact that it is a matter of the faith, which applies not only to the absolute, to God, which we spontaneously associate with the notion of faith, but also to the reality »from this world«, and therefore, besides claims such as “I believe in God” or “I believe God” may appear as well: “I believe I can”, “I believe it will happen”, “I believe you’re telling the truth”, “I believe in you”, “I believe you”; finally, following Tarnowski’s argument, it makes sense to say: “I believe, there are plenty of laws of physics and mathematics that I don’t know or understand<sup>15</sup>”, although in the latter case, one can rightly share a doubt with L. Wittgenstein: “Should I say I believe, or I know?”<sup>16</sup>. The above comments lead to the conclusion that when describing a faith as a relationship to something or someone, both the act of faith (*fides qua creditur*) and its contents (*fides quae creditur*) must be considered. The very division into act and content in terms of theoretical, but also practical analyses is useful (e.g. in sociological research), however, it should not be forgotten that when we speak of true faith the mentioned components exist along with Aristotle’s form and matter and as such, cannot exist separately. Yes, there is a known division between faith and belief, where the concept of belief is “a set of beliefs, more or less coherent doctrines, in which a given faith is to believe”<sup>17</sup>, which gives the belief a phenomenological dimension, while the belief is descriptive (see the area of interest of Anglo-Saxon religious studies).

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<sup>13</sup> See *Faith*, <http://sjp.pwn.pl/slownik/2535574/wiara> [access: 15.07.2017].

<sup>14</sup> *Faith*, <http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo.php?id=3995315>, [access: 15.07.2017]. The rest of the slogan states that “in Christian theology, [faith] is, beside hope and love, one of the theological virtues”. It is telling that these three categories are also of great importance in contemporary psychological discourse, completely departed from the theological context.

<sup>15</sup> K. Tarnowski, *Faith*, in: *Religia. Encyklopedia PWN*, T. Gadacz, B. Milerski (eds.), electronic edition, Warsaw 2003.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

According to P. Ricoeur, we can talk about three types of belief. The first includes various concepts of reality; the second includes spontaneously accepted rules of social or individual life; and the third, being partly descriptive and partly prescriptive, focuses on individual destiny, the afterlife, the nature of the divine, etc. While the first two types of belief can do without internalisation of the faith (a typical example would be the stereotype of a "Sunday Christian" who externally performs certain cult activities but does not attach much importance to the reality of the faith, treating worship and dogmas with conformism, as elements of tradition, yet not internalising them), the third one already coincides with both the content of the faith and its act.

In order to present the issue of faith more fully, it is necessary to recall the popular distinction between the secular (belief) and the religious (faith), which share a consideration that something is true. The category of truthfulness is connected to the category of credibility, especially if we quote from K. Tarnowski the difference in the perception of "belief that" and "belief in". In the case of "believing that", we are dealing with the cognitive experience modus, with adhering to someone or something considered to be true. "Faith in" goes deeper, concentrating not only on admitting the truthfulness of an utterance (see: faith formulas), but on the subject who formulates this utterance and is "somehow" (by implication: concrete). Both ways of understanding the faith are reflected in the biblical definition and that of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. According to the Letter to the Hebrews, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1)<sup>18</sup>, while the second source quoted says that "Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed"<sup>19</sup>. This is not the only definition present in the Catechism of the Catholic Church", but the others correspond to the one given herein<sup>20</sup>.

Here, we arrive at the problematic issue. In the context of faith, the truthfulness of a thesis or claim is intrinsically linked to the person from whom the thesis or claim is heard. This is where both the credibility of this person and the authority we bestow on him are already at stake. These two components, in turn, are built on a foundation of trust both in the person with whom I have a relationship and in the content that I communicate to them. It can be assumed that trust will always be a category closely related to faith, as it is difficult to talk about trust without trusting, putting

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<sup>18</sup> Polish: after *the Millennium Bible* (ed. V, Warsaw 2005), English: *the Bible, Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*, <http://honlam.org/rsvce/index.html> (translator's note); see Hebrews 11:1-3 according to the so-called *Paulist Bible (Scripture of the Old and New Testaments. Latest translation from original languages with commentary, Częstochowa 2011)*: "Faith is the guarantee of what we expect and proof of the invisible reality. It gave our ancestors a testimony. By faith we know that the worlds were created by God's word, that is, what we see was not made of visible things.

