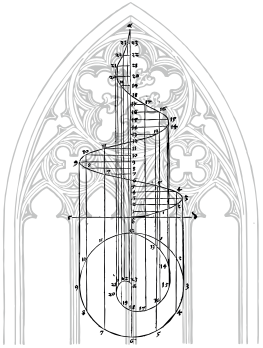
GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE *SACRED* AND THE *PROFANE*



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GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE *SACRED* AND THE *PROFANE*

THE STUDY OF RELIGION

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From the author

The title of these reflections may be interpreted by believers as an intellectual provocation, or perhaps even an attempt to insult their religious feelings and convictions. I had no and have no such intentions. Their general purpose is to show and demonstrate that in reflections over religion and religiosity there have been attempts both at bringing the world of the *profane* closer to that of the *sacred*, and at bringing the world of the *sacred* closer to the *profane*. No less significant is that both the former and the latter are interesting and cognitively inspiring. The former have as a rule occurred among the faithful, and among those desiring to win new followers over to their faith. The latter on the other hand are mainly seen among those in some way holding different types of belief and religious practice at a distance, or at least striving not to link the matter of their conscience with the issue of how they think, talk and write about religions. It goes without saying that in both one case and the other, attitudes and convictions of such a nature have emerged that it is frequently difficult to say whether we are dealing with a religious or a supra-religious point of view. There have also been incidents (and far from rare) of those speaking out in regard to religion and religiosity presenting a religious point of view in one issue, and a non-religious point of view in another. In each case it had a major impact on the character of the generalisations and appraisals formulated.

I refer in my reflections to those traditions of research in the study of religion that were initiated by Max Weber. This does not mean, naturally, that I consider all of his generalisations and appraisals totally relevant. However, some of them at least are of interest to me, and provide inspiration for my research into religion and religiosity. What I recognise as particularly significant is Weber's treatment of different religions and different forms of religiosity as the kind of product of human activity which, firstly, was and is the collective product of numerous different social groups, that

secondly it has adopted significantly different forms in different places and at different times, and thirdly that in western culture at least the leitmotif of this process was and continues to be the aspiration to achieve as great a rationality as possible.

For a dozen or so centuries, this aspiration was linked to science and scientificity, understood in its different ways. However, up until the modern era, meaning the early years of the 17th century, one did not see radical divergences between its religious and non-religious grasp such that one could say their paths radically differed or took different directions. Of course there were signals earlier on, that thinking about science and practising it without concern for religious authorities could lead to these paths diverging, and on occasion that is what happened. To serve solely as an example I shall mention here the dispute—a resounding affair in the Middle Ages—between Pierre Abelard, who taught at what was later to become the Sorbonne, and the theologians of the day, or the trial of Galileo that reverberated in the first decades of the 17th century and ended with the condemnation of heliocentric views by the Church authorities and judicial institutions. However, the following century saw the appearance in various countries of Europe of philosophers and scholars who became engaged in dispute with their religious milieu not so much through an unfortunate coincidence as of their own accord—if one may thus describe their search for opportunities for such confrontations, and their attempts at demonstrating not only that the "train" bearing the sign *science*, and that bearing the sign *religion and religiosity*, were not only two different "trains", but also that essentially they were heading in different directions—the former in the direction of knowledge, the latter towards the kind of faith that in general did not have and could not have anything in common with genuine knowledge. They contributed not only to at least some of the existing scientific disciplines being set free of the control of various Churches, but also to the appearance and practice of religious studies as a discipline independent of those beliefs that are based on revelations or theological figures of authority. Their heir, to some degree (but only to some degree), was Max Weber.

He conducted research not only in regard to various religions, but also regarding other spheres of life and social coexistence. He treated religions and the different forms of religiosity as an important but not only important sphere of that life. From the point of view of this scholar, the creators of this life are diverse social groups, while their faith in God or in gods could

have been and frequently was either helpful in this or constituted a major obstacle on the path to achieving their goals in life, and as a rule proved helpful up until a certain moment, while later it only constituted the "ballast" of the past. However, in such a perception and portrayal of religion, Weber was not sympathising with those who perceived it as some kind of "stumbling block" on mankind's road towards an ever brighter future. On the contrary, he frequently criticised such people for the one-sidedness of their opinions and judgments and placed them—as, for example, was the case with the intellectuals of the Enlightenment—in the group of those socially excluded, and even (through his intellectualistic rationalism) excluding themselves from their social environment (not sharing their faith in it being only reason that could lead to a true salvation for mankind).

The inspiration I have drawn from Weberian thought on religion and religiosity does not signify an uncritical approach to this scholar's achievements. Besides, certain continuators of Weber's views have indicated certain simplifications or even mistaken interpretations and portrayals of the transformation and modernisation of the culture of the western world, if only to mention as examples Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckmann or Niklas Luhman. I also refer to their conclusions and suggestions—such as the need for treating secularisation processes not only as displacing various Churches from their hitherto social positions, but also the entanglement of this process in the resolving of various issues related to worldview, customs, language, and many other things as well. This grasp of the processes of transformation and modernisation, broader than that seen with Weber, is present inter alia in those sections of my deliberations in which the object of analysis is the issue of means of expression and the communication of religious content. These matters have of course been tackled since long ago both by the defenders of religion and by its adversaries. Yet in no other period were they as significant as they are today—not even so much because it often was and is difficult for the defenders and opponents of religion to come to an agreement, as because the means of communicating to the masses, the mass media, have gained such broad recognition and application. This embraces means of communication that transcend traditional language barriers and are, as a broad front, entering the world of the *sacred* that the churches were and are. I have in mind here not only television, or the Internet, but also such means of communication as, for example, Facebook. Today not only ordinary followers use such media, but so too do those offering them their spiritual service—and needless

to say not only in such traditional locations for this as churches, but also in places frequently difficult to locate (and there is not even any need to locate them). Is this testimony to the world of the *sacred* moving closer to the world of the *profane*, or only the former coming to grips with modern technology and devices for communication? Naturally one can have various opinions on this matter. But there is certainly a certain coming to grips occurring here.

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Part I

Getting to grips with science and scientificity

Chapter 1

What was and what is the study of religion?

An article by professor Andrzej Bronk, entitled *What is the Study of Religion?*, led me to speak up in regard to the question in the title. In the conclusions summarising his deliberations, the author claims, among other things, that "calling the study of religion or religiology a discipline, and what is more, ascribing it methodological autonomy, is at the very least clumsy, because we are not dealing with a single science but a collection of numerous disciplines varying in their degree of autonomy and methodological identity." A little later he adds: "religiology is not a type of separate 'super-science,' with its own subject-matter and method of research, attempting for example to determine by itself the essence and genesis of religion, but only a general name for defining the field of study and set of sciences dealing with the study of religious phenomena, not in competition with any of the many sciences about religion, and not threatening any of them."[1] I do not wish here to polemise with the legitimacy of placing that "or" between the names, "religious studies or religiology" (although I do have certain doubts in this respect, in which I am probably not alone). However, I would like to take a stance regarding the theses of the internal and external autonomy of religious studies and its discipline-ness and (possibly) whether it constitutes a field. These issues are significant due to the need for indicating the place of religious studies (and experts on religion) on the scientific research and academic map.

[1] Cf. A. Bronk, *Czym jest religiologia*?, "Nauka" 2011, no. 2, p. 47.

Tough beginnings

Referring to tradition is of significance not only for the "religions of the Books" (among which is Christianity) but also for sciences of symbolic culture (sciences of different religions and forms of religiousness belong to them). Their venerable tradition both raises the standing of these religions and sciences, as well as shows what, as a rule, was a difficult road towards the defining and self-defining of their identity and place in culture. The study of religion is no exception. This is not purely or even above all a matter of the name (although this issue is not totally devoid of significance), but about defining and self-defining in reflection over religion (or religions), in which two markedly different worlds will not—consciously to a lesser or greater extent—be joined, meaning the world of what one believes in and how one believes, with the world of the objective (or critical) thought over what one believes in and how one believes. Needless to say, I am in favour of a defined understanding of the scientific approach, or attitude. Karl R. Popper called this *rationalism* and connected it to "an attitude that seeks to solve as many problems as possible by an appeal to reason, i.e. to clear thought and experience, rather than by an appeal to emotions and passions."[2] A. Bronk talks of a kind of "starting point to the research preconceived by the researcher […] the kind of stance that one takes towards religious phenomena: pro-religiously or anti-religiously involved."[3] In both cases this approach, or attitude, is situated at the starting point. And in both cases it is emphasised that this attitude, or approach, "gives rise to questions regarding the possible objectivism of the results obtained here." Both authors have commented on this objectivism on various occasions, and on many an occasion even if not speaking in one voice they have at least spoken of the same problems, and certain convergences can be point-

[2] "This explanation, of course, is not very satisfactory, since all terms such as 'reason' or 'passion' are vague. […] We could then say that rationalism is an attitude of readiness to listen to critical arguments and to learn from experience. It is fundamentally an attitude of admitting that 'I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer to the truth'. It is an attitude which does not lightly give up hope that by such means as argument and careful observation, people may reach some kind of agreement on most problems of importance." Cf. K.R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Princeton and Oxford 2013, p. 431 et seq.

[3] Cf. A. Bronk, *Czym jest religiologia?*, op.cit., p. 47.

ed out in the solutions they have adopted and proposed—for example in such issues as: 1) the problem situation (which is acknowledged not only as equally as significant as the solutions proposed, but also as conditioning the latter); 2) criticism and critique of these problem situations and proposed solutions that do not meet the requirements of scientificity; or 3) the complexity and objectivity of research (not only that studies must not rule each other out, but even that they have to complement one another; according to both philosophers, knowledge without assumptions does not exist).[4]

Needless to say, in those distant times in which the first sciences appeared, there was neither any discussion regarding these problems nor were such solutions proposed that could meet the demands set today for objective knowledge. However, there would be neither those problems nor those solutions if not for the emergence of those few ancient "lovers of knowledge" (philosophers), who both themselves held an objective stance towards contemporary beliefs and religious practices, and also managed to convince others of this stance—and they too were relatively few (while those who identified with those beliefs and practices were numerous). An enormously diverse gallery of these people is presented by Diogenes Laërtius in his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Although in this portrayal the beginnings of philosophy and the philosophers are debatable (there were then, among others, such who derived from the "time of the Magi"), the fundamental breakthrough was achieved with the appearance of those Greek sages who took a critical stance towards "barbarian" beliefs and practices. One of them, living in the 6th century BC, was Bias of Priene. Diogenes Laërtius' account may lead one to the conclusion that he commented in a general and even sweeping manner (for example, he is supposed to have said: "Speak of the Gods as they are") on the gods and deities in whose existence and primum mobile his contemporaries believed, but in specific situations, when he encountered unwise (irrational) behaviour among others, he distanced himself not only from the behaviour, but also from those gods on whose help those people were counting.[5] One cannot, of course, say that this sage was an expert

[4] Cf. K.R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge. An Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford 1972; A. Bronk, *Podstawy nauk o religii*, Lublin 2009.

[5] As an example: "Once he was on a voyage with some impious men, and the vessel was overtaken by a storm; so they began to invoke the assistance of the Gods; on which he said, 'Hold your tongues, lest they should find out that you are in this

on religion, and likewise one cannot precisely define what this distancing actually signified. However, one can say that there is probably no question here of some kind of "ungodliness" (atheism). One could also say that his attitude, or his conduct, meant—despite these ambiguities—some kind of expertise in contemporary beliefs and practices. And is this not what the study of religion is generally about?

A position significantly stronger than that of Bias of Priene in philosophical tradition is occupied by Socrates (approx. 470/69–399 BC). Sadly he left behind no written testimonies of his wisdom, and all information on his life and philosophy is second-hand. One such source comprises the writings of his student Plato (427–347 BC). In his *Socrates' Defence (The Apology of Socrates)* he emphasises not only the exceptional wisdom of his master and teacher, but also indicates the rather limited wisdom of those with whom it was Socrates' lot to coexist—inter alios those poets who believed that "they are possessed, like the seers and fortune-tellers, who also say many fine things but know nothing about what they're saying."[6] One of the accusations levelled at Socrates in the case against him was that of "teaching not to acknowledge the gods that the city recognises, but other strange spiritual things." Although the philosopher did not grant his accusers an explicit answer to the question about what these "spiritual things" were, he did clearly say "I don't believe the sun, or even the moon, to be gods, like other men do," similarly as he did not believe in other folk beliefs, and he did not believe in them because they were irrational. Without going into detail regarding Socrates' faith, one may also say here that it is not a matter of atheism. However, it is a matter of proclaiming one's *votum separatum* towards folk belief that was based on "primitive anthropomorphism, both in the physical and the moral sense, which discredited it [the folk belief]."[7] One could also acknowledge his diagnosis as an element of

ship." When he was asked by an impious man what piety was, he made no reply; and when his questioner demanded the reason of his silence, he said, 'I am silent because you are putting questions about things with which you have no concern'." Cf. Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers,* Hastings 2017, p. 63 et seq.

[6] Cf. Plato, *Socrates' Defence*, London 2015, p. 4 et seq.

[7] "It also seems that one may conclude from the various allusions that Socrates […] reacting to the irritating polytheism appropriate of folk religion acknowledged the concept of a single god, although he did not rule out a multitude of his manifestations." Cf. G. Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy I. From the Origins to Socrates*, New York 1987, p. 225 et seq.

expertise within the scope comprising the area of research in the study of religion. Yet with Socrates one cannot say that he lacked method—since this philosopher went down in history as the author of the original dialogical, or maieutic method, applied in practice to this day.[8] It goes without saying that he neither singled out a separate subject of the study of religion nor formulated his own specific research methods. Except that in those bygone times few had any need for such singling out. Of a different opinion was Aristotle (384/83-322/21 BC), a philosopher "largely aiming for philosophy to be capable to the greatest possible extent of justifying itself as knowledge that is not linked to any benefit."[9] However, he was one of those exceptions that one can encounter in any era.

The deliberations over religion and religiousness by Cicero (106–43 BC) constitute an interesting contribution to the discussion regarding the difficult beginnings of the study of religion. He presented them, inter alia, in his treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*. In this he did not question the legitimacy of belief in the existence of gods, or even belief that "they [the gods] take heed for human affairs," but he did doubt whether priests or philosophers were able to provide justification for it.[10] He found this justification in the universal need for peace and social calm—and in his opinion, without this belief "holiness and religious obligation should also disappear, and when these are gone a great confusion and disturbance of life ensues; indeed, when piety towards the gods is removed, I am not so sure that good faith, and human fraternity, and justice, the chief of all the virtues, are not also removed." Although all of this and many other remarks regarding religion and religiousness by his contemporaries were uttered in the conditional (absent, after all, in scientific dialogue), many

[8] For more on the matter of this method, cf. ibidem, p. 248 et seq.

[9] "Philosophy should as philosophy remain totally free and independent, while at the same time tied to practice and creation. […] does not mean, though, that knowledge thus obtained cannot bring significant benefits to people's lives. On the contrary, it becomes indispensable knowledge for a good life. […] Those who philosophise move closer to the Gods in their actions (on which point Aristotle agrees with Plato) and thanks to their activity they achieve the highest degree of happiness. However, they do not acquire this solely for themselves, but in sharing their knowledge with others they make it possible for them to achieve success in life." Cf. R. Elberfeld, *Was ist Philosophie? Programmatische Texte von Platon bis Derrida*, Stuttgart 2006, p. 41 et seq.

[10] The latter frequently differ fundamentally in these issues, while Diagoras the Melian and Theodorus of Cyrene thought that there were no such beings at all. Cf. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, Oxford 1997, p. 1 et seq.

a sociologist, cultural anthropologist or expert on religion could put their name today to the legitimacy of these observations.

Another interesting contribution to the discussion over these difficult beginnings of the study of religion comprises the remarks by mediaeval Christian writers regarding pre-Christian beliefs and religious practices. One of the more significant of them is Augustine of Hippo (or St Augustine, 354–430 AD). His *The City of God* constitutes a grand intellectual reckoning with the "barbarian" future of mankind, and an attempt (to a large extent successful, since it later came to be accepted by western Christianity) at founding a new type of religion and religiousness. It devotes a great deal of space in particular to analysis of the religion and religiousness of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Needless to say, these religions are criticised, but criticised with good knowledge of the beliefs and practices present in them, and this in so many details that today this work may still constitute a source of knowledge on the Greek and Roman gods, on their demons and the attempts at taming them, on their cults and ceremonial rites, and so on.[11] This is accompanied by manifold appraisals, qualifications, and—as well—disqualifications, such as "irrational belief," "lust," "shamelessness," "abomination" and "hideousness," et cetera. And it is also accompanied by words full of faith, such as of "the redeeming power of Christian religion," of the "reverence due the single God, whom everybody senses as the giver of happiness, even if they know not his name," or of the "superiority of the believing Christian over all philosophies." One could of course make do with acknowledging this as a confession of the deep Christian faith of this work's author. Yet one could also treat it as a starting point for discussion over the connection of religiosity with scientificity, including in regard to the legitimacy of the formulating of appraisals within them (especially such extreme ones), or the dividing of the world of beliefs and religious practices into absolutely wrong and the sole true ones, et cetera. After all, these are not issues that the science of today has definitively dealt with.

Such discussion is all the more necessary since modern times saw the appearance of a significant and influential group of such philosophers (scholars?), who—despite a Christian education and upbringing being the rule—set about disassembling altars big and small raised by Christians in honour of Christian greatness and values. During the enlightenment—an era recognised for various reasons as a turning point in European culture—Voltaire (1694–1778) took the lead among them. He had a rather mediocre

[11] Cf. Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, North Charleston 2015.

education (having graduated from the Jesuit Collège Louis-le-Grand in Paris), but spoke out on so many diverse issues that it would be hard to find a field or discipline in which he had nothing to say. Of course, his remarks were not always sufficiently competent for him to be acknowledged as an expert in what he spoke about. He considered himself the kind of expert in whose area of interest lay culture as a whole (and not only European), and in particular the great damage rendered in it by Christianity.[12] I shall put it briefly: his appraisals, qualifications and disqualifications are equally as extreme as those appearing among those zealous defenders of Christianity—except that his are situated at the opposite extreme, meaning that where one sees affirmation among the defenders, with Voltaire (and those of a like mind) one sees negation. In each case, this placed—and still places—their scientificity under question.

However, one must also recall that in that era, rich in philosophical and polemical talent, there were also philologists who—knowledgeable of the oriental languages—made attempts towards a new interpretation of the "old" writings, including the Old and the New Testament. One of these was Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768), author of *An apology for, or some words in defense of, reasoning worshipers of God.*[13] The very publication of excerpts from this work by Lessing provoked a scandal and the indignation of those who were linked intellectually and emotionally to Christianity. One must admit that there was reason to be concerned. Because the philological analyses conducted by Reimarus led him to the conclusion that the holy books of Christianity were not actually so holy to be free of serious vagueness and contradiction, while the biblical protagonists were not so heroic to be free of the common drawbacks of the common people (such as, for example, an inclination towards revenge or vindictiveness). Today discoveries of this nature are treated—particularly in Protestant academic circles—as normal and natural, but back then they were treated as an attack on religious sanctity.

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[12] For more on this matter, cf. Z. Drozdowicz, *O racjonalności w religii i religijności. Wykłady*, Poznań 2009, p. 80 et seq.

[13] "Reimarus was a staid and peace-loving professor who lectured on Oriental languages at high school in his native Hamburg. […] He wrote valued books in defence of natural religion and against atheism; in particular he argued that only could one explain the miraculous organisation of the world of insects by the wisdom of a Highest Being." See P. Hazard, *European thought in the 18th century: From Montesquieu to Lessing*, Gloucester 1973.

Scientific breakthrough

This breakthrough was achieved in the 19th century, and was connected—generally speaking—with profound faith in the cognitive power of the sciences, in particular of those that were capable not only of accurately describing phenomena, but also explaining their genesis and function, as well as anticipating the directions and character of changes taking place.[14] In the first half of that century these were considered mainly the natural sciences, such as physics or biology, among others. However, in the latter half and in the first decades of the century to follow certain social sciences were also added to the group—for example sociology and psychology. The appearance of the study of religion came to be linked to this second phase of scientism—according to some as a separate scientific discipline, while for others a quasi-scientific or pseudo-scientific discipline.[15] Far am I from overestimating the scientificity of both scientism itself (I feel that it was both a philosophy of science and an ideology), and of the scientificity of those sciences that constituted its showpiece. However, I do believe that it constituted an important break from the speculativism of those philosophers and theologians who earlier aspired to be seen as the most credible experts on religion and religiosity. I also believe that the directions of research then initiated, and the methods of research applied in them, are tied to what is better and not to what is worse in the study of religion. I shall strive

[14] For more on this matter, cf. Z. Drozdowicz, *Główne nurty w nowożytnej filozofii francuskiej*, Poznań 1991, p. 130 et seq.

[15] A. Bronk is also inclined to link the "origin of scientific bestowals over religion" with this scientism. In his opinion, the components contributing to the "emergence of nineteenth-century interests in religion were: the development of the historical and philological sciences, psychology, sociology, ethnology and historical and comparative linguistics, the methods (techniques) of which were stretched to embrace research into the history, beginnings and functions of religion; an evolutionary way of seeing the world, placing what was imperfect (primitive) at the beginning; the coming into being of modern science, rationally (by reason) explaining all phenomena; but also the criticism of and hostility towards the Catholic Church, then towards every form of institutional religion and ultimately religion as such, increasing since the days of the Reformation." The last of these was of course the negative "capital" of the study of religion. But also in those first historical foundations of the modern study of religion, in this author's opinion, there were significant negative factors—such as: "a meagre grounding on facts" or "general and speculative theories regarding the genesis and essence of religion." Cf. A. Bronk, *Podstawy nauk o religii*, op.cit., p. 43 et seq.

to justify my position, referring to those scholars acknowledged today as classics of a kind in the sciences of symbolic culture.

One deserving such a description is Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), author of, among other things, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.[16] An unambiguous answer to the question of whether this is an ethnographic, ethnological, sociological or religiological work is probably not possible, since it represents all of these disciplines, then barely distinguished from one another, while the author neither had any difficulty connecting them nor made a scientific or knowledge-related problem of the matter. However, he did see a significant problem in the selection of research methods for this diverse area of research. Besides, he dedicated a separate treatise to this matter, entitling it *The Rules of Sociological Method* (which may be why he is considered the precursor of contemporary sociology). In it, he indicated not only those methods that should be applied in humanistic and social research, but also the general purpose of these studies.[17]

In the issues of greatest interest to us here, meaning the tasks and capabilities of specific humanities and social sciences, Durkheim had already spoken out in his preface to *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. He asserts there, among other things, that the titular elementary forms may be described by the sociologist "with all the exactness and fidelity that an ethnographer or an historian could give it," when firstly the religious system "is found in a society whose organisation is surpassed by no others in simplicity," and secondly "when it is possible to explain it without making use of any element borrowed from a previous preceding religion." However, "sociology raises other problems than history or ethnography," meaning that "it has as its object the explanation of some actual reality which is near to us, and which consequently is capable of affecting our

[16] "The publication of this work [in 1912 – author's note] was preceded by a long period of intense intellectual activity in which no other work by Durkheim in the form of a book was written. […] This book is the most ethnological of Durkheim's works, grounded entirely on ethnographic materials. It was preceded by numerous smaller studies, including those using data collected by anthropologists as well as regarding the lives of primitive societies." Cf. E. Tarkowska, Foreword to the Polish edition of *Elementarne formy życia religijnego* (Warszawa 1990, p. XVII et seq.).

[17] "Indeed our main objective," he states there, "is to extend the scope of scientific rationalism to cover human behaviour by demonstrating that, in the light of the past, it is capable of being reduced to relationships of cause and effect, which, by an operation no less rational, can then be transformed into rules of action for the future." Cf. É. Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*, London 1982, p. 33 et seq.

ideas and our acts: this reality is man, and more precisely, the man of today…"[18] This treatise also contains (philosophical) content, general to a lesser or greater degree, regarding either religion as such (of the type: "In reality, then, there are no religions which are false. All are true in their own fashion; all answer, though in different ways, to the given conditions of human existence"), or the general principles of its research (of the type: "one of Descartes' principles that the first ring has a predominating place in the chain of scientific truths"). Analysis of the individual sections of this voluminous work would most likely enable answers to the question about the fragments in which Durkheim appears as a sociologist, and in which as a historian, ethnographer or philosopher. One only needs to ask whether these findings are necessary, and who needs them, as well as whether they would not hinder the tasks of those who, inspired by this work, sought and found new paths and areas of humanistic and social research (founding, among other things, such disciplines as cultural anthropology).

Another considered a classic of the sciences of symbolic culture is Max Weber (1864–1920). Associated today above all with sociology, he actually had significant accomplishments in many diverse disciplines. Besides, these achievements are indicated and analysed in regard to their ingenuity in professional literature.[19] As such it would be worth recalling that he possessed thorough academic preparation for this multidisciplinary research—acquired initially during his studies at the university in Heidelberg (where he studied law, philosophy, economics and history), and later at the universities in Berlin and Göttingen. He also had a research programme that he had developed (and corrected on several occasions) over the years; initially, he intended to focus on investigating western culture, or to be more precise, on demonstrating "Protestant asceticism as the foundation of modern vocational civilisation" and how this was so (he wrote on this issue in a letter to Heinrich Rickert on 2 April 1905), and later expanded his research to embrace various kinds of dependency occurring between religious and non-religious forms of social life, including in other cultures.[20]

[18] Cf. É. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Oxford 2001, p. 1 et seq.

[19] Cf. as an example: S. Turner (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Weber*, Cambridge 2000.

[20] He explained the reasons for this change in the second edition (in 1920) of *The Protestant Ethic*—the first of them was the aspiration to reveal the role of vocational ethics in as broad a cultural context as possible, while the second was the publication of a work by his colleague Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian*

He presented the findings of this research in his thematically diverse works. This diversity means that none of them may be explicitly categorised into a specific scientific discipline—even those whose titles, such as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* or *Ancient Judaism*, seem to suggest that they belong to the study of religion. Obviously his *Economy and Society*, a work constituting a kind of assessment and summary of many years of research, is the hardest to assign to a particular discipline. Although its subtitle says that it contains an "outline of interpretive sociology," its centre of gravity comprises the *understanding* of such global and local processes of change in social life in which nothing is omitted that was, is and will be significant for this life; and after all one does not have to be a specialist to assert that of significance for them are the economy, governance, religion, the state, and law, etc. Weber has something important to say in regard to all of these and many other determinants and components of social life (linking them—in general—with social action and rule). The more his research steps beyond the paths of study established by specific disciplines, the more interesting it is (while also inspiring the tackling of successive issues). There is of course still the open question as to whether such sociology as that practised by Weber is still, or no longer, a scientific discipline. It most certainly does not have much in common with descriptive, statistical and "dogmatic" sociology.[21]

The study of religion today

Needless to say it is enormously varied, and—as in other humanistic and social disciplines—these differences run not only along its internal determinants (linked by A. Bronk with, among other things, the "arrangement of questions") and external determinants (linked by this author with, inter alia, how it functions institutionally and personally), but also within

Churches; M. Weber acknowledged this as a "universal history of the ethics of western Christianity." For a broader look at this issue, cf. W. Schluchter, *The Rise of Western Rationalism. Max Weber's Developmental History*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1985, p. 139 et seq.

[21] With the last of these definitions I quote August Comte, who not only introduced the term "sociology" into science, but also the differentiation between a "dogmatic and historical, that is social, point of view." Naturally he brings the "social point of view" to the fore ("both in a logical and scientific sense"). Cf. A. Comte, *Discourse on the Positive Spirit*, Michigan 1902, p. 3 et seq.

these determinants. The kind of tradition referred to by today's experts on religion was and is significant, and likewise whether or not they count on the possibility of the revocation of their social "imprimatur" (I use this term in the meaning broader than it has in the Church). Seemingly prosaic matters, such as a fashion for particular names, for a defined manner of thinking and talking (for example today it is fashionable to talk as if one were a specialist in everything), and so on, also were and are crucial. There are of course more such determinants and markers of diversification in the study of religion. As a result one may, for example, on many an occasion doubt whether one is dealing with expertise on religion and religiousness, or rather with testimonies of the faith or lack of faith of those commenting. I only wish by this to say that it is equally as difficult for some experts on religion to link their religiosity with their scientificity, and for others their anti-religiosity with their scientificity. However, I do not want to deal more broadly with this issue here. What I would like to do, though, is provide a few examples of the kind of practising of religious studies that may be acknowledged as its showcase today.

Such an example could be the religious studies as practised by Mircea Eliade (1907–1986). His concept of religion and religiousness, called *morphology of the sacred*, relates directly to the position taken by Rudolf Otto, and in particular the latter's treatise *The Idea of the Holy*, in which various forms of religious experience are analysed, and "Otto sets himself to discover the characteristics of this frightening and irrational experience."[22] Philosophically, the concept is situated in the phenomenological tradition (its founders the likes of Edmund Husserl, and continuators such as Gerard van der Leeuw). An Eliadian phenomenologist—just like any phenomenologist in fact—deals with what is manifested in religious experience, although what is manifested in it does so in various shapes (morphemes) and can be—and actually is—identified by different people in different ways. Eliade himself represents above all the point of view of a historian of religion, although at the same time he recognises the significance of research by the sociologist, ethnologist and psychologist of religion. The fundamental concepts in his research are the concepts of *myth*, the *sacred*

[22] The basic elements of this experience are a "feeling of terror before the sacred" and "fear before the fascinating mystery (*mysterium fascinans*) […] Otto characterizes all these experiences as numinous (from Latin numen, god), for they are induced by the revelation of an aspect of divine power." Cf. M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York 1987, p. 8 et seq.; R. Otto, *Das Heilige*, München 1963.

and the *profane*. Eliade situates myths between man's subconscious and conscious experiences. However, myth may only be "grasped, as a myth, in so far as it reveals something as having been fully manifested." Myths differ from other experiences appearing in this area (such as, for example, dreams) in, among other things, the fact that: 1) they constitute a "manifestation [that] is at the same time creative and exemplary"; 2) "a myth always narrates something as having really happened, as an event that took place, in the plain sense of the term"; 3) "Myths reveal the structure of reality and the multiple modalities of being in the world"; 4) and they mean "everything that has opposed Earthly 'reality', while at the same time they make dependent the retention of this reality in existence."[23] The *sacred* is only one step away from myth thus understood and presented, since it turns out that "ontophany always […] implies theophany or hierophany. It was the Gods or the semi-divine beings who created the world and instituted the innumerable modes of being in the world, from that which is uniquely human to the mode of being of the insect. In revealing the history of what came to pass *in illo tempore*, one is at the same time revealing an irruption of sacred into the world." Through dialectic opposition, his *profane* sits in contrast to the "irruption of *sacred* into the world"; it constitutes the second of the fundamental modes of "being in the world," the "two existential situations assumed by humankind in the course of history."[24] Stating that we are dealing here more with mythology than the study of religion is, to a certain degree, legitimate. Except that this is barely an introduction to these multidimensional and multifaceted investigations of the connections between the *sacred* and the *profane* that Eliade conducted over many years, the findings of which he presented in his numerous treatises. In some of them (such as, for example, the three-volume *A History of Religious Ideas*) a comparative history of religions takes the foreground, while in others (such as *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*) it is ethnology, and in yet others (for example *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*), mythology and depth psychology.

However, another characteristic aspect of the contemporary study of religion is how it is practiced by those who both consider themselves above all sociologists, and who also cite mainly the findings of sociologists and sociology. An example could be the study of religion as practised by

[23] Cf. M. Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, New York 1975, p. 6 et seq.
[24] Cf. M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, op.cit., p. 11 et seq.

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, co-authors of the book *The Social Construction of Reality.*[25] The starting point in this is the philosophical question: "What are the sources of knowledge?" However, according to this work's authors, sociologists are not striving to take philosophers' place in answering this question, but assuming that reality is constructed socially, they analyse this construction, or to be more precise they analyse the "relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises."[26] Analysis of this connection leads them to pose questions to which new multidisciplinary sciences such as cognitive science (the cognitivists deal with various aspects of the functioning of the human mind) and traditional disciplines such as linguistics, including its section of semantics (dealing with investigation of language meanings), strive to find the answer. The latter constitutes for them a direct transition to issues connected to religious life, since it turns out that the so-called universes and sub-universes of meanings ("These result from accentuations of role specialization to the point where role-specific knowledge becomes altogether esoteric as against the common stock of knowledge") must have their "carriers" (just "like all social edifices of meaning, the sub-universes must be 'carried' by a particular collectivity, that is, by the group that ongoingly produces the meanings in question and within which these meanings have objective reality"), and that they are maintained by mythology ("the oldest universe-maintaining conceptualizations available to us are mythological in form") and theology (differing from the first in the "greater degree of theoretical systematization"). Not only do they have their social functions in common, but also their historical roots (they stem from historical processes of institutionalisation).[27]

[25] In the preface to this treatise, they give Durkheim and Weber as their precursors, while they give Carl Mayer as their direct teacher (his lectures contributed to a better understanding of Weber and Durkheim). Cf. P.L. Berger, Th. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, London 1991.