<sup>19</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (further: CCC), Polish: 2nd edition, (corrected), Poznań 2002; English: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c3a1.htm#III](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c3a1.htm#III), no. 150.

<sup>20</sup> See CCC, no. 162: "Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man"; CCC, no. 166: "Faith is a personal act – the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself".

some element of your life into the hands of someone else. In this way, we can refer to the next point of our argument, i.e. its pedagogical and teleological aspect.

### The pedagogical (teleological) aspect

In the discussion on contemporary questions about faith and culture it is impossible not to address pedagogical issues. Pedagogy, originally understood as “leading a boy”, and nowadays referred to as “learning about upbringing, its aims, methods, means and organisational forms”<sup>21</sup>, deals with “the process of conscious and deliberate influence on human development in all phases of life”<sup>22</sup>. Upbringing, in turn, has two meanings, according to the “PWN Encyclopaedia”: broader, where it is understood as “all phenomena related to the impact of the social and natural environment on humans, shaping their identity, personality and attitudes”, and narrower, defined in the given source as “deliberately organised impacts, which are to lead to desired changes in the individuals and groups’ functioning”<sup>23</sup>. As far as contemporary education is concerned, the quoted article contains an interesting paragraph which is worth quoting in its entirety (author's emphasis):

“The modern upbringing is treated as a whole of processes and interactions taking place in the course of mutual relations between two people, helping them develop their own humanity. It presupposes **the recognition and affirmation of freedom**, through which both sides of the interaction can reveal and realize the values that give meaning to their lives. **There are no tutors and pupils** in such an understanding of upbringing, but there are people who meet each other and who bestow their humanity upon each other. For this to happen, they must open up to each other, recognise their freedom and dignity, and show authenticity, sense of responsibility, trust and empathy. Upbringing is therefore a dialogue between individuals, and therefore implies interchangeability of roles: speaking and listening, giving and taking, or offering and assimilating”<sup>24</sup>.

The “upbringing” thus understood is about freedom, dignity, humanity or enigmatic “values that give meaning to human life”. The contact between entities assumed in this perspective assumes a certain dialogue maturity in both entities, but also omits (or even negates) the issue of authority and objective values; although the quoted passage refers to responsibility, it is not clear what it is supposed to concern. For dialogue to be possible at all, appropriate conditions are needed, both in terms

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<sup>21</sup> *Pedagogy*, in: The *PWN Encyclopaedia*, <http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo.php?id=3955414> [access: 16.08.2017].

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup> *Upbringing*, in: The *PWN Encyclopaedia*, <http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/3998683/wychowanie.html>, access: 16/08/2017.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.



of the competences of the individual participants (such as language skills at a level that enables mutual understanding, both verbal and non-verbal when it comes to sending and interpreting communication signals in the form of gestures, etc.) and in terms of external factors (communication noise may render the dialogue impossible<sup>25</sup>).

It is both interesting and astonishing that the increasingly popular so-called humanistic psychology, with its focus on the person and his resources<sup>26</sup>, emphasizing the person's desire for self-fulfilment, assuming his natural goodness and postulating reference to the present (the "here and now" principle), in practice contradicts the assumptions of personalism, especially Christian personalism, which cannot be missed from reference in this article<sup>27</sup>. The relational nature, which is one of the key factors in the development of a person in personalism, both in the human-to-human and human-to-God relationship (and vice versa), is necessary to achieve goodness in a wider than just individual scope. But for it to be true, it must refer to the truth. The definition of the contemporary upbringing cited just now carries a significant danger, which was observed by Fr. Janusz Tarnowski in one of the Polish Parliament (*Sejm*) debates. During this debate, it was said that the work of an educator is actually about humanisation. Tarnowski writes that hearing these words has become a source of anxiety, "for if the teacher wants to *humanise* the pupil with the conviction that he has already achieved the right humanity, the situation becomes dangerous. Education is about discovering and developing humanity on both sides of the educational process. Of course, the responsibility is disproportionately greater and the demands are placed on the educator"<sup>28</sup>. Tarnowski also specifies that in the Christian perspective, through an authentic dialogue between the educator and the pupil, "both should therefore aim at engaging encounters with the Son of Man, opening themselves to His grace. So upbringing is a mutual and humble humanisation, closely observing the One about whom a Roman official said: *Behold the man* (John 19:5)<sup>29</sup>. Let us note the

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<sup>25</sup> Most of the currently used communication models are based on the so-called Shannon and Weaver model. See their work: C.E. Shannon, W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, Urbana, Illinois 1949 (1969's 10th Edition is available online: <http://www.magmamater.cl/MatheComm.pdf>, [accessed: 01.10.2017]).

<sup>26</sup> Here, suffice it to mention the names such as Gordon Allport or Carl Rogers; it is controversial to include Kazimierz Dąbrowski in the group of humanistic psychologists, because especially his concept of positive disintegration definitely differs from Allport and Rogers' assumptions, having more in common with the personalist approach. See K. Dąbrowski, *Dezintegracja pozytywna*, Warsaw 1979, p. 121. The theory of positive disintegration (TPD) is also discussed on the website [www.dezintegracja.pl](http://www.dezintegracja.pl).

<sup>27</sup> When I recall Christian personalism, I have in mind, above all, authors such as Karol Wojtyła, Tadeusz Styczeń, Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, Józef Tischner, Mieczysław Gogacz, Stanisław Grygiel, among others. See W. Granat, *Personalizm chrześcijański. Teologia osoby ludzkiej*, Poznań 1985, p. 603; Cz.S. Bartnik, *Personalizm*, Lublin 2013, p. 502. For a general personalism overview, see S. Kowalczyk, *Personalizm. Podstawy, idee, konsekwencje*, Lublin 2012, pp. 179.

<sup>28</sup> J. Tarnowski, *Paradoks chrześcijańskiej pedagogiki*, in: *Wychowanie chrześcijańskie. Między tradycją a współczesnością*, A. Rynio (ed.), Lublin 2007, p. 70-78 (citation: p. 78).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

subtle difference between the two definitions. Tarnowski's definition points to a certain pedagogical pattern, to teleology based on the encounter with Jesus. At the same time, it assumes asymmetry in two dimensions: on the line between educator and pupil and on the line between human and God. By referring to Christ, Tarnowski's definition also provides, a hermeneutical key that enables the precise determination of both the point of departure and the point of arrival in education. Categories such as humanity, freedom, dignity, authenticity, sense of responsibility, trust and empathy fit well with Christian anthropology, and in pedagogy oriented towards the relationship with Christ, the subjects involved in the process of education have a clear, evangelical picture of their realisation. But if we look at these categories without this hermeneutical key, moving from personalism to individualism (or selfism), then the definition given in the *PWN Encyclopaedia* is difficult to defend from the scientific point of view. These categories are realised and updated in relativity (this is clearly visible in authenticity, responsibility, trust and empathy), and they are based on the universalistic assumption that human contact is the contact of equivalent subjects and equivalent values, subordinated to the elementary (archetypical sense) principles of communication. Meanwhile, the equality of actors and dialogue based on mutual understanding is not given automatically, but results from a specific model of culture and society and, in its deepest perception of the dignity of the person, is characteristic of Christianity. Attempts to implement these categories into the so-called "liberal" vision of the world face, because they have to, numerous problems<sup>30</sup>, the most serious of which result from the tension between the universalism and relativism. This phenomenon was perfectly described by J. Mariański: "Changes in values and moral norms take place on a scale from the value of duty (obligation) to self-developmental (self-realisation) values, often of an individualistic nature. Approval of self-fulfilment values is connected with attempts to move away from traditional ethical systems (e.g. the religious ones), together with the pursuit of emancipation, individual autonomy and criticism of all authorities. Many Poles are moving away from the ethics that speaks of permanent and universal criteria of good and evil, towards the ethics of individual conscience or situational ethics. As a result, moral choices are rarely determined by general principles and