[26] "It may thus be said that the sociology of knowledge constitutes the sociological focus of a much more general problem, that of the existential determination of thought as such." Ibidem, p. 11.

[27] "Theology is paradigmatic for the later philosophical and scientific conceptualizations of the cosmos. While theology may be closer to mythology in the religious contents of its definitions of reality, it is closer to the later secularized conceptualizations in its social location. […] Modern science is an extreme step in this development, and in the secularization and sophistication of universe-maintenance. Science not only

In their explanation of the mechanisms behind the social maintaining of meanings, Berger and Luckmann refer not only to the work of mythologists and theologians, but also philosophers, psychologists, and even sociologists. Which of these groups is capable of best performing this task is determined not only by their knowledge and practical skills, including the skills of competing on the market of therapeutic and nihilation services, but also the social circumstances in which they are carried out. As a rule each of them aspires for the position of "universal expert," providing the "possibility of […] holding an effective monopoly over all ultimate definitions of reality in society," while those who managed to occupy these "decisive power positions are ready to use their power to impose the traditional definitions of reality on the population under their authority" ("Traditional definitions of reality inhibit social change"). However, sooner or later this gives rise to various kinds of resistance and rebellion, and leads to the appearance of diverse heresies and schisms, as well as revolutions of the kind that radically change both the symbolic universe and the social positions of those who legalised and maintained it. In their opinion, one should search history for answers to the fundamental question of "what next?," and particular the history of modern religious movements, since this shows that those who carried out the social revolutions in these times, meaning "the transformation of revolutionary intellectuals into 'official' legitimators." They differ from their ancient and mediaeval predecessors in that they managed to impose on western societies the definition of a pluralistic society, meaning one that "they have a core universe taken for granted as such, and different partial universes, coexisting in a state of mutual accommodation."[28]

A few general remarks

The premise for these remarks is provided by those scholars who fit within the broad and intellectually invigorating trend of interpretive sociology. They are linked not so much by the describing of transformations in so-

completes the removal of the sacred from the world of every-day life, but removes universe-maintaining knowledge as such from that world." Ibidem, p. 112.

[28] "The pluralistic situation presupposes an urban society with a highly developed division of labour, a concomitant high differentiation in the social structure and high economic surplus." Ibidem, p. 134.

cial life, including its significant fragment that religious life constitutes, as by their attempt at understanding and explaining the *sense* of these transformations. This undoubtedly was and is a philosophical problem. However, the scholars cited here convincingly showed and demonstrated that it was and is also a historical, psychological, ethnological, theological, religiological, culturological and sociological problem, as well as one of still other humanistic and social sciences. I am prepared to sign my name to the thesis that if one of these does not perceive it, then one could have justified doubts as to whether everything is as it should be with its scientificity.

It goes without saying that this problem has both a global (comprehensive) dimension and a number of local (fragmentary) dimensions. Among other things, this means that not one of the individual humanistic or social sciences has been or is capable of resolving it without using the research methods and findings of others. Not only awareness of this fact differs among those representing these sciences, but so too does their readiness and skill of using the methods and findings. I am also prepared to subscribe to the thesis that today the results relatively the most significant and cognitively interesting are achieved not by those who shut themselves away in their own discipline, speciality or specialisation, but by those who—as authentic specialists "in something"—are simultaneously rather well oriented in what other specialists are doing, how they are doing it, and what results they are achieving. In this respect the study of religion is not, or at least it should not be, aspiring for some kind of exception. In a situation where it becomes a sort of isolated and self-isolating island, then it has either already ceased to be a science or is on the road to losing its status as a humanistic and social science—in the understanding of these sciences as given them by, among others, interpretive sociology. The fact that that such sociology is moving into the foreground today does not—in my opinion—detract at all from its honour. After all, in science somebody and something was always first (including theologians and theology), and the fact that this firstness is changing constitutes the norm and a natural rule.

Chapter 2

Confession or science – a real or ostensible dilemma?

At the very outset I would like to state clearly that one cannot legitimately give ultimate answers to the question posed in the title. This does not mean, naturally, that such answers are not forthcoming. After all, one can encounter two extremely opposite positions in this matter. On the one side are those who believe that confession (of faith), or religiosity, totally excludes science, or scientificity, and within this group are both declared atheists and people who are religiously indifferent. Yet on the other side we have people who believe that confession and science not only do not exclude one another, but are even mutually complementary or can at least coexist in peace—and they treat those who do not share their view as people who either do not know what religion and science are about, or who adopt some kind of simplified understanding of them.[1]

I do not share the opinion that every attempt at connecting religiosity with scientificity can only harm both one and the other; likewise I do not believe that every form of their separation can be good for them. However, indicating the circumstances and the conditions in which they rule each other out, and those in which they can complement one another or at least not make life difficult for the other, requires answers to many additional questions, including one about the understanding of the confession of faith and scientificity, and about their boundary conditions. Referring to the history of the relations between them, and hearing what prominent theologians,

[1] Such a view is, to some degree, proclaimed by Fr. prof. Andrzej Bronk, whom I value highly. He favours a defined version of combining religiosity and scientificity, while he ascribes an "absolutely irrational aversion towards experts on religion who are believers" to those believing that they always rule one another out in religious studies. Cf. A. Bronk, *Podstawy nauk o religii*, Lublin 2009, p. 138 et seq.

scholars and philosophers had to say on the matter, may prove helpful here. History is admittedly not a good teacher in every situation, nevertheless I am convinced that for resolving an issue so sensitive and touchy as that posed as the object of these deliberations it is unlikely to prove harmful.

Issues of terminology

The concepts appearing in the title of these deliberations require terminological clarification. And so, religiosity—the titular "confession" (as in the confession of faith), a term that derives, as do many other words functioning in modern languages, from Latin (from the word *confessio*), and is connected both to a specific religion and to the significant component of this that faith constitutes.[2] In Christian tradition it is also connected to the settlements adopted at specific ecumenical councils—hence one speaks of the "Nicene Confession (Creed)," (connected to the decisions of the Nicene Ecumenical Council), or the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (linked to the decisions of the First Constantinople Council), and so on. Following the emergence of the reformed Churches, creeds began to be linked both to these Churches (distinguishing, among others, the Lutheran, Calvinist and Anglican creeds, etc.) and to communities known as "religious organisations." Considering the significant differentiation in how the term "confession" (or "creed") is understood, all that remains common is the reference to religious faith—both in its objective aspect (what one believes in), and its subjective, personal aspect (the one who believes).

The second of these fundamental terms is "scientificity." This is directly linked to the concept of "science," deriving from the Latin concept of *scientia*, meaning both science and knowledge. The answer to the question as to what has come to be associated with science is a problem in itself, since the list of these associations is not only long, but also highly varied. Besides, there is copious literature on the topic.[3] Obviously these answers

[2] "In theological usage this term does not primarily mean the act of confessing the faith but a series of propositions in which the magisterium and Tradition have sought to provide a more or less complete formulation of the content of faith. This is also called a profession of faith (or symbolum)." Cf. K. Rahner, H. Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, New York 1965, p. 268.

[3] This literature encompasses, inter alia, Monika Walczak's monograph entitled *Racjonalność nauki*. In her opening remarks, the author writes: "Even a cursory glance

are different when looking at how this concept functioned in the past, and when considering its contemporary understanding and application. After all there were such periods in European culture when what was religious and what was scientific were brought as close together as possible, when people of the Church were not only figures of religious but also scientific authority. However, there were also periods in this culture when the paths of what was religious and what scientific radically diverged, while any attempt towards bringing them together provoked the staunch opposition of both those in the Church and those who, for various reasons, found themselves outside of the Churches. I shall not cite any examples here, as these are issues that are generally well known, while those keen on learning more on the topic can with little difficulty find papers worth reading. The answers to the question posed above also depend on what sciences we are referring to—since after all what constitutes a minimum of scientificity for a mathematician or naturalist does not have to constitute the same, and frequently does not, for a representative of one of the humanities or social sciences. Besides, since quite long ago there has been a distinct differentiation into the so-called hard and soft sciences.

However, even with such variation one can point out a kind of minimum without which science ceases to be science, and although it may admittedly remain a certain part of culture, it is no longer a part of scientific culture. The fulfilment by scientific activities and products of such demands as the following has come to be acknowledged as such a minimum: "authenticity, justification, rationality, objectiveness, intersubjectivity, method, orderliness, regularity, repeatability, and general and specialist character (single-aspect, theoreticality and practicality)."[4] I would also add requirements related to the conduct of the scholar to this list, such as criticism, self-criticism and readiness to subject to inspection one's own views, actions and applied procedures, and so on. Karl R. Popper identified these demands with rationalism; in his opinion, this rationalism is nothing

at the history of science and ways of reflecting over it reveals its multiformity, multidimensionality, complexity and dynamism, the consequence of which is a multitude of meanings in which the term 'science' was used in the past and is used today. Since its very beginning, science has appeared in numerous changing forms, and although there is a genetic connection between science as grasped by the ancient Greeks and science today it would be difficult, if at all possible, to find similarities between them." Cf. M. Walczak, *Racjonalność nauki*, Lublin 2006, p. 21 et seq.

[4] Cf. ibidem, p. 24.

other than a "readiness to listen to critical arguments and to learn from experience."[5] Less about the name. For science it is important that one not approach what is of the greatest essence in it on one's knees.

Needless to say, this does not mean that scholars have no need for a certain humility, self-sacrifice or self-limitation, since after all many a scientific achievement could not have been reached without them. Yet more than one may also not have been achieved without that specific boldness that is essential for entering an area with numerous unknowns and remaining there for as long as it takes to finally reach the goal one has set, or at least get significantly close to it. In addition many may never have reached fruition if not—putting it colloquially—for the tarnishing of things then considered sacred, and that means tarnishing them without a care for the so-called consequences; and after all, this frequently meant not only outrage or umbrage, but also repercussions in the form of the exclusion or public stigmatising of such hotheads. I shall not even attempt to resolve whether these are issues of secondary or primary importance. After all, much depends on the specific conditions in which scholars came to live and conduct their activities. I treat each of these requirements as an issue for serious discussion. A voice in this discussion is the generalising proposition that although positing crucial issues is a certain kind of art, resolving them is an even greater art. I would like to stick to this proposition from this point forward in my deliberations.

Confession and scientificity—confrontational scenarios

Such scenarios—written both by people of religious faith and people of science—appeared at the same moment as when it was realised that the hitherto forms of coexistence for Christian religion and the sciences tackling issues in a manner different to that of theology had been exhausted,

[5] "It is fundamentally an attitude of admitting that 'I may be wrong, and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer to the truth.' It is an attitude which does not lightly give up hope that by such means as argument and careful observation, people may reach some kind of agreement on most problems of importance; and that, even where their demands and their interests clash, it is often possible to argue about the various demands and proposals, and to reach—perhaps by arbitration—a compromise which, because of its equity, is acceptable to most, if not to all." Cf. K.R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Princeton and Oxford 2013, p. 431.

and that it was necessary to either modify them, or find new ones. In his sketch *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, Jacques Le Goff argues that this happened in the 12th century, and was linked to the appearance of universities as institutional forms of scholarly life. In the section entitled *The 12th Century – The birth of the Intellectuals*, he recalls the high-profile dispute between Peter Abelard, a professor at the Sorbonne, and prominent professors of this Parisian seat of learning who defended Christian tradition, including the traditional approach to practising science. Of course there were various aspects to this dispute, one of which was the stance taken by Abelard, theologian, philosopher and logician devoting himself to science with a passion, and so convinced of his own scientific competence that he did not hesitate to attack—in the name of the truth—the most famous of the Parisian scholars.[6] This confrontation ended as it had to end, considering such a disproportion of power and means between the defenders of Christian tradition supported by the Church, and Abelard, with the support of mainly his own intellect and a relatively sparse group of students; it ended with the scholar's private and professional demise.[7]

Greater success in the battle for what was most important in science was achieved by Erasmus of Rotterdam, author of works including *The Praise of Folly*, a work equally as subversive as sacrilegious, since it questioned the rationality of the prevalent beliefs and behaviours at that time, and placed a huge question mark over the wisdom of the major figures of authority of the day. Even today it is still amazing how flippantly this theologian and philosopher, a lecturer at a few universities in his time, pronounced his opinions—regarding "venerable old popes" ("Such an old man talks nonsense yet at the same time is free of those pathetic worries that torment the wise"), ancient and contemporary academic grammarians, dialecticians and teachers of the art of speech (their art boiling down to "dragging through courts"), and medics ("in this job – the greater the ignoramus, and the more impudent and the more with gay abandon, then even the more valued by dukes festooned with chains"). This intellectually suspect company lacks neither philosophers of the day ("venerable thanks to their beards and long coats") nor theologians ("perhaps they would be better ignored with silence," although at least one should say that it "is more difficult to find one's way out of their various scholastic systems

[6] Cf. J. Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, New York 1993, p. 45 et seq.

[7] His books were burned on papal order, while he was removed from teaching in Paris and sent to the priory of St Marcel in Chalon-rur Saône, where he died in 1142.

than to escape a labyrinth"). In his conclusion to this long list of fools, Erasmus wrote: "Fortune loves those who are less than discrete, she loves the rasher sort, and the ones who are fond of that saying, "The die is cast." But wisdom makes men meticulous, which is why you commonly see that the traffic of wise men is with poverty, hunger, and smoke; you see them living neglected, inglorious, and disliked. You see my fools abounding in money, holding the helms of states, in brief, flourishing in every way."[8] Although he did not live in poverty himself, as a travelling lecturer he did not have a steady source of income and had no lack of troubles in life in practically any of the places where he spent time.[9]

The life and teachings of Erasmus came at the beginning of an era that saw the eruption of a huge rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church and its authority. This was recorded by history as the Reformation, while the movement's instigators came to be known as the Protestants.[10] There was no lack of those with academic titles and achievements among the participants. Yet the inspirers and leaders of the Reformation were not people of science, but people of the Church—such as Luther or Calvin. They were disinclined to accept a compromise between what Christian religion had been proclaiming for centuries, and what had been determined by the scholars of their day. According to Andrew White, "Protestantism was no less zealous against the new scientific doctrine" than Catholicism. This is confirmed in the attitude displayed by the leaders of the Protestant revolution mentioned here towards the theories of Copernicus: "Said Martin Luther: 'People gave ear to an upstart astrologist who strove to show that the Earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. […] This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the Sun to stand still, and not the Earth'. […] Calvin took the lead, in his Commentary on Genesis, by condemning all who asserted that the Earth is not at the centre of the universe. He clinched the matter by the usual reference to the first verse of

[8] D. Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, Princeton 2015, p. 156 et seq.

[9] He arrived in Basel in 1521 and became involved in polemics with the theses of Martin Luther. In 1529, when the city came under Protestant rule, he moved to Freiburg im Breisgau, but he returned to Basel in 1533 and remained there until his death in 1536.

[10] This name appeared for the first time in 1529, at the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire held in Speyer.

the ninety-third Psalm, and asked, 'Who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?'"[11]

Neither the unfavourable attitude towards the scientific discoveries of the 16th century among leaders of the Protestant revolt, nor measures taken by the Roman Catholic Church disciplining the faithful were capable of holding science in check, and only individual Christian creeds unfurled their theological wings. This is because individual scientific disciplines also developed, both in Protestant and Catholic countries.[12] Of course this proved easier in some, more difficult in others. In countries that remained with the Roman Catholic Church, a particularly difficult period began at the moment when the provisions of the Council of Trent began to be implemented, in other words towards the end of the 16th century and in the first half of the 17th century.[13]

How the confrontation between creeds and science looked back then is shown, among other things, in the story of the struggles between the Church's ruling bodies and Galileo Galilei, a professor at the university in Padua, and a scholar of multifarious interests and achievements.[14] His vocational and private problems were mainly related to the fact that he spoke in favour of the Copernican system. In his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* he writes that he could never "can I sufficiently admire the eminency of those men wits that have received and held it to be true [i.e. that of Copernicus – author's comment] and with the sprightliness of their judgements offered such violence to their own senses, as that they have been able to prefer that which their reason dictated to them, to that which sensible experiments represented most manifestly on the

[11] Cf. A. White, *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, New York 1955, p. 126 et seq.

[12] Science historians even talk of a scientific revolution taking place then. Cf. A.C. Crombie, *Medieval and Early Modern Science*, vol. 2, Cambridge 1967, p. 124 et seq.

[13] The Council of Trent ended in 1563 with the adoption of provisions intended to strengthen the Roman Catholic Church both internally and in its fight with the reformed Churches. For Catholics, this meant "the faithful were again subjected to the uncompromising severity of Church discipline, and even in the extreme cases, to the sword of excommunication." Cf. L. von Ranke, *The History Of The Popes during the Last Four Centuries*, vol. 1, London 1913, p. 295 et seq.

[14] He was an outstanding mathematician and scientist as well as an ingenious inventor (constructor of, among other things, the telescope and hydrostatic balance). For more on his achievements, see Cf. A.C. Crombie, *Medieval and Early Modern Science*, vol. 2, p. 152 et seq.

contrary."[15] But this fascination was shared neither by scholars linked to the Catholic Church, nor by members of the Sacrum Officium upholding Catholic orthodoxy, who placed Galileo before the tribunal of the Roman Inquisition. His trial lasted for almost twenty years (from 1614 to 1633) and concluded with condemnation not only of Copernicus' theories, but also the views of Galileo, who was ordered to "relinquish altogether the said opinion" (in public) and pledge to acknowledge those views as false, mistaken and heretic. He also promised that "in the future he would no longer proclaim them in speech or in writing, and that should he learn of any heretic or person suspected of heresy, he would report this to the Sacrum Officium or the inquisitor, or to the bishop of the place where he would be. The scholar submitted to this order, but later in his correspondence he described the verdict of the Roman tribunal a "triumph of ignorance, impiety and deceipt."[16]

The execution of this confrontational scenario in the 17th century constituted a serious warning to those scholars who, for various reasons, were inclined to trust in their own reason more than the Holy Bible. This is confirmed, among other things, by the behaviour of that great philosopher and scholar (with particularly significant achievements in mathematics) René Descartes. He wrote a voluminous treatise on the world, one in which he also spoke out in favour of Copernicus' system, but at the news of Galileo's sentence he destroyed it.[17] The fact that this French thinker took the decision (in 1628) to leave Catholic France and live in the more

[15] Cf. G. Galilei, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* in *Collected Works of Galileo Galilei*, Hastings 2017, p. 895 et seq.

[16] A detailed description of the trial is given by A.C. Crombie in his treatise cited here.

[17] Only the outline (published posthumously in 1664) and introduction (published as the *Discourse on the Method*) have survived. In a letter to his French supporter, the Jesuit Fr. M. Mersenne (in April 1634), he wrote: "Doubtless you know that Galileo was recently censured by the Inquisition and that his views about the movement of the Earth were condemned as heretical. […] 'Not everything that the Roman inquisitors decide is automatically an article of faith, but must first be approved of by a General Council'—well, perhaps, but I'm not so fond of my own opinions as to want to maintain them by splitting hairs. I want to live in peace and to continue the life I have begun under the motto 'He lives well who is well hidden'. So I'm more happy to be delivered from the fear that this work would make my social circle larger than I wanted it to be than I am unhappy at having lost the time and trouble I spent on its composition." Cf. ibidem, p. 268.

tolerant Protestant Holland is also significant. Although he did not manage to thereby avoid shrewd polemicizing with Christian theologians, he did at least avoid the humiliation that befell Galileo. In Catholic countries the Roman Church obviously implemented the scenario that was outlined at Trent, while it was honed and adapted to the specific conditions by local censors, inquisitors and church ordinaries. Admittedly, this did not entirely shut off access to university faculties for those scholars who wanted to achieve some kind of discovery in science, and were capable of doing so, but it was a serious hindrance. This is seen, for example, in the fortunes of the views proclaimed by Descartes.[18] A consequence of this "tightening of the boundaries" was, on the one hand, that the universities of the day became more uniform in regard to creed, while on the other scholars unwilling to or incapable of identifying with this religiosity sought openings beyond these places of learning. An example could be the public-office career of the naturalist G.L. Leclerc de Buffon, highly respected in the 18th century and author of the enormous (36 volumes) and well-read (translated into several modern languages) *Histoire Naturelle*, in which, among other things, he formulated the concept of 'organic particles', acknowledged as a germ of the theory of evolution.[19]

In the 18th century, philosophers of the Enlightenment also outlined their confrontational scenarios. Among the most vociferous and most influential was Voltaire (François Marie Arouet). One could have various reservations regarding his erudition, since he spoke often and willingly on many a different topic but his knowledge was not sufficiently comprehensive on any subject to avoid significant faults. They can be seen, inter alia, in his presentation of the achievements of Descartes and Newton. In the fourteenth of his *Letters on the English*, he accuses the former of committing elementary scientific errors, including making scientific conclusions

[18] J.S. Spink, in presenting these fortunes, indicates for example that Cartesianism "violently infiltrated" the university in the Protestant city of Leiden, while the Catholic Louvain and Liège "proved inaccessible for it." As for the Anglican city of Oxford, it "shows no interest in Cartesianism," and the Anglian Cambridge "only moderate" interest. Cf. J.S. Spink, *French Free-Thought from Gassendi to Voltaire*, London 2013, p. 282 et seq.

[19] At no period in his career was L. Leclerc de Buffon a university professor, while his main source of income from his family estate and remuneration received for his function as steward of the Royal Gardens (today's Jardin des Plantes). For more on his academic achievements, cf. A. Bednarczyk, *Filozofia biologii europejskiego Oświecenia*, Warszawa 1984, p. 155 et seq.

dependent on belief in a truthful and omnipotent God ("He pushed his metaphysical errors so far, as to declare that two and two make four for no other reason but because God would have it so"). In many respects the "famous Newton, this destroyer of the Cartesian system" was his opposite—not only did he have the "felicity […] to be born in a country of liberty […], in an age when all scholastic impertinences were banished from the world," but also "reason alone was cultivated" and—needless to say—he joined those who stood by human reason in science.[20] Although he admits in his treatise dedicated to Newton that he "was convinced of the existence of God," he quickly adds that "he understood by this word not only a boundless, omnipotent, eternal and creative being, but also a Lord who established a certain relationship between himself and his creations." Later in his arguments he strives to convince the reader that this was rather the God of enlightened deists than of Christian theists.[21] Unfortunately this has little in common with the actual religiosity by Newton, who was not only a declared Anglican, but also a scholar seeking rather what joined than what divided religion and science, while his pupils and proponents (such as the philosopher and theologian Samuel Clarke, highly esteemed in those times) were ordinary theists and certainly not deists.

In the 19th century various confrontational scenarios between religion and science were written and put into effect, and in a few of them the confrontation was very fierce. Such was the case, for example, just after the end of the Napoleonic Wars (in 1815) when the conservative forces of Western Europe attempted to restore the pre-revolutionary order. There was then a kind of hunt for so-called freethinkers. Such persons were removed from influence in public life, including in the education of youngsters. Within this circle was a group of university professors who for various reasons did not want to agree to the subordination of academic science and academic teaching to the Church. One of these people was Jules Michelet, a professor at the Collège de France. His dispute with the Jesuits led first of all to him being suspended from teaching, and later his expulsion from his position at the university. Michelet's response to these measures was his multi-volume *History of France*, in which he contrasted secular history with "holy" history (the latter written by people of the Church and in the Church's interest), while the culmination of this work

[20] Cf. Voltaire, *Letters concerning the English nation*, London 1733, p. 120 et seq.
[21] Cf. Voltaire, *Elements of the Philosophy of Newton*, London 2004, p. 5 et seq.

was not only the clashing of two histories in the French Revolution, but also the recognition of victory for the former over the latter as an expression of historical Justice. With this widely-read and influential work (translated into several different languages) he contributed significantly to, inter alia, a reinforcing in educated people's minds of the image of the Renaissance as that period in the history of European culture that saw a departure from the "dark ages" of the Christian Middle Ages.[22]

Another prominent example of the clash between two confrontational scenarios is that of the day's debates around Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. The biographers of this great scholar argue that the author of the treatise *On the Origin of Species* (printed in 1859) underwent profound evolution in his intellectual development: "He was raised a Christian, trained for a career with the clergy, and died an atheist."[23] However, he had neither the inclination for acute ideological confrontation nor the personality of a great warrior ("he was a great thinker, but he lacked self-confidence"). But there was such a warrior among his close collaborators, and he was Thomas Henry Huxley. The authors of the biography cited here write that he was a "brilliant academic" (a member of the Royal Society). However, he had not completed any university studies and at no moment in his academic career was he a professor of a higher place of learning (although he held honorary doctorates from a few universities).[24] Quite an accurate

[22] The term itself, "la renaissance" in French, appears for the first time in J. Michelet's *History of France*. In describing this way of understanding, Zygmunt Łempicki writes: "J. Michelet, a hero of the February Revolution [of 1847 – author], portrays the Renaissance from a revolutionary's point of view, and sees in it the first stage of liberated man and at the same time the first step on the road to a great revolution. […] He accentuates the sense of real life, the joie de vivre hallmarking that era, and posits that thanks to this, man has broken free of the bonds of spiritualistic separation from life and ascetic disdain for the world, constraining man in the Middle Ages." Cf. Z. Łempicki, *Renesans, oświecenie, romantyzm*, in *Wybór pism*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1966, p. 31 et seq. However, this sharp contrasting of the Renaissance and Middle Ages is not confirmed in the facts. For more on this matter, cf. P.O. Kristeller, *Humanizm i filozofia* [lit. Humanism and Philosophy; a collection of works], Warszawa 1985.

[23] Yet his theory of evolution does not challenge the essence of Christianity. There is no doubt that it contributed to overturning the fundamentalist principles and naïve myths of the world's creation, but it is not atheistic doctrine as some would like. Cf. M. White, J. Gribbin, *Darwin: A Life in Science*, London 1995, p. 16 et seq.

[24] Huxley held a deep aversion for the class-based system of education and the entire academic world. The sole value for Huxley was that of intellectual potential, and as such he decided with utter determination to bring down the hitherto system

description of the clash between two confrontational scenarios—Huxley's, and that of Samuel Wilberforce, defending the Oxford traditions—has survived. It occurred at the "notorious gathering of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which took place in Oxford on Saturday 30 June 1860, six months after the publication of the first edition of Darwin's work.[25] At a certain point during this confrontation, the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wildberforce, addressed Huxley with the following question: "Are his monkey ancestors on his grandfather's or grandmother's side?." The floor was then given to Huxley, who in a masterly manner parried: "I wouldn't be ashamed of such pedigree at all. However, I'd consider it a discredit were I to be descended from somebody who prostituted the gift of culture and eloquence in the service of prejudice and falsehood." One may of course presume that for certain persons attending the said gathering, this response was outrageous. Yet there was no shortage of those whom it amused and who held its author in high esteem.[26] Intellectual life in various countries added to the further course of this great debate. Needless to say, it has of course had its dramatic moments—for example the highly publicised matter of John Scopes, a teacher of physics in a high school in Dayton (in the American state of Tennessee), who was taken to court in 1925 for propagating the theory of evolution (and this became an opportunity for American liberals to confront American fundamentalists).[27]

Religion and Science—mediatory scenarios

These appear at various times in history, and various moments of the debate between defenders of religion and defenders of science—including

and eliminate the dependence of research on the scientist's social position. Cf. ibidem, p. 195 et seq.

[25] Of course Darwin did not appear at this meeting, but his "generals," Hooker, and especially Huxley—for many years well prepared to substitute for Darwin in the fight for the legitimacy of the theory of evolution against all fanatics and disbelievers—formed ranks while the author himself roamed Down House. Ibidem, p. 239.

[26] Comments on Huxley's answer by the authors of the cited biography are also of such a tone; they write about Wilberforce's behaviour that it resulted from arrogance and underestimation of the opponent," while they describe Huxley's behaviour as resulting "from a hatred for religious authorities, their ignorance and social arrogance. Ibidem, p. 242.

[27] For more on the topic, cf. S.J. Gould, *Rock of Ages*, London 2002, p. 134.

at those moments when the confrontational scenarios ultimately took the upper hand. As such it would be worth taking a somewhat closer look at such high-profile cases as those of Galileo, Descartes, Newton and Darwin. Such a mediatory scenario was proposed by, inter alios, the first of these scholars in his *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina* of Tuscany: "Citing the authority of St Augustine, Galileo argued that God was the author not only of one great book but of two, of Nature as well as the Scriptures. Truth was to be studied in both, but with different results. The book of nature was to be read in the language of mathematical science and the results expressed in physical theory; the Scriptures, on the other hand, contained no physical theory, but revealed to us our moral destiny. […] Indeed he pointed out that the Scriptures had always been understood to use figurative language at many points […], where a literal interpretation would be directly heretical. It was against both reason and tradition to use a literal interpretation of Scriptures…"[28] The Church authorities were unable to agree upon a secular scholar determining what was and what was not heretical. However, a solution proposed in this dispute by the Protestant theologian A. Osiander (author of the foreword in *De revolutionibus* by Copernicus) proved acceptable to them; according to this, the Copernican model "should be considered a mathematical hypothesis" facilitating calculations, but not a "physical explanation." Yet this solution was rejected by Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, representing the Church in the dispute (in his opinion Copernicus "used absolute and not hypothetical wording").

This method of avoiding conflict between religion and science was frequently and willingly taken advantage of later by scholars in Protestant countries, Newton among them; this is seen, among other things, in his letter (dated 2 June 1672) to Samuel Horsley, in which he states that "the best and safest method of philosophizing seems to be, first diligently to investigate the properties of things and establish them by experiment, and then to seek hypotheses to explain them. For hypotheses ought to be fitted merely to explain the properties of things and not attempt to predetermine them except in so far as they can be an aid to experiments. If any one offers conjectures about the truth of things from the mere possibility of hypotheses, I do not see how any thing can be determined in any science; for it is always possible to contrive hypotheses, one after another, which

[28] A.C. Crombie, *The History of Science from Augustine to Galileo*, New York 1994, p. 207 et seq.

are found rich in new tribulations. Wherefore I judged that one should abstain from considering hypotheses as from a fallacious argument, and that the force of their opposition must be removed, that one may arrive at a mature and more general explanation."[29] Briefly put, science is hypothetical in character, while religion—as all believers know—is dogmatic. Still open is the matter of whether one should understand by this only that statements of the former may be questioned, while those of the latter may not, or whether the former applies purely to matters of the mundane world, and the latter exclusively or above all to matters of the supernatural world. Needless to say, this openness provided opportunity for writing further mediatory scenarios.

Descartes seemingly took this lead. In his *Principles of Philosophy*, written in 1644, and in which he presented, inter alia, his position regarding the Earth, he says he chooses to offer "everything that I'm going to write simply as a hypothesis." In Part III of this work, he presents three hypotheses on the matter of the Earth and the Sun: that of Ptolemy ("it conflicts with many recent observations") and those of Copernicus and Tycho Brahe (they "don't differ much, except that the Copernican version is a little simpler and clearer"). However, in his summary on the deliberations contained in this work, he wrote: "I affirm nothing, but submit all these my opinions to the authority of the church and the judgment of the more sage."[30] The ostensibility of this philosopher and scholar is heightened further by his frequent invoking of God—an "all-perfect being," "his infinite perfections," "all-powerful," "the true cause of all that is or can be," "he is absolutely veracious and the source of all light," and so on. Yet the deliberations contained in the first sections of this work should arouse doubts regarding whether this is about the same God of whom the Church has been teaching for centuries. This is because the work contains a hypothesis of a God-deceiver, meaning a being capable of anything (if there were to be something it could not do, it would not be omnipotent), including deliberately leading astray a person aspiring for the truth; and whether or not he does must be determined not by God, or by his earthly successors in the Church, but by that person, and he or she must resolve this unequivocally. Of course Descartes resolves this, claiming that "God is no deceiver" (because there is always a certain imperfection in deceiving, and therefore it cannot apply to God)—but is,

[29] Cf. ibidem, p. 324.

[30] Cf. R. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, in *Collected Works*, Hastings 2017, p. 582 et seq.

on the other hand, the giver of everything that is best in man, and is the ultimate guarantee of the proper usage of these gifts, which include the infallibility of human reason. One could of course ask: and what would happen if God were not to bestow upon man his skills, or were He to not want to grant him all those guarantees? Descartes' answer in this matter is explicit: all the worse not only for man, but also for God, who would turn out to be a being internally contradictory and submerged in the shadows of ignorance. According to this philosopher and scholar, there is nothing worse than contradiction and ignorance. This is also resolved not before a church tribunal, but before the highest such earthly tribunal—which Descartes firmly believes to be human reason. At this point little remains of that great mystification comprising the Cartesian declarations of readiness to surrender to the judgment of the Church, or the acknowledgement of theories formulated in his *Principles of Philosophy* "simply as a hypothesis."