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<sup>30</sup> These problems are clearly illustrated in the article by A. Zoll, *Człowiek jako podmiot wolności i praw w jednoczącej się Europie*, in: *Horyzonty wychowania w czasach przemian*, W. Pasierbek, M. Grodecka (eds), Kraków 2009, p. 385-396. A. Zoll reflects on the four values declared in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity. He already makes an interesting observation about the former: "the period of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution challenged the theological justification of human dignity. However, dignity itself, as a source of freedom and human rights, is still there and attempts are being made to build on it the legal order that determines the relationship between human and power, i.e. the scope of freedoms and rights to which every human being is entitled. This does not mean, of course, that the secular approach does not lead to a significant weakening of this source. (...) To abandon the foundation of human dignity, which the Creator himself creates, risks a relativity in dignity and questioning its inherent and inalienable character (s. 385).

rules, what is good or bad is decided by everyone on their own. Thus, it is easy to find permissiveness, relativism, and even moral nihilism. (...) In the situation of unstable value and norm systems, young people in particular feel lost and deprived of authority"<sup>31</sup>. Let us also specify that this individualism or selfism goes much further in its essence than the model liberalism. Referring to the constitutive features of modern liberalism, among the foundations of liberal attitude, three are in the foreground: "1. The individual is a subject of rights or natural rights and constitutes an absolute reference point for reflection on the social order (autonomy of the subject), 2. All individuals are equal in their freedom; they have equal rights, 3. The right to property constitutes, together with the right to life and liberty, a set of inviolable rights"<sup>32</sup>. Surprisingly enough, today's selfism does not coincide with liberalism thus understood. While the central element of liberalism remain the individuals, but with respect for their freedom and the emphasis on equality of rights, in modern selfism, the strong individual leads the way, an individual capable of fighting for his or her rights (hence the right to live is denied for both the unborn and those with reduced comfort of living: the elderly, the disabled, the sick, subject to euthanasia even without taking their will into account). In the relative world, which preaches the affirmation of the individual by making an initial assessment and selection, the fundamental value becomes in fact not the individual but the market, consumerism, happiness based on the use of goods, which leads to the temptation of "secularised salvation"<sup>33</sup>. Attempts to implement this temptation in

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<sup>31</sup> J. Mariański, *Szanse i zagrożenia wychowania chrześcijańskiego w niestabilnym świecie*, in: *Wychowanie chrześcijańskie. Między tradycją a współczesnością*, A. Rynio (ed.), Lublin 2007, p. 523-538 (cited above, p. 524 n.).

<sup>32</sup> See Z. Stawrowski, *Liberalizm a demokracja*, in: *Liberalism at the end of the 20th century*, J. Miklaszewska (ed.), Cracow 1999, p. 61-64. There are also other foundations of liberal attitude: 4. Everyone is entitled to freedom in the public sphere, i.e. freedom of association (on a voluntary basis, by contract), freedom of speech, freedom of profession, freedom of movement, etc., 5. Like society, the state, is an association based on a contract, the silent consent of citizens (giving legitimacy to those in power and those in power obliging them to obey), while its objective is to uphold the freedoms and freedoms of citizens, 6. Hence the limited nature of the State" Quote after: K. Wrońska, *Chrześcijańskie społeczeństwo obywatelskie wyzwaniem dla pedagogiki chrześcijańskiej*, in: *Pedagogika chrześcijańska. Tradycja. Współczesność. Nowe wyzwania*, J. Michalski, A. Zakrzewska, Toruń 2010, p. 346-362 (citation: p. 351). In the same place, K. Wrońska quotes two more points after Z. Rau: "7. The structure of the government reflects the principle of separation of powers, which is intended to be the most effective way of safeguarding the powers of those in power and 8. The ruler has the right of resistance against those in power when the powers of those in power are systematically violated" (cf. Z. Rau, *Liberalizm. Zarys myśli politycznej XIX i XX wieku*, Warsaw 2000, p. 12).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Ch. Desol, *Esej o człowieku późnej nowoczesności*, M. Kowalska (trans.), Cracow 2003, p. 151. "Take away from people all their ideals, ridicule the symbols that their cultural world consists of, convince them that there is nothing they should wait for and nothing they should worship, and that they will worship the products that surround them in their daily life and, if they are able to do so, devote all their zeal to further improving this life. (...) Economism wins in a walkover, because all the values that could fight it or simply take up part of the space given to it are ridiculed. When the value of everything that is not marketable is taken away, the only atmosphere of existence becomes the market" (quoted after J. Mariański, *Szanse i zagrożenia*, p. 526; there are also words about the "secularized salvation," as well as a note about