It would be difficult today to resolve unequivocally whether proponents of Descartes' views who were connected to the Church fully realised what was purely mystification in his declarations, and what was the essence. However, it is worth noting that there were at least a few Jesuits among his supporters—such as Fr. M. Mersenne and Fr. Le Valois (they saw in Descartes above all a great physicist) or Fr. J.M. Aubert (who more than anything else saw a great mathematician in the scholar).[31] Within the group linking religiosity with scientificity there were also those who realised immediately that these Cartesian declarations were basically only words, since in its most essential assumptions and aspirations Cartesian doctrine was a-Christian. Attention was drawn to this fact by another great scholar of those times, Blaise Pascal; the name Descartes appears on several occasions in his *Pensées* [Thoughts], and each time is accompanied by critical remarks.[32] At a later period some took Descartes' attempt at mediation between religion and science as an acceptable way out of a problem that was hard to resolve, while others felt quite the opposite, and considered it unacceptable to those truly devoted to religion.[33]

[31] Cf. J.S. Spink, *French Free-Though*…, op.cit., p. 192 et seq.

[32] In one of the fragments of this work he states: "I cannot forgive Descartes. In all his philosophy he would have been quite willing to dispense with God. But he had to make Him give a fillip to set the world in motion; beyond this, he has no further need of God." Cf. B. Pascal, *Thoughts*, New York 1910, p. 34 et seq.

[33] One of the more important voices in this matter is the treatise by the contemporary neo-Thomist Etienne Gilson, entitled *God and Philosophy*; in his opinion, the

One could of course find many an original attempt towards mediation in this area in the 18th century. Yet they tended to involve Protestants rather than Catholics. From this point of view it would be worth taking a closer look at, for example, what was proposed by philosophers such as Kant (using the demands of practical reason to justify the necessity to believe in God) and economists such as Adam Smith (combining the theory of the "hard hand" of the economic market with the theory of the "soft" realities of moral feelings and faith).[34] Such mediators were also to appear in the next century in Catholic countries where the confrontation between Church and scientific circles took a rather violent course. An example here could be France, where the first decades of that century saw the emergence of such mediators as Claude Henri de Saint-Simon—who in his *Nouveau Christianisme* [The New Christianity] attempted to build a bridge between efficient management, the efficient shaping and conducting of scientific research, and the efficient practising of religious beliefs and rites. This was all supposed to lead together to a kind of unity in which there would no longer be any point in asking where religiosity ended and scientificity began.[35] The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the formation in a few European countries of a group of intellectuals known as *Catholic modernists*. They shared the desire to defend both religion and science, but the mediation formula they proposed gained the approval of neither the Church nor secular academic circles. It boiled down to a recognition of the issues of religion and religiosity as the sphere of subjectivism and subjectivisation, and the sphere of science and scientificity to the objectivism and objectivization deriving from commonplace experience as well as the related rationalism and rationalisation. An attempt at demonstrating the validity of this division was made by, among others, Edouard Le Roy in

Cartesian God is not the Christian God, but is an "infelicitous hybrid of religious faith and rational thought." Cf. E. Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, New Haven 1941, p. 89 et seq.

[34] For more on the topic—cf. G. Himmelfarb, *Political Economy and Moral Sentiments*, in *The Roads to Modernity. The Britsh, French, and American Enlightenments*, New York 2004, p. 53 et seq.

[35] According to J.E. Grabowski, this idea of 'unity' constitutes the foundation of Saint-Simon's social views: "Deep faith in the idea of unity led him to the concept of one doctrine being both science and religion, to the concept of one social organisation embracing the whole of humankind and possessing one supervisory power, and finally to the concept of one norm that the conduct of all people and groups should be guided by." Cf. J.E. Grabowski, *Saint-Simon. Utopia – Filozofia – Industrializm*, Warszawa 1936, p. 170 et seq.

his treatise entitled *Dogme et Critique* [Dogma and Critique]; in the light of the explanations contained here, the so-called rules of science are either established conventions or "dogmatic" definitions, or even practical general regulations, and most often all of them simultaneously.[36] This stance was condemned in the Papal encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* (1907), as well as in the syllabus of the Roman Inquisition, *Lamentabili sane exitu*. On the part of secular academic circles, it was spoken out against by the likes of the brilliant French mathematician and philosopher Henri Poincaré.[37]

At the same time an attempt was made to establish a bridge between religion and religiosity on the one hand, and science and scientificity on the other, by Max Weber. He presented it in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, a treatise which from its very appearance in 1904 proved a source of much discussion, as well as a great deal of inspiration, for those seeking answers to the fundamental questions regarding European culture, including religious and scientific culture. This is, of course, not the sole work by this outstanding German scholar (sociologist, historian, economist, lawyer and expert on religion) in which he analysed European culture and formulated his generalisations on the matter. But in no other does this mediatory scenario have such clearly laid-out primary and secondary roles, and in no other are they played with such virtuosity that only at the very close does one learn who is the hero and who the villain in this spectacle, or—needless to say—where the entire "plot" (if one may thus call the main theme in this treatise) is heading. As such taking a somewhat closer look at this scenario is well worth the trouble.

In his entr'acte (called "opening remarks") there is a presentation of "science" at a stage of development that is the achievement of solely the Western world.[38] The case is similar with art and with "the most fateful force in our modern life, *capitalism*." The author of *The Protestant Ethic*

[36] For more on this topic cf. K. Szlachcic, *Filozofia nauki francuskiego konwencjonalizmu*, Wrocław 1992, p. 43 et seq.

[37] Cf. H. Poincaré, *La valeur de la science*, Paris 1970, p. 156 et al.

[38] "Empirical knowledge, reflection on problems of the cosmos and of life, philosophical and theological wisdom of the most profound sort, […] knowledge and observation of great refinement have existed elsewhere…," but "elsewhere" there was not that "mathematical foundation which it first received from the Greeks," or that "rational proof" that "was another product of the Greek intellect," that "method of experiment" that "was, apart from beginnings in antiquity, essentially a product of the Renaissance," etc. Cf. M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London 2001, p. xxviii et seq.

gives most space to the latter. Its strength is determined by various forms of rationalism and rationality, including the "technical utilization of scientific knowledge." Weber divided the rest of this work into three parts. In the first, entitled *The Problem*, there is the "Protestant belief," or to be more precise, "faiths," since there are many of them, of which such mixed-religion countries as Germany, England or Holland are examples. The basis for their distinction is that "business leaders and […] higher grades of skilled labour […] of modern enterprises are overwhelmingly Protestant." Even Catholics are supposed to agree with this fact. The titular "problem" boils down to the question: why is this so? Although there is not just one answer to this question, one of the more important is the assertion that unlike a Protestant, a Catholic has "less of the acquisitive impulse; he prefers a life of the greatest possible security, even with a smaller income, to a life of risk and excitement, even though it may bring the chance of gaining honour and riches."[39]

After pointing out this fundamental difference, Weber reveals its main culprits: they are the "English, Dutch and American Puritans […] characterised by the exact opposite of the joy of living, a fact which is indeed, as we shall see, most important for our present study." However, before we "see," we find out—among other things—that the "old Protestantism of Luther, Calvin, Knox, Voet, had precious little to do with what today is called progress," or with the "spirit of capitalism," the credo of which is expressed in the mottos "time is money," "credit is money" and "money can beget money," and so on. Admittedly, the above-mentioned founding fathers of the various Protestant Churches and faiths did not subscribe to this credo, but ordinary members of these religious congregations did, and—of no less importance—they also implemented it in practice; this was also so among political leaders who—like Benjamin Franklin ("although he was a colourless deist")—did not personally identify with any Protestant faith, but understood well the causative power of the "new Protestantism" (Puritan) and took it into account in their social activity.

Weber then went on to give a shining presentation of the main protagonists of the contemporary western world. These were the four currents of ascetic Protestantism, meaning Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism and "the sects growing out of the Baptist movement." Each of these was linked somehow with the sciences, although these connections were mainly with

[39] "The proverb says jokingly, 'either eat well or sleep well'. In the present case the Protestant prefers to eat well, the Catholic to sleep undisturbed." Cf. ibidem, p. 8 et seq.

the sciences of these movements' leaders—such as Philipp Jakob Spener (leader of the Pietistic movement), John Wesley (initiator of the Methodist movement) or George Fox and Robert Barclay, playing the main roles in the Quaker movement. None of these people had either the appropriate training or displayed any particular interest in the ordinary sciences (if one may thus call the natural sciences). However, they did possess specific theological preparation and what lends one the charisma of a leader, organisational talents, and the skill of communicating religious messages such that numerous others followed them, and—of no less importance—they believed that it was not consuming well that worked in one's favour, but working well and earning salvation through such work. To work well meant, of course, to work such that one's occupation became a calling. In the group of those working in this manner there is room for ordinary scholars and the ordinary sciences. Admittedly, Weber did not write at length on this topic in *The Protestant Ethic*, but he returned to this issue in a lecture given at the University of Munich in 1917. In this, he demonstrated that the scholar should treat his duties as carrying out a "vocation-calling."[40] One may conjecture that at this Catholic seat of learning he did not wish to be so tactless as to tell his audience directly that this came more easily to the Protestant scholar, and worked out better than for a Catholic scholar. However, this was added by later science historians, writing their works in keeping with the scenario proposed by Weber.[41]

Attempts at generalising

I shall refer here to the examples of two such generalisations that lead to radically different conclusions, meaning to the thesis of an insurmountable conflict existing between science and religion, and to the thesis that this

[40] Cf. M. Weber, *Science as Vocation*, in R. Owen and T. Strong *The Vocation Lectures*, llinois 2004, cf. Z. Drozdowicz, *Uczony – zawód czy powołanie?*, "Nauka" 2009, no. 4, p. 67 et seq.

[41] An example could be the monograph by R. Hooykaas, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science*. In this, the author formulates the general thesis that where Protestant scholars had a say, the natural sciences made significant progress. This is confirmed, inter alia, in the fact that in the 16th century Protestants accounted for the vast majority of Botanists, while out of the 10 founders of the Royal Society as many as 7 were Puritans, and the greatest scholars of the day included such Protestants as J. Kepler, Ch. Huygens, I. Beeckman and I. Newton. Cf. R. Hooykaas, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science*, Edinburgh 1977.

conflict can and should be overcome. The former was presented in a book by the American philosopher and historian of science, Tad S. Clements, entitled *Science versus Religion*. In its Preface, the author already introduces his "Conflict Theory" (which he wrote with capitals) in the book's Preface; this is "not confined to conflict between science and the doctrines of the fundamentalists," but runs in general between a "scientific stance" and "religious stance." He links the former of these with, among other things, curiosity and the desire to "understand phenomena," and with "acquiring solid and soundly-justified knowledge," "the awareness that anybody may be mistaken," "an inclination of scepticism among scholars," "an inclination to manipulate the phenomena of nature," "a preference for logical simplicity," "the ideal of moral neutrality in the process of seeking knowledge" and with a "fundamentally impersonal attitude towards the laws of nature." Curiosity is also meant to be connected with a religious stance, although in this author's opinion religious people "want to know the origin and purpose of things," to "possess as thorough knowledge as possible on the way God or the gods work." In addition, "an important aspect in religious stance is the desire for certainty of the knowledge on divine matters" and "succumbing to divine influence, being inspired and guided by a supernatural being," as well as "uncritical orthodoxy" treated as "one of the most important virtues (closely connected to absolutism and intolerance)," the acknowledging by "orthodox people of certain fundamental beliefs that one may not subject to falsifying tests," "a complex of diverse emotions that a believer cherishes towards the divine being or beings" entity and treating "the spiritual forces standing beyond the processes of nature as a personal being."[42] All these differences are meant to constitute confirmation of the thesis that "science and religion are incompatible" and "differ radically" from one another.

Throughout this treatise, Clements' reasoning is conducted in the same manner, meaning via comparison, opposition and confirmation of the thesis formulated in the *Preface*, about the insurmountable conflict between science and religion. As such I shall only relate very briefly that part 3 presents the opposition of "scientific knowledge and religious knowledge," while part 4 has the opposition of "the language of science and language of religion." There are so-called troublesome situations in both one and the other area of deliberations. In the first, they are connected, inter alia, to questions in ultimate issues (or border issues, if you prefer),

[42] Cf. T. Clements, *Science versus Religion*, Buffalo 1990, p. 42 et seq.

such as are contained in the questions: "Why does the universe exists, yet nothingness does not? Why does this universe exist, but not some other possible universe? Why am I here?," and so on. Clements agrees that one cannot give unequivocal answers to these logical questions. Yet he believes that this is insufficient justification for the so-called supernaturalists' assertion of the "essentialness of some kind of great intelligence, which (in a manner incomprehensible do us) initiates and organises the processes of nature, and guides them in keeping with a preconceived goal."[43] In the opposition of the "language of science and the language of religion," such a troublesome situation is connected to the fact that both scholars and the "supernaturalists" believe that their discourse "meets strict cognitive requirements." In his opinion, the problem lies not in religious discourse not being exact, but in the fact that religious remarks may at the most be "imitations of descriptive sentences" (and as such should be disqualified), and in addition they infringe what is the principle of rationality in science ("For every intellectually honest person it is obvious that there is a fundamental difference between concepts considered rational in science and religion").[44]

In the final section of his deliberations he indicates doctrinal incompatibilities between science and religion, such as those that occur, among other things:

– between "proponents of the literal creationism based on the Bible, and the theory of the evolution of species,"

– in the approach to the issue of evil ("the occurrence of certain types and scales of evil constitutes a problem that the great monotheisms of the world find it hard to cope with"),

– and "the nature of man and related issues"; "In the opinion of most monotheists and polytheists, shared in essence by followers of almost all religions, man has a twofold nature," meaning spiritual and corporeal, but the question about "what the word 'spirit' or 'soul' might mean" cannot be clearly answered ("the concepts of the soul present in modern supernatu-

[43] "Therefore, our conclusion is that if the supernaturalists are unable to give any adequate justification for adopting a supernatural perspective other than and beyond the tried perspectives […] then wishing to remain in keeping with logic, one should reject the supernaturalistic theses as groundless fantasies." Cf. ibidem, p. 186 et seq.

[44] Hence his postulate that "religious language muddling human minds, wrongly attributed with rationality in the describing of facts, [should] cease to be used, giving way to scientific language…" Cf. ibidem, p. 210.

ralisms are hopelessly unclear and cannot serve to explain the conjectured relations between the soul and the body").

His closing conclusion is unequivocal: science and only science "can deliver settlements and solutions free of the faults of the theses of religion, because it applies cognitive methods that eliminate or minimise subjectivism by disciplining human imagination using logical and empirical criteria."[45]

A fundamentally different view on the matter of whether religion and science can be reconciled is represented by the American biologist Stephen Jay Gould, author of the book *Rocks of Ages*. He proposes a solution that he calls "the NOMA principle, i.e. the Non-Overlapping Magisteria." The first of these, the "Magisterium of science," is connected to the "attempt at documenting the physical natural world and the creation of theories that coordinate and explain those facts." As for the second, the "Magisterium of religion," it is connected to the "area of human aspirations, meanings and values." Thus although science and religion turn out to differ from one another fundamentally, their "People of goodwill wish to see science and religion at peace, working together to enrich our practical and ethical lives."[46] In the various chapters of this book, its author presents the "NOMA principle" as "resolving the ostensible conflict between science and religion." His entire reasoning strives to convince the reader that many of the infamous conflicts between science and religion, still discussed to this day, could have been avoided, or would have taken a much milder course, had there been people of good will on both sides, meaning people capable of understanding the NOMA principle and applying it in practice. And so first of all we have the "two Thomases," one doubting and the other believing in the words of Jesus. His doubt changes into belief, and leads to acceptance of the NOMA principle—which in this case is expressed not only in the acknowledging of the separation of faith and knowledge, but also in recognition of the supremacy of the former over the latter; "The steadfast, in such cases, are more blessed (and more to be trusted) than

[45] Cf. ibidem, p. 351.