life must end with a dispute within pedagogy, which is one of the first sciences to experience the changes postulated and induced by new ideologies or philosophies, not necessarily even understood systematically, but introduced into everyday life by pragmatic attitudes. Within the framework of this dispute within pedagogy, two attitudes that condition pedagogical teleology can be distinguished in particular.

The first attitude is distinguished by a close relationship between pedagogy and faith. In this approach, pedagogy takes concrete religious values as its point of reference and, in relation to them, shapes its axionormative system. The more concrete (including descriptive) these values are, the more concrete the pedagogical system becomes. An example is Christian pedagogy, which, being in fact a collection of different kinds of educators, will be distinguished by common criteria, which, according to A. Salamucha, are: "the reference to the extra-national sources of beliefs (supernatural knowledge), especially the Revelation contained in the Bible", and "the Biblical pedagogy's acceptance of the image of man based on dogmas (theological treatises) about Creation, Original Sin, Incarnation and Redemption"<sup>34</sup>. Regardless of whether Revelation can really be seen as extra-national, referring to a reality based on the faith results in situating Christian pedagogy and, in a broader sense, any pedagogy that refers to faith and beliefs, within the circle of theological disciplines<sup>35</sup>. It should be noted that this does not depreciate such a pedagogy as the science of upbringing; rather, pedagogy and theology, like other sciences, overlap, and the more these overlapping layers, the more complete the scientific reflection is. There is no exclusion of culture, as it is in culture and through culture (in relation to it) that a specific educational system is implemented. It is characterized in the Christian version by a precise vision of man and the purpose of upbringing, as well as great care for culture understood also as an environment of life and upbringing, a place of meeting with another human being.

The second attitude will not refer to religious faith, but to an individualistic, selfist worldview (as we pointed out earlier, calling it "liberal" is a conceptual error). Perhaps the clearest example of the marriage of pedagogy and self-mindedness are anti-pedagogical concepts that claim "freedom, equality, friendship, self-determination or self-responsibility of every person, regardless of age, gender, race, religious denomination, etc."<sup>36</sup> It simply states that it is necessary to "move away from the teleological concept of educational influences, which is based on the search for methods and means that are most effective in achieving the previously assumed goals, because

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the desolidarisation of today's mortality as a result of the individual's focus on maximizing one's happiness – see p. 526 n.).

<sup>34</sup> See A. Salamucha, *Kiedy pedagogika jest chrześcijańska? Uwagi metodologiczne*, in: *Pedagogika chrześcijańska. Tradycja. Współczesność. Nowe wyzwania*, pp. 120-125 (cited p. 124).