[46] Cf. S.J. Gould, *Rocks of Ages*, op.cit., p. 4. Later in this book he explains that in the light of this principle, both fields, that is science and religion, "hold equal worth and necessary status for any complete human life," but that "they remain logically distinct and fully separate in styles of inquiry, however much and however tightly we must integrate the insights of both magisteria to build the rich and full view of life traditionally designated as wisdom." Ibidem, pp. 58–59.

those who cavil and demand rationales each time."[47] The next protagonist turns out to be the 17th-century Protestant theologian Thomas Burnet, author of *Telluris Theoria Sacra*, or *Sacred Theory of the Earth* ("This book became the bestseller of its age"). "Contemporary scientists treat Burnet either as a fool or as a demon of evil, who tried once again to impose undisputed dogmas of biblical authority onto the new paths of scientific honesty," but they assess him so guided by the contemporary norms of science (needless to say, he "did not function in keeping with today's norms of science, but abided honestly by the norms in force in his era"), and also take no account of the fact that his views were also shared by such "exceptional theists" as—among others—Newton, Hally, Boyle and Hooke, whom nobody reasonably well oriented in the history of science would call fools or ignoramuses. In this case, the "NOMA principle" is seen not only in the acknowledging of the right for science and religion to coexist, but also in primacy being granted to the former of them ("Burnet encouraged his readers not to accept biblical interpretations that were contradictory with the discoveries of science"). Later in this book we have "the two greatest protagonists […] of evolutionary biology, the Victorian scholars Charles Darwin and Thomas Henry Huxley." According to Gould, "comic histories" would have us believe them to have been "obdurate enemies of religion." Yet the fact is that the former did "not have atheistic intentions," and neither did he claim that his theories "could resolve the religious issues of the ultimate sense of life." The latter in turn, sorely experienced by life ("he lost his dear firstborn son"), was prepared to listen to the advice of his friend, the "liberal clergyman Charles Kingsley," and seek "solace in the Christian doctrine of the immortal soul." In this case the NOMA principle boils down not so much to granting science priority over religion as to granting the latter the possibility of pointing out what the former is unable to point out, meaning the ultimate goals of human life, as well as man's "solace" at difficult moments of life. In this manner Gould defends not only the right for science and religion to coexist in peace, but also their working together in a "common matter" by showing the human face of the great scholars—with their personal tragedies, needs and doubts, etc.

In the different sections of this book he recalls great historical figures and conflicts between science and religion—such as, for example, Galileo (who in his opinion "fell victim to a rather conventional form of tragedy

[47] Cf. ibidem, p. 15.

in the royal courts of Europe"). He gives most attention to Darwin and Huxley, the "the fathers of evolutionary biology," and to the theory of evolution itself. His deductions strive to demonstrate that as time passed attitude towards this theory among people of the Roman Catholic Church, including its highest hierarchs, changed ever more distinctly. This is supposedly confirmed in the position shown by two popes in this matter, Pius XII and John Paul II. The former, despite being "very conservative," "defended evolution as the object of research in the *Humani generis* encyclical; however, in his conclusion to it he "unwillingly acknowledged evolution as a legitimate hypothesis, but one he considered weak and potentially (as he clearly expected) false." The latter in turn, "nearly fifty years later, reaffirms the legitimacy of evolution under the NOMA principle, but then adds that additional data and theory have placed the factuality of evolution beyond reasonable doubt. Sincere Christians may now accept evolution not merely as a plausible possibility, but also as an effectively proven fact."[48] In this case, the "NOMA principle" is expressed not only in recognition of the equivalence of both "Magisteria," but also in the mutual support in criticism and self-criticism, leading to revision of a previously held position. The examples given here of radically different positions in the issue of science's attitude towards religion (and vice versa) show how crucial a role is played during attempts at generalising appraisements by the positive or negative attitude of those formulating these appraisements. With Clements this attitude is oriented towards searching for what divides science and religion, while with Gould there is a search for what can realistically or potentially join them in a human matter worth the effort. Answers to the question about where such attitudes come from are, as a rule, neither simple nor clear-cut. This is because various types of historical, social, biographical and psychological conditioning, and so forth, come into play. One of the more important is how the authors quoted here accepted significantly different visions of science and scientificity on the one hand, and religion and religiosity on the other. With Clements this is the more or less consistent identification of science with the natural disciplines, and scientificity with precise measuring, calculation, and determining things empirically, and so on. For him, the antithesis of this is religion and religiosity, identified either with "supernaturalism" or with "metaphysicalism," meaning with what one cannot measure, weigh, see or touch; and God only knows whether it

[48] Cf. ibidem, p. 82.

really exists—as long, of course, as God himself exists (which the author of this book most evidently doubts). With Gould there is no tendency to reduce science and scientificity to the natural disciplines or to boil down the scholar to the kind of person who, like a doubting Thomas, if unable to resolve something through experiment and present it with mathematical accuracy, will be in serious trouble in life and at work, and—needless to say—will not seek help from some Church or faith for deliverance from this trouble. On the contrary, this book provides an image of the scholar as the kind of person who only resolves a part of their problems single-handedly, while for some of them other scholars are relied upon—including those openly admitting to their religiosity and not questioning either the existence of God or the sense of seeking support from him in their most difficult moments in life. At the same time the author of *Rocks of Ages* is certain that this does not signify some kind of "softening" of the so-called hard sciences.

I am inclined to agree that the "NOMA principle" presented by Gould does not inevitably entail such a threat. However, it does have at least two fundamental weaknesses. The first of them is concealed in the seemingly innocent concept of "people of good will." Without them, this principle cannot be implemented. They are of course necessary both on the side of the "MAgisterium of science" and the "MAgisterium of religion." However, the very posing of the question regarding on which side they are harder to find may become the source of conflicts, while seeking answers to it in historical confrontational scenarios may be interpreted as an attempt at maintaining them, or making them stronger. Referring to mediatory scenarios may be interpreted similarly—after all, in more than one of them major Churches and faiths, of importance to this day, were in the spotlight. The second significant weakness of this principle is the blurring of the distinction between the so-called context of a scientific discovery and the context of the scientific justification. Their separation and the adherence to this division is legitimate, because the former (containing, among other things, elements of historism, psychologism, moralism and moralising) is "softer" in character than the other (containing, inter alia, elements of logicism, analyticism and verificationism, and the like). When describing and explaining scientific discoveries one can, and even on many an occasion one has to, refer to specific historical circumstances, the personality traits of the people making the discoveries, their problems in life, or ordinary human weaknesses, but after all these cannot constitute reasoning justi-

fying the maintaining of their inaccuracies or ordinary mistakes, which can and should be refined and amended using contemporary methods and research procedures, as well as based on the current state of knowledge. The former of course add a certain colour to science and the scholars themselves, but the latter above all contribute to their development. I draw attention to these weaknesses not in order to describe the fundamental idea of the "NOMA principle," or to place a large question mark over the sense of the "irenic principle" that is linked to it (the peaceful coexistence of science and religion), but in order to indicate its objective limitations and the obstacles that might (but do not have to) appear on its path. This simultaneously constitutes an answer of some kind to the question posed in the title of these ponderings.

Chapter 3

Standards of rationality in the *sacred* and the *profane*

Quite where rationality begins and where it ends, as well was what forms of expression it can and should don, was and is a matter of debate. However, there is no question that its pursuit constituted and continues to constitute one of the major purposes of human activity. Also indisputable is the fact that one of the boundaries traditionally raised between the variously understood forms of rationality, and between rationality and irrationality, ran between its occurrence in the sphere of the *sacred* and its occurrence in the sphere of the *profane*. Demarcating this border did not always mean that the types of rationality appearing in these two different spheres could not, or even should not, have any points of similarity. Such an approach to rationality also appeared, admittedly, in European culture, but it had relatively few proponents. Besides which it soon turned out not only hard to defend, but also difficult to implement consistently in thought and in practice. With almost every one of its supporters one can find attempts at combining a certain element of the *sacred* with a certain element of the *profane*.

In these contemplations I refer to a few such examples of establishing standards of rationality, in which although the spheres of the *sacred* and the *profane* are distinguished, and are even set against one another in several respects, at the same time there is an indication that in some other respect they may and should complement one another. Sometimes this means complementing by adding various powers to the human struggle with life's problems. Another time it means complementing through the exclusion of certain powers and opting for others—not only differing from the former, but also unrecognisable and impossible to use effectively with-

out referring to them. Such complementation was and is described and explained both by philosophers (including Plato in Antiquity, and currently Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor) and by Christian theologians (such as St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart and Rudolf Otto).

Early traditions in standardising rationality

In my recollection of these traditions I shall begin with Plato—a philosopher rightly acknowledged as the precursor of everything that has come to be linked to those standards of rationality that are juxtaposed with vernacular thought and vernacular beliefs, and which invoke that special power of the mind that intellect constitutes and in which one sees the articulation of its abilities for which above-average philosophical qualifications are necessary in order to understand them. Experts on his views claimed and claim that here we are dealing not with one but with at least two significantly differing standards of rationality. However, both remain connected to religion and religiosity which he understood in a specific way.

Diogenes Laërtius, author of *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, drew attention to their occurrence with Plato, writing that the latter "considers wisdom as the knowledge of things which can be understood by the intellect, and which have a real existence: which has the Gods for its object, and the soul as unconnected with the body. He also, with a peculiarity of expression, calls wisdom also philosophy, which he explains as a desire for divine wisdom. But wisdom and experience are also used by him in their common acceptation; as, for instance, when he calls an artisan wise."[1] Thus it happens that with Plato, the first of these wisdoms (rationality) is oriented to what is absolute and purely of the mind (spiritual), while the second is oriented to what is relative and partially of the mind, partially of the senses (tangible).

Those favouring such a differentiation of these wisdoms (rationalities) include Giovanni Reale. The differences between these two standards of rationality are supposedly determined by the categories of *myth* and *logos*. In his opinion, "Plato reevaluated myth alongside the notion of logos; and, beginning from the *Gorgias* until the late dialogues, he attributes a singular importance to them." This expert on Plato's philosophy also asserts that

[1] Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Hastings 2017, p. 188 et seq.

"the problem is solvable only if the precise reasons that brought Plato to repropose the myth are uncovered. And these reasons are to be found in the reevaluation of some basic theses of Orphism and of its mystical tendency, and, in general, in the predominant power of the religious component, beginning from the *Gorgias*. Myth, in sum, in Plato arises not only as an expression of the *imagination*, but rather as an expression of what we may call faith (Plato used the term *hope* in the *Phaedo*). Platonic philosophical discourse on certain eschatological themes, actually, from the *Gorgias* onward, in the greater part of the dialogues, becomes a form of rational faith: myth seeks a clarification of the *logos* and the *logos complements myth*."[2] Of significance for an understanding of this faith are both Plato's teachings regarding the Demiurge (which turns out to be "'the best of intelligible beings' and 'the best of the causes'") and regarding the cosmos (which because of the said Demiurge happens to be the sphere of wisdom, spirituality, unity, intelligibility, commensurateness and order).

One should add here, that this wisdom (rationality) has nothing—or at least should not have anything—in common with the common "phantasms" or such "foolishness" as, in this philosopher's firm opinion, was (among other things) prophesising. In *Timaeus*, Plato asserts, inter alia, that "no man, when in his wits, attains prophetic truth and inspiration; but when he receives the inspired word, wither his intelligence is enthralled in sleep, or he is demented by some distemper or possession. And he who would understand what he remembers to have been said, whether in a dream or when he was awake, by the prophetic and inspired nature, or would determine by reason the meaning of the apparitions which he has seen, and what indications they afford to this man or that, of past, present or future good and evil, must first recover his wits."[3] This suggests, for a start, that Plato differentiates mythological religiosity from the religiosity of

[2] "The power of faith which is explicated in the myth, Plato entrusts sometimes with the task of carrying and elevating the human intelligence into the ambit and sphere of a superior vision, *to pure dialectical reason*, alone, in which pure reason fails to ascend but can nevertheless take possession in a mediate form; at other times, instead, Plato entrusts to the power of myth the task, when reason has achieved its extreme limits, of intuitively overcoming these limits and thus to crown and complete this effort of reason, by elevating the intelligence to a vision or at least to a transcendent tension." Cf. G. Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy II. Plato and Aristotle*, New York 1987, p. 30 et seq.

[3] Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, Indianapolis 2000, p. 20.

the *Logos*, ascribing rational character to both (although these are types of rationality that differ significantly), and secondly that he differentiates both types of religiosity from that of "prophetic" religiosity, and he denies the latter rationality (wisdom).

Plato leaves no doubt that one should walk away from prophetic religiosity, and convert to either mythical religiosity or the religiosity of the *Logos*, and ideally—initially cross to the former, and then to the latter, ultimately combining them *dialectically*. In *The Republic*, Plato says that he who is capable of seeing the whole is a dialectician, and he who cannot is not. It has to be clearly stressed that he acknowledges dialectic as the highest form of rationality, outclassing even such a rationalised science as logic.[4] Dialectic has the same core as logic, and also arithmetic, geometry and astronomy—comprising the *Logos*, manifested in diverse "embodiments" and shades of meaning. Hence that Platonic dialectic can and should adopt various forms.

Of its highest form—leading from that which constitutes the plurality to that which constitutes unity—Plato wrote that it is "the method of wise discussion, which dissects the assumptions and relates to the very beginning in order to consolidate," and that "one who attains a conception of the essence of each thing" is capable of wise discussion. This is a form of ascending dialectic, meaning that it applies *synoptic* method. However, he who uses descending method is also a dialectician; he starts from what constitutes unity, and reaches various pluralities. In *Philebus* he explains that "the one and many become identified by thought, and that now, as in time past, they run about together, in and out of every word which is uttered, and that this union of them will never cease, and is not now beginning, but is, as I believe, and everlasting quality of thought itself, which never grows old." However, one has to accept that "these unities have a real existence" and investigate "how each individual unity, being always the same, and incapable either of generation or of destruction," is still most definitely that one unity.[5]

One of those to refer at a later time to the standards of rationality created and applied by Plato was Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–439). In his *Philosophical Dialogues* he not only displays thorough knowledge of this

[4] "[…] the latter is rather the theory of reasoning, of discursive reasoning, the theory of rational thought, while dialectic is the art of applying logical rules in discussion. […] Logic is a static theory, dialectic is a dynamic skill." Cf. K. Leśniak, *Platon*, Warszawa 1968, p. 54.

[5] Plato, *Philebus*, in *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. III, Cambridge 1871, p. 159.

philosopher's views, but also of the fortunes of the Academy that Plato founded in Athens. In his dialogue *Against the Academicians*, he criticises representatives of the new Academies for having strayed from what Plato himself taught. This was to lead them to the wasteland of scepticism, to the kind of stance and such views as are expressed in the conviction that man is unable to achieve anything of certainty.[6] In Augustine's opinion, Plato was not only not a sceptic, but was also wiser than the sceptics, and even "the wisest and most learned man of his day." Although a suggestion appears in the summary to this dialogue that Plato revealed his greatness above all in knowledge through reason, while knowledge is reached not along one path but two, namely reason and faith, Augustine assures the reader simultaneously that knowledge acquired through subtle reasoning and which is to be found at Plato's Academy "does not oppose our faith."

In fact, he put much intellectual effort into convincing the Christian reader that such knowledge did not go against their faith. Let us be quite clear, though, that the Plato emerging from these deliberations differs not only from the views of the Platonists of the new Academies, but also of those of the old. In Augustine's portrayal he admittedly displays substantial wisdom (rationality), but owes this not so much to his own reason as to turning to such an Omni-mind, as is, in the firm conviction of this Church Father, the Christian God. In his dialogue *On Order*, he reasoned that everything that exists proves the existence of God, as well as the necessity to turn to God and seek in Him both that first Platonic argument, and an explanation of unity in diversity. "If somebody were to say that it is too much, then I shall say even less: let (somebody) learn well either just the science of numbers, or dialectic. And should this also seem infinitely laborious, I shall make do with at least thorough knowledge of the meaning of unity in numbers, ignoring the highest law and the highest order of all things […]. Philosophy itself already contains these messages within itself, and it shall not reveal anything more than the essence of unity, though doing so in a manner significantly more profound and divine. Two questions emerge here: the first concerns the soul, the second—God. The first allows him to discover himself, the second—the source of our origin. […] Such is the order of the studies that lead towards wisdom, and thanks to it man becomes capable of understanding the order of things, meaning to distinguish the two worlds and the Father of the universe himself, whom

[6] Cf. Augustine of Hippo, *Against the Academicians*, Marquette 1957, p. 71 et al.

the soul knows only insofar that he knows in what manner he does not know Him."[7]

Both these and other remarks by Augustine convince one that he treated Plato and Platonism as an important stage on the path of a man pursuing genuine wisdom (rationality), and his teachings on numbers and the dialectic as steps leading to this goal. Neither is there any doubt that he made genuine wisdom (rationality) dependent not only on what is or may be known (what the soul knows), but also—and even above all—from that which is unknown and cannot be known; at the most, the "soul knows in what manner one does not know Him." Although there is admittedly something of the Platonic dialectic in this, Augustine's dialectic differs from that prototype to a significant degree.