<sup>35</sup> Idem, p. 124.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. B. Śliwerski, *Antypedagogika*, in: *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna XXI wieku*, sci. ed. and introductory comment by T. Pilch, vol. I, Warsaw 2003, pp. 154-164.

it actually generates mystification, violence and manipulation of children's feelings of guilt<sup>37</sup>. While in pedagogy – and not only religious, but pedagogy as such – there is an anthropological assumption about intergenerational upbringing, in anti-pedagogy it does not exist, even more so, it is seen as harmful. The essence of this trend is aptly described by B. Śliwerski: “There is no anthropological necessity to raise others. There is also no single concept of moral value and duty commonly accepted in philosophy on which to base right educational demands. (...) Everyone can feel their own good from birth. No one has to do it for them, decide what is good and bad for him, because they themselves are capable of doing it one hundred percent from birth. (...) The responsibility of adults for children and young people is abolished here, replacing it with the responsibility of everyone – both adults and minors – for themselves<sup>38</sup>”. At the same time, the anti-pedagogics claim that “the fully equal rights of adults and children should be accompanied by a feeling of equality, unconditional acceptance of others, respect and trust<sup>39</sup>”. All this, surrounded by the apotheosis of democracy, emancipation and affirmation, while depreciating the patriarchal society as generating violence, leads to a very dangerous phenomenon, resulting from the illogicality of the selfist option (which anti-pedagogy may be considered). The loss of responsibility for another human being can, after all, be a source of violence (the word “duty” does not exist in the selfist world, hence the weaker individuals are left to their own devices), and the ideology of equality is already wrong at the root, since it fails to see elementary biological, genetic, developmental, socialisation and economic differences, to name but a few. Pupils brought up (if this term can be used) selfistically, having a sense of their uniqueness, dignity, freedom in the broadest possible sense, emancipated from all duties and compulsions, realising and affirming their own self on the basis of self-created points of reference, are immediately confronted with the principles of competitiveness, demand and supply, economic (non)utility in the tough free-market world. Unprepared to live in the tough world, they withdraws into the world of their own “ego”, experiencing existential difficulties towards which they are helpless. It is significant that in the western world, leaning towards the selfist option, the proclamation of unconditional freedom so often leads to enslavement, which is reflected in an avalanche of addictions to both classical (psychoactive agents) and behavioural addictions. Meanwhile, as I often emphasize during numerous preventive and specialist training courses, one of the most important school lessons is the physical education lesson, during which students have the opportunity to experience empirically, and without the help of an adult, that absolute equality does not exist. Someone is less fit, someone is more. In sportive competition, someone is less active, someone is more. The fitter, healthier people enjoy greater esteem; strength and

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<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 155.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, p. 160.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, p. 164.

physical fitness, especially among boys, play an important role in group positioning, which in turn translates into interest from the opposite sex (in the vast majority of cases). Self-confidence, perseverance, and mental resilience are just some of the qualities one acquires when improving oneself, and it is these qualities that later influence one's economic success, which, as I wrote earlier, becomes the most important (and no longer so relative!) test of happiness in the relative world. As a result, the success is achieved by the one who is stronger than the other or who has a head start (education, economic status, atmosphere in the family home, friendships, intelligence – a list of these variables can be created long). The problem is not achieving this success, because selfishness leaves no alternatives, nor does it prepare for failure, which has to be dealt with on its own or by using specialised and expensive psychotherapeutic services. I base the above conclusions on my own, several years of therapeutic practice. What is interesting is that there is a paradox in the Western world: never before has such a high standard of living been achieved, never have there been more professional “helpers”, to use the G Egan’s naming... but also people have never had such a problem with the lack of feeling of happiness<sup>40</sup>, and mental illnesses have been growing rapidly in recent years – according to data provided by M. Angell, between 1987 and 2007 in American society, the number of people whose mental illnesses have taken away their ability to function normally has more than doubled; in case of children, the increase is as much as 35 times<sup>41</sup>. To further outline the scale of this increase, let us quote a study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in 2001-2003, according to which as many as 46% of adults in the United States met the diagnostic criteria for at least one mental illness in the following categories: “anxiety disorders” (including phobias, PTSD); “mood disorders” (here, among others, clinical depression and bipolar disorder); “impulse-control disorders” and “substance use disorder”. Antidepressants are used by one in ten Americans over 10 years old<sup>42</sup>. Even if we take into account Angell’s critics, who tried to weaken his thesis about the outbreak of mental illness in the United States in recent decades<sup>43</sup>, similar conclusions to those of the aforementioned researcher also come from scientists in Poland. In 2012, a report by EZOP (Epidemiology of Psychiatric Disorders and Availability of Psychiatric Health

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<sup>40</sup> In the 2012 HPI (Happy Planet Index) survey, the richest European countries ranked only 29th (Norway), 41st (Great Britain), 46th (Germany). The podium was taken by Costa Rica, Vietnam and Colombia; see <http://happyplanetindex.org/> [access: 10.09.2017].