In the Middle Ages, various theologians referred to Augustine's dialectic, including those who are classed among the Christian mystics. What connected them was their search for the path to attain their coveted *unio mystica*—a uniting with God, a union of one's soul with God, or as some phrased it, "a spiritual marriage with God." They had the following in common: a) belief in the possibility of this union or "marriage"; b) religious experience, by which this contact is lived through in such a manner as if God were very close, and c) making this experience the sole authentic source of faith and knowledge.[8] However, they differed in their perception of this path, and their perception of the means that could be helpful in their conduct along this road. For example, according to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), such means were to be love and humility. In his theological treatise, *The steps of humility and pride*, he distinguished as many as twelve such steps. Admittedly, achieving the last of them does not actually mean finding oneself in God's immediate proximity, but barely on the first step towards authentic truth; and this truth is discovering one's own wretchedness. Only at this point does the real journey of the humble Christian begin, meaning the journey along the path of love. In his *Treatise of the Love of God*, he strived to demonstrate that this love should cause a kind of transformation of the human soul, meaning its deification. Not only did he believe profoundly in the possibility of such deification, but also in the fact that he had personally experienced it or rather was expe-

[7] Augustine of Hippo, *On Order*, Michigan 2007, p. 114 et seq.

[8] Cf. L. Kołakowski, *Świadomość religijna i więź kościelna. Studia nad chrześcijaństwem bezwyznaniowym XVII wieku*, Warszawa 1997, p. 22 et seq.

riencing it—since it is not a state which once achieved assures the soul with lasting *unio mystica*.

This path and the means were perceived and presented differently by Johannes Eckhart (1260–1327), known as Meister Eckhart. A thoroughly educated (in the universities of Cologne and Paris) and intellectually sophisticated Dominican friar, he did not hesitate to draw the most far-reaching conclusions from those aspects of Christian doctrine that led him to intellectualistic mysticism.[9] For this, he was admired by some, condemned by others. In the papal bull issued by Pope John XXII in 1329, *In agro dominico*, he is attributed with 28 theses, of which 17 are acknowledged to be heretic, and 11 as "sounding exceedingly evil."

The first of them speaks not of divine power, but of divine impotence, or to be precise, that: "God could not have created the world earlier, because a thing cannot act before it exists." Hence the second article, that "the world has existed from eternity."[10] Eckhart's proposition, that "anyone who blasphemes God himself praises God" is also deemed heretic, or "sounded evil." The Church authorities also discerned evil in the sounding of his thesis that God is a superessential nothingness, or—which turns out to be the same—that He is such perfectly pure Wisdom, that he is entitled to nothing other than wisdom also. This is because this it suggests that "God is nameless" and "none can say or understand anything about Him […] If I now say God is good, it is not true; rather, I am good […] Thus, too, if I say God is wise, it is not true: I am wiser than He," etc. This is of course but a sampling of the way in which Meister Eckhart thought and spoke about God.

Eckhart's propositions in which he talks about man were also seen as sounding evil. Although he agreed with the teachings of the Church Fathers, that man derives from God and is similar to God, when explaining the sense of this origin and similarity he asserted that "we shall be transformed totally into God and changed into him," that "I am so changed into him that he makes me his one existence, and not just similar," that "whatever holy scripture says of Christ, all that is also true of every good and divine man," that "since God in some way wills for me to have sinned, I should not will that I had not committed sins," that "Let us bring forth the fruit not of exterior acts, which do not make us good, but of interior acts, which

[9] This name is used to describe this mysticism by, inter alios, Joseph Sudbrack. Cf. J. Sudbrack, *Mistyka*, Kraków 1996, p. 37 et seq.

[10] Cf. *Meister Eckharts Deutsche Predigten und Traktate*, Leipzig 1983, p. 413 et seq.

the Father who abides in us makes and produces." Certain aspects of *unio mystica* are to be found in every one of these statements.

Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) discerned something more in these and other theses propounded by Meister Eckhart, as he saw both a manifestation of the purest Christian faith as well as the purest holiness and rationality. It would be worth taking a somewhat closer look both at this understanding of holiness, as well as this reconstruction of rationality. This is because he indicates within it the occurrence of holiness and rationality in those forms of religiosity in regard to which major reservations have been voiced at various times and for various reasons. Nevertheless, one has to say from the outset, that this is only partly a historical reconstruction of Meister Eckhart's manner of thinking and expressing himself; it is also partly the philosophical construction (conceptualisation) of Rudolf Otto, based on the philosophical and religious assumptions that he adopted.

These assumptions were clearly presented in his treatise entitled *The Idea of the Holy*. Its subtitle already speaks of "the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational." However, in the opening chapter, *The Rational and the Non-Rational*, the author attempts to indicate reasonably explicitly the difference between these aspects. In his depiction, "An object that can thus be thought conceptually may be termed *rational*. The nature of deity described in the attributes above mentioned is, then, a rational nature; and a religion which recognizes and maintains such a view of God is in so far a 'rational' religion. Only on such terms is Belief possible in contrast to mere *feeling*."[11] Setting clear concepts against pure feeling constitutes one of the possibilities of differentiating the rational from the non-rational in religion.

Such a possibility of differentiating these aspects is also given by the acknowledgement of the miraculous. "It is not that which is commonly asserted, that Rationalism is the denial, and its opposite the affirmation, of the miraculous. That is manifestly a wrong or at least a very superficial distinction. For the traditional theory of the miraculous as the occasional breach in the causal nexus in nature by a Being who himself instituted and must therefore be master of it—this theory is itself as massively 'rational' as it is possible to be." In other words, a miracle as popularly understood is something that cannot be placed within the causal nexus in nature. Likewise, with the concepts of *God, piety, myths* and even *mystical excesses*.

[11] Cf. R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, London 1923, p. 4.

The study of religion, treated by Otto as the science of religious phenomena, is of course not about vernacular or commonplace notions, but above all about categorical concepts, such as *the holy* in the book's title. One should therefore first of all answer the question about what it can and what it cannot (because of irrationality) mean. In his opinion, it cannot and even should not mean either something exclusively moral, or something exclusively inexpressible. However, it may and should mean something more primeval than morality and inexpressibility. Otto proposes calling this "something" *numinous* (from the Kantian concept of the *noumenon*—the essence of a thing, a thing in itself).

This concept cannot be strictly defined, but can be rationally used, and one can define what it signified and what it is meant to signify: and it signified and is meant to signify the *first numinous*, in other words a "creature-feeling" of dependence, as a reflection in the consciousness of a feeling oriented towards the numinous object; and the *second numinous*, meaning the *mysterium tremendum*, which means the *creature feeling of dependence* which is "abased and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures." This second one, considered in the "deepest and most fundamental" reflex of religious emotion, means "a mystical awe," while when considered as an element of the self (the consciousness) means the "tranquil mood of deepest worship." As for awe (in *tremendum*), it may mean both dread ("'Tremor' is in itself merely the […] emotion of *fear*") and something more than just dread, as it is that kind of particular fear which, in Hebrew, is called *hiqdish* (hallow); this means "to keep a thing holy in the heart."

The main part of this definition of the concept of the *numinous* proceeds not so much in a semantic as in a psychological direction. This is because Otto indicates its rational aspects (which have their *reasoning*) such as "numinous emotion" (for example daemonic dread, an attribute of the so-called religion of primitive peoples), or mysterious inclinations to overcome this and shift these feelings to higher degrees and forms of development ("That this is so is shown by the potent attraction again and again exercised by the element of horror and 'shudder' in ghost stories, even among persons of high all-round education").[12] Elements that are biblical (from both the Old and the New Testaments) as well as philosophical also appear in it.

[12] "Though the numinous emotion in its completest development shows a world of difference from the mere 'daemonic dread,' yet not even at the highest level does it belie its pedigree or kindred. Even when the worship of 'daemons' has long since

Both at the end and in specific fragments of these analyses, the fundamental problem is indication of the difference between what can and should be acknowledged as *rational* in this *numinous*, and what can and should be acknowledged as *irrational*. In certain cases, "we are not concerned with a genuine intellectual 'concept,' but only with a sort of illustrative substitute for a concept," as an ideogram of a "unique emotional moment in religious experience" (for example when talking of "elements derived from the moral reason: righteousness in requital, and punishment for moral transgression"). This of course complicates and hinders the understanding and depiction of *numinous* in categories of *rational* and *irrational*.

However, this also inclines Otto, researcher of the *sacred*, to unveil further aspects of that *misterium tremendum*, or—in this case meaning the same—to indicate and specify its successive sub-categories, such as, for example, the *third numinous* (a category concerning "numinous hymns," lauding "the 'honour of God' in all its fullness"), the *fourth numinous* (regarding *fascination*, meaning that which in something is "uniquely attractive and fascinating" with together with "the daunting" combines "in a strange harmony of contrasts"), or *the fifth numinous* (concerning the prodigious, and connected to what is "evil of imposing, potent and strange, queer and marvellous, horrifying and fascinating, divine and daemonic"). One can indicate what is rational within each of these elements, and what is irrational. For example: in *fascination* "the rational side of this non-rational element of 'fascination' are Love, Mercy, Pity, Comfort; these are all 'natural' elements of the common psychical life, only they are here thought as absolute and in completeness. But important as these are for the experience of religious bliss or felicity, they do not by any means exhaust it. It is just the same as with the opposite experience of infelicity—the experience of the *orghé* or Wrath of God: both alike contain fundamentally non-rational elements. Bliss or beatitude is more, far more, than the mere natural feeling of being comforted, of reliance, of the joy of love…"[13]

In these analyses of profound religiosity, Otto refers both to pre-Christian and Christian religious beliefs and practices. Some of them at least

reached the level of worship of 'gods', these gods still retain as 'numina' something of the 'ghost' in the impress they make on the feelings of the worshipper…" Ibidem, p. 17.

[13] "This 'something more' has its antecedent phases very far back in the history of religions. It may well be possible, it is even probable, that in the first stage of its development the religious consciousness started with only one of its poles—the 'daunting' aspect of the numen—and so at first took shape as 'daemonic dread.'" Ibidem, p. 32.

possess not only their *fascinas*, but also their *fascinatis*, meaning those who are fascinated by this religiosity. These include Meister Eckhart. In *The Idea of the Holy*, the significance of this philosopher and theologian for the culture of the West is barely brought up. On the other hand, in Otto's work *Mysticism East and West*, Eckhart is presented as one of the most meaningful figures in Western culture.[14] But this treatise has not one but two cult figures; after all, Meister Eckhart was for the culture of the West what Adi Shankara was for the culture of the East.[15] They are described as having in common, among other things, an understanding of theology as the "study of salvation," and grasping the "path to salvation" as the "path of discovering" ("The path to salvation leads through *discovery*"). On the other hand, they are said to differ in their perception of the "road for uniting with God." Otto calls Meister Eckhart's "road" the "mysticism of introspection," and Shankara's the "mysticism of unifying vision."

Contemporary grasps of the standards of rationality

I refer here to two contemporary philosophers, to Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre. Not only the traditions I have cited here connect them, but so too does their articulation of standards of rationality in opposition to those philosophers who set down successive stages of parting from the Christian *sacred* and passing into the kind of *profane* that means

[14] "We maintain that in mysticism there are indeed strong primal impulses working in the human soul which as such are completely unaffected by differences of climate, of geographical position or of race. These show in their similarity an inner relationship of types of human experience and spiritual life which is truly astonishing. Secondly, we contend that it is false to maintain that mysticism is always just mysticism, is always and everywhere one and the same quantity. Rather, there are within mysticism, many varieties of expression which are just as great as the variations in any other sphere of spiritual life, be it in religion generally, or in ethics, or in art. Thirdly, we affirm that these variations as such are not determined by race, or geographical situation, but that they may appear side by side, indeed that they may arise in sharp contrast to one another, within the same circle of race and culture." Cf. R. Otto, *Mysticism East and West. A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism*, Eugene 2016, p. xvi et seq.

[15] Adi Shankara (ca. 700–750) was an Indian mystic, a reviewer of the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita* Hindu scriptures (he is ascribed with having written over 300 commentaries), and theoretician on classic Vedanta. Although he probably had numerous disciples, only four of them are well known: Padmapada, Sureshvara, Totakacharya (Totaka) and Hastamalakacharya.

defining one's identity by referring above all to that which is either loosely connected to the former, or—in the furthest-reaching variant—no longer has anything in common with it.

An answer to the questions of how this came about, and who played the most significant part in this process of shifting away from the Christian *sacred*, is to be found, inter alia, in *Sources of the Self* by Charles Taylor. In this voluminous study, the author sketched a kind of grand fresco portraying the spiritual culture of the western world created in various periods and by various people. Philosophers have a significant role here, and in each era they played both positive and negative roles, or to be more precise, in some respects positive and in others negative. Such was the case in antiquity with, for example, Plato. In Taylor's opinion, his positive aspects included "the distinction between higher and lower actions, motivations, ways of living turns on the hegemony of reason or desire. But the hegemony of reason is understood substantively. To be rational is to have a vision of rational order, and to love this order. […] the key to this order is the Idea of the Good itself. Their relation to this is what makes certain of our actions or aspirations good; it is what constitutes the goodness of these actions or motives."[16] There were philosophers in the past who found in this vision of rationality a path leading to the Christian God and to Christian faith. Among others, Taylor classes I. Kant among them ("In Kant's theory, rational agency is the constitutive good").[17]

His clarifications suggest, however, that for the modern-day standards of rationality, Kant "had not yet gone all the way along the road to disenchantment, or discarded all the remnants of Christian theology and ancient philosophy." On the other hand such a passage had been achieved by the likes of Descartes, who perceived our dignity "in the courage and lucidity of our stance to a meaningless universe," or—which in general boils down to the same thing—in the belief that the human mind could "stand unconsoled and uncowed in the face of the indifferent immensity of the world and to find the purpose of their lives in understanding and

[16] "Let us call this kind of reality a 'constitutive good'. We can then say that for Plato the constitutive good is the order of being, or perhaps the principle of that order, the Good." Cf. Ch. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge 1989, p. 92 et seq.

[17] According to Kant, "the motive which enables us to live according to the law is the sense of respect (Achtung) what we experience before the moral law itself, once we understand it as emanating from rational will." Ibidem, p. 94 et seq.

transcending in this way by far their own insignificant locus and being." Chapter 8 in this book, entitled *Descartes's Disengaged Reason*, is dedicated to this perception of dignity and this belief. It not only points out the weaknesses in this philosopher's philosophy, but also indicates its place in the great tradition of intellectual culture in the western world.

Among other things, Taylor asserts that "Descartes is in many ways profoundly Augustinian"—such traits including an emphasis on "radical reflexivity, the importance of the *cogito*, the central role of a proof of God's existence." It is the titular "disengaged reason" that is supposedly the weakness of this philosophy: a disengagement not only from the "irremediably confused and obscure way of grasping things," but also from that Christian God and that Christian faith without which one cannot emerge from the said confusion and the said obscurity. With Descartes, this signifies not the "aligning" of human intellect with God, but His "alignment" with the meditating person, or to be more precise, with a person meditating in such a manner for that power of the mind to be able to take rational control over everything that is or that can be the object of meditation. In the light of this new model of rationality—then to think rationally is the same as being "free of the illusion which mingles mind with matter," or—which means practically the same—"to have an understanding of the latter which facilitates its control."[18] Taylor thereby demonstrates that Descartes is subjugating contemplative reason to instrumental reason, and attributes the latter with the kind of overriding function that comprises exercising full control both over the world perceived by the senses and the world of emotional experiences; in the light of the Cartesian model of rationality, "[r]eason rules the passions when it can hold them to their normal instrumental function."[19] In his summary for this analysis of the Cartesian "disengaged reason," Taylor asserts that although this philosopher's starting point was "essentially Augustinian," in subsequent phases his meditation mutated "into something else. It is not carried out so as to make God appear at the very roots of the self, closer than my own eye. On the contrary, it is the

[18] "Similarly, to free oneself from passions and obey reason is to get the passions under instrumental direction. The hegemony of reason is defined no longer as that of a dominant vision but rather in terms of a directing agency subordinating a functional domain." Ibidem, p. 149 et seq.

[19] "The endorsement of instrumental control means that Descartes constantly enjoins efficacious action for what we want, alongside detachment from the outcome." Ibidem, p. 151.

sure *inference*, from powers that I can become quite certain of possessing, to their inescapable source."[20]

Taylor finds a further-reaching version of the "disengaged subject" in John Locke's philosophy. He calls it the "punctual self," acknowledging as its starting point a rejection of any theory assuming the existence of innate ideas and the "profoundly anti-teleological view of human nature, of both knowledge and morality" directly connected to this. Locke proposed an "atomising of the mind" in their place; according to this, "our understanding of things is constructed out of the building blocks of simple ideas," the mind is grasped as the ability to "construct a picture of things following the canons of rational thinking." This constructing "is something which in the nature of things each person must do for himself" (this theory excludes the influence of an authority), while that which motivates the mind to take action is the "uneasiness aroused by the absence of some good."[21] All this together "opens the prospect of self-remaking." Although in regard "to the rational goals of such remaking, Locke is clear that it should follow the law laid down by God, which he also calls at times the Natural Law," and even asserts that this leads to the "greatest happiness," the exercising of control over this remaking lies within the individual human consciousness and self-consciousness ("that something we call consciousness or self-consciousness could be clearly distinguished from its embodiment, and the two allowed to separate and recombine in various thought experiments"). It was the combination in a single theory of the ideals of "rational self-responsibility" and "freedom or independence, backed by a conception of disengagement and procedural reason"[22] to which Locke owed his philosophical success, measured among other things in his enormous influence on later philosophising.