<sup>41</sup> M. Angell, *On the epidemic of mental illness*, “New England Journal of Medicine”, <http://www.psychologia.edu.pl/obserwatorium-psychologiczne/1751-o-epidemii-chorob-psychicznych.html> [accessed: 10.10.2017].

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem. Cf. two parts of the article: M. Angell, *The Epidemic of Mental Illness: Why?* “The New York Review of Books”, 23.06.2011, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/06/23/epidemic-mental-illness-why/> [accessed: 10.10.2017]; from the same author, *The Illusions of Psychiatry*, “The New York Review of Books”, 14.07.2011, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/07/14/illusions-of-psychiatry/> [accessed: 10.10.2017].

<sup>43</sup> See R.W. Pies, *Is There Really an “Epidemic” of Psychiatric Illness in the US?*, <http://www.psychiatrytimes.com/articles/there-really-epidemic-psychiatric-illness-us> [access: 10.10.2017].

Care) was published from a large scale research (10000 respondents aged 18-64), according to which "the multitude of potential clients of the mental health care system [in Poland – footnote *K.P.*] exceeds six million<sup>44</sup>" and taking into account only the main diagnostic sections, the prevalence of defined mental disorders in the population aged 18-64 can be estimated at 23.4%<sup>45</sup>.

Arriving at the conclusions, let us note that we have also joined the discourse in the field of mental health, including psychology, the modern religion of the 21st century<sup>46</sup>. Contrary to appearances of psychology and religion, it is not far from each other, because in both cases the common point (one of many) is to refer to the inner convictions of humans, which to a large extent constitute their actions and give meaning to their life. Both areas are also based on certain paradigms. In the case of religion this is obvious, but in the case of psychology, especially modern, referred to as the humanist, we are dealing with the original assumptions, which are pushed without scientific findings<sup>47</sup>. An example of this can be the assumption that there are only cultural differences between a man and a woman, as well as the depreciation of sociological and social knowledge when focusing on the subjective feeling of happiness by a man, or finally the often encountered syncretism of religious experience and psychological concepts, which is probably the most clear illustration of this is the depth of C.G. Jung's psychology<sup>48</sup>.

Culture is created by people therefore faith and spirituality are an integral part of this creation; faith gives people the power and sense of meaning, therefore it can also be used in psychological activities. Above all, however, it is a form of self-determination of the human individual, his or her point of departure and point of arrival, and therefore it is necessary not only to underestimate it in contemporary cultural discourses (also in its scientific dimension), but also to take into account its potential, which, especially in educational terms, cannot be overestimated, since it offers concrete proposals for the teleology of education. This cannot be ignored in any area that speaks of human beings and their development.

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<sup>44</sup> Chapter 5 of the EWC study, *Podsumowanie – rozpowszechnienie, bariery i rekomendacje*, is fully available online: <http://www.ezop.edu.pl/05-Podsumowanie.pdf> [accessed: 11.10.2017] (quote: p. 276).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 272.

<sup>46</sup> See P.C. Vitz, *Psychologia jako religia: kult samouwielbienia*, Warsaw 2017, pp. 193; A. Wasiukiewicz, *Psychologia jak religia, religia jak psychologia*, Warsaw 2015, pp. 124.

<sup>47</sup> For example, forcing the existence of only cultural differences.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. J. Bytniewski, *Carl Gustav Jung i współczesny kryzys duchowości*, „Humaniora. Czasopismo internetowe”, 2013, no. 3(3), pp. 11-22.