In Taylor's opinion, the next significant step in the direction of detaching human reason from the Christian God, and philosophical rationality

[20] "The Cartesian proof is no longer a search for an encounter with God within. It is no longer the way to an experience of everything in God. Rather what I now meet is myself: I achieve a clarity and a fulness of self-presence that was lacking before." Ibidem, p. 157.

[21] "Where twentieth-century psychologists speak of 'habits', Locke speaks of the association that each of us makes between inner unease and certain goods as our 'relish.'" Ibidem, p. 170.

[22] "This has given Locke's outlook its tremendous influence, not only in the eighteenth century, but right through to today. […] We can see it […] in some contemporary discussions about identity." Ibidem, p. 174.

from Christian rationality, was taken by representatives of the radical Enlightenment. From the very first sentences of the chapter focusing on an analysis of their views, he claims that the "radical Aufklärer [enlighteners] had no use for the notion of providence, or a providential order; at least they thought they didn't. Their ethic was purely based on utility. We start from the fact that people desire happiness or pleasure and the absence of pain. The only issue is how to maximize happiness."[23]

The list of Enlightenment philosophers classed by Taylor among these radicals is mixed. It includes Helvétius ("dismissing both the moral sense of Shaftesbury and the belief in innate goodness of Rousseau"), Voltaire (placing a huge question mark above the rationality in the belief that "this is the best of all possible worlds") and Diderot (praising the philosopher who, "trampling underfoot prejudice, tradition, venerability, universal assent, authority," "dares to think for himself, to ascend to the clearest general principles, to examine them, to discuss them, to admit nothing save on the testimony of his own reason and experience"). Apart from the principle of utilitarianism ("which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness"), they also have in common: 1) "The ideal of self-responsible reason" 2) "The notion that the ordinary fulfilments that we seek by nature […] have a central significance," and 3) "The ideal of universal and impartial benevolence."[24] Let us add here the visions of 1) natural order, which even if it was created by something, it was certainly not created by the Christian God; 2) humankind, which owes all that is best about it to individuals guided by their own reason; and 3) culture, which traditional religions and traditional forms of religiosity can only harm.[25] In the Age

[23] "On this view, we can't draw our judgments of right and wrong from any conception of the order of things, either the ancient hierarchical one of reason or the modern one of providential design." Ibidem, p. 321.

[24] "The obvious importance of this ideal tends to accredit an oversimple view of the radical Enlightenment, one moreover which has sometimes been tempting as a self-portrait of philosophes. […] But this is a radically one-sided and inadequate view. It leaves out of account the force of attraction of the other two life goods, the pursuit of happiness and benevolence, and the image of nature which underlay them." Ibidem, p. 323.

[25] Nicolas de Condorcet gave the fullest expression to the latter of these convictions in his *Outlines of an historical view of the progress of the human mind*: "The whole picture is there: the decline into servitude and superstition under the imposture of the educated classes, the alliance between despotism and superstition, the countervailing

of Enlightenment, these principles, ideals and visions constituted in their entirety or in their particular fragments the constituent parts of both the deism of the time and of materialism (such as that which, for example, appears in the writings of Julien Offray de La Mettrie and Paul H. Holbach), and at a later time both marxism and nihilism (such as that seen on the pages of Friedrich Nietzsche's works).

A retrospective of the standards of rationality, equally as broad and deeply set within philosophical tradition, was sketched by MacIntyre in his book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* As with the author of *Sources of the Self*, he discerns its precursors in antiquity, while acknowledging the Age of Enlightenment as the period of the most profound breakthrough in the understanding of rationality and in the determining of its standards. However, he recognises not so much "disengagement" as the keyword for understanding the character and directions of the changes unfolding within it, as "justification." It was not Plato, but Aristotle, who he saw as the precursor in lending particular significance to this notion, while the most significant continuator in this area was not Saint Augustine of Hippo but Saint Thomas Aquinas.

In MacIntyre's opinion, Aristotle's premise was that "a human being separated from the *polis* is thereby deprived of some of the essential attributes of a human being."[26] To word it differently, then in the Aristotelian understanding, the justification (in the board meaning of this word) for a human being possessing those attributes that make him or her a person is this being's belonging to the kind of community that the Greek *polis* constituted in that age, that is, the city-state in possession of its own catalogue of virtues. Aristotle placed justice in first place among these virtues ("Justice thus occupied a key position among the virtues"), followed in second place by rationality, while he ascribed both one and the other not only a theoretical but also a practical character ("The virtues are, on Aristotle's view, dispositions to act in specific ways for specific reasons").

struggle of reason, aided by science, the progressive strengthening of reason in the modern age aided by technology, particularly the art of printing." Ibidem, p. 353.

[26] "Aristotle uses two analogies to make his central point. A human being stands to the *polis* as a part to its whole, in a way analogous both to that in which a hand or foot stands to the body of which it is a part and to that in which a piece of a board game […] stands to a game in which it is deployed. […] Abstract a piece from such deployment in a game; it too is deprived thereby of function and capacity. What is it that a human being is deprived of, if radically separated from the life of the *polis*?" Cf. A. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Notre Dame 1988, p. 97 et seq.

Such a grasp of virtue constitutes justification both for how life is organised in the Greek *polis*, including the social hierarchies observed there ("The hierarchy of the best kind of *polis* is one of teaching and of learning, not of irrational domination") and the sharing of duties between its citizens (such that they move "from role to role, both as one who is ruled and one who rules"), as well as diverse social exclusions, for example the exclusion of slaves from the body of citizens (according to Aristotle, "some people by nature are incapable of ruling themselves and therefore are natural slaves"), or the exclusion of women from those who govern ("Aristotle believed that women could not exercise the requisite control over their emotions"). Putting it briefly, "there is no standard external to the *polis* by which a *polis* can be rationally evaluated in respect of justice or any other good."[27]

In the chapter entitled *Aristotle on Practical Rationality*, MacIntyre strives not only to show what the practical character of this rationality involves, but also what conditions it on the part of the individual performing an action. And so he writes that it is conditioned, among other things, by the possession of abilities: that 1) this person is "able to characterize the particular situation in which he finds himself"; is 2) "able to understand his goods *qua* participant in a variety of types of activity"; and 3) can identify "which of the specific goods […] he should in fact set himself to achieve as what is immediately best for him." Having these skills developed to the highest degree, combined with the fully ordered *polis* within which the said individual functions, creates chances for achieving both maximum justice and maximum rationality. In MacIntyre's opinion, the problem lies in the fact that individuals exercising reason not only have to function in conditions of numerous social imperfections, but also in these abilities themselves also being imperfect, which—among other things—results in one performing actions while there are numerous unknowns. This is one of the reasons why progress in formulating and disseminating the standards of rationality involves not so much replacing imperfect standards with perfect ones as succeeding "to some significant degree in elaborating ever more comprehensive and adequate statements of their positions through the dialectical procedure of advancing objections which identify incoherences,

[27] "To apprehend what a *polis* is, what the good is which is its function to achieve, and to what extent one's own *polis* has successfully achieved that good, all require membership in a *polis*." Ibidem, p. 122.

omissions, explanatory failures, and other types of flaw and limitation in earlier statements."[28]

From this point of view, the Augustinian alternative was—in MacIntyre's opinion—progress both on Plato's and Aristotle's standard of rationality; in the light of this alternative, "just action in accordance with that standard is produced by a love of the just whose object is in fact the divine justice," while "the ultimate determinant of human action" is not human reason, but human will, "systematically misdirected." Hence among the factors conditioning human rationality one sees "*both* the necessity of grace for the redirection of the will *and* the necessity of the will's freely assenting to the divine grace."[29] According to the Augustinian position one should speak not so much of practical action as of "right action," or to be more precise, of that in which this action's "primary determinant" is not the intellect but "right willing." This in turn is moved and shaped by faith, which "is prior to understanding."[30]

Saint Thomas Aquinas is reported as having presented the next great alternative to the earlier standards of rationality. What MacIntyre acknowledges to have been particularly significant in this alternative is the reconcilement of the "demands of two distinct and rival traditions, the Aristotelian and the Augustinian, both in their thirteenth-century versions." Each of these traditions possessed "measures to evaluate their own progress or lack of it," while neither had the kind of measure or such abilities which would allow one "to understand the theses, arguments, and concepts of their rival in such a way that they are able to view themselves from such an alien standpoint and to recharacterize their own beliefs in an appropriate manner from the alien perspective of the rival tradition."[31] The subsequent description and explanations regarding what makes Saint Thomas Aquinas' alternative a groundbreaking one suggest that it involves, among other

[28] This procedure involves "finding the strongest arguments available for supporting those objections, and then of attempting to restate the position so that it is no longer vulnerable to those specific objections and arguments." Ibidem, p. 144.

[29] "[…] the fundamental human virtue is a virtue of the will in its returning to freedom, just as the fundamental human vice is the vice of the will in its self-enslaved condition. The fundamental human vice is of course pride; correspondingly the fundamental human virtue is humility…" Ibidem, p. 157 et seq.

[30] "[…] what understanding can provide is a rational justification for having initially believed or done what faith enjoined, but such justification must always be retrospective." Ibidem, p. 158.

[31] Cf. ibidem, p. 167 et seq.

things, the building of a kind of bridge between diverse and multifarious standards of rationality in the domain of the *sacred*, and standards of rationality in the domain of the *profane*. One cannot describe this bridge as sufficiently perfect to require no further improvement; on the contrary, one could actually say that "what has so far been accepted may yet have to be modified or even rejected." Thomas Aquinas presented not only manifold justifications for such a state of affairs (such as, for example, that practical human activity is shaped by various forms of directedness—*inclinatio*), but also explained what rational justification involved, or what—in a normative sense—it should involve. Whatever the case, in every justification one should refer to certain principles, and in holistic justifications to the kind of prime principle that is God (as the first motor of everything that is in motion, as the first cause of everything to be found in cause-effect relationships, etc.).[32]

Both in the days of Saint Thomas Aquinas and later there was no shortage of philosophers and theologians who believed in the existence of "a set of necessarily true first principles which any truly rational person is able to evaluate as true." For MacIntyre, both Hume and Kant were philosophers who belonged to this group. Although the former indicates the principle of "consensus concerning the passions," and the latter the principle of utility, the position taken by each of them "turned out to be susceptible of rejection by the adherents of rival answers, whose claims to rational justification were as much and as little contestable as those of its opponents."[33]

In MacIntyre's opinion the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment, among others, constituted such a formation of adherents of rival answers. They differed in numerous crucial issues, including in the understanding and portrayal of the differences and borders between rationality in the realm of the *sacred* and in the realm of the *profane*. On the other hand they

[32] "[…] rational justification, according to both Aristotle and Aquinas, is a matter of deducibility from first principles, in the case of derived assertions, and of the self-evidentness as necessary truths of these same first principles." In MacIntyre's opinion, Aquinas' own characteristic contribution to this understanding of rational justification lay in how he showed that at the same time one should differentiate between justification within a particular science, and justification "required by an account of the sciences as a whole, hierarchically ordered system." Ibidem, p. 172 et seq.

[33] "And it is no different with the contemporary heirs of Hume, Kant and Mill; they too are engaged in a battle in which no one is finally defeated, only because no one is ever the victor." Ibidem, p. 176.

shared a belief that people, applying their enlightened reason, were capable of providing "for debate in the public realm standards and methods of rational justification by which alternative course of action in every sphere of life could be adjudged just or unjust, rational or irrational, enlightened or unenlightened. So, it was hoped, reason would displace authority and tradition. Rational justification was to appeal to principles undeniable by any rational person and therefore independent of all those social and cultural particularities which the Enlightenment thinkers took to be the mere accidental clothing of reason in particular times and places. And that rational justification could be nothing other than what the thinkers of the Enlightenment had said that it was came to be accepted […]."[34]

The problem lies not only in the thinkers of the Enlightenment failing to secure the agreement of those representing other alternative formations for the principles constituting the basis of this justification, but also in them failing to reach an agreement among themselves on this matter (they drew up an "ideal of rational justification which it has proved impossible to attain"). The consequence—in MacIntyre's opinion—is today's interminable disputes in matters concerning both justice and rationality. He sees a possible way out of them in a return to the tradition initiated by Aristotle, elaborated by Aquinas, and continued by those contemporary Thomists who—as opposed to the various forms of disbelief (and its justifications) in the possibility of stretching a bridge between the realms of the *sacred* and the *profane*—strive to reinforce this bridge and persuade others to use it, both in theoretical thought, and in practical action.

A few general remarks

The first takes the form of a kind of apposition, or disambiguation regarding the standards of rationality themselves. It comes towards the end of these deliberations because the positions and views cited here constitute a sort of sanctioning by philosophical and theological tradition of the kind of understanding that I am in favour of. And so with the standards of rationality, or—which practically means the same—its models, though admittedly different at different times, and even different at the same time but among different philosophers and theologians, one can actually indicate

[34] Cf. ibidem, p. 6 et seq.

something like their lowest common denominator, or to be more precise, two complementary denominators. The first of these is their general function in thought and in practical action. This function may be compared to the functions of those characteristic "navigating" devices that enable reasonably efficient sailing across the world's seas and oceans, not always human-friendly. Needless to say, the better such devices are constructed and the more efficiently they are operated, the lower the danger of disaster or the kind of drifting meaning that one is not heading for the intended "port"; and reaching this "port" signifies not only achieving wisdom, but also applying it such as also to achieve other meaningful goals in life. The second of these common denominators is connected to their internal composition, and in particular their component parts. This comprises both hierarchically ordered general notions (such as the notions of *principle, right, sagacity* or *wisdom*), and general assertions, in particular assertions bearing the character of philosophical principles (if only to mention the Socratic principle expressed in the assertion "*I know that I know nothing*," Leibniz's principle that "*there is nothing without reason*," the principle of *disengagement* highlighted by Taylor, or the principle of *justification* given prominence by MacIntyre). Lending specific meanings to these general notions and highlighting certain principles while minimising others is reflected directly in the differentiation of standards of rationality and the emphasising of the role that some have in thought and in practical action, and the minimising of this role held by others.

The second of my remarks is tied to something that I would call a maximalist approach to the standards of rationality. In this view one should aspire—when searching for and articulating these standards—to identify a component part of them that could be acknowledged as the principle of principles. Such an approach may (but does not have to) lead to rationality in the realm of the *profane* being made dependent on rationality in the realm of the *sacred*. This is confirmed by Aristotle's position in this matter. As a reminder, such a principle of principles in the view of the author of *Prior Analytics* and *Posterior Analytics* is rational (intellectual) intuition.[35]

[35] In justifying this position, he asserts that "no other kind of thought except intuition is more accurate than scientific knowledge, whereas primary premisses are more knowable than demonstrations, and all scientific knowledge is discursive. From these considerations it follows that there will be no scientific knowledge of the primary premisses, and since except intuition nothing can be truer than scientific knowledge, it will be intuition that apprehends the primary premisses – a result which also follows

Where the problem lies, however, is that this is the principle of principles in analytics, meaning in specifically understood Aristotelian logic, and analogically such a principle should also be sought in metaphysics, in physics, ethics, politics, and what have you. This then opens up the possibility of passing from the realm of the *profane* to the realm of the *sacred*, as well as to the acknowledgement of God as such a principle of principles. Such a loophole was also made use of by Saint Thomas Aquinas as well as later continuators of his maximalism in their approach to the standards of rationality. Of importance here are the arguments warranting and justifying the need for such unification, since they may place a huge question mark both over the rationality of man's *disengagement* from God, and the rationality of justifying the kind of human thinking and practical action that either does not expect the support of human power or reduces it to a certain minimum. Such reduction is seen—as both Taylor and MacIntyre well demonstrated—in the likes of Descartes and Locke.

The third of my general remarks is linked to this reduction, and the starting point here is the following question: does it mean relinquishing some kind of maximalist approach? In giving an answer here, I am inclined to assert that it could mean opting for some form of minimalism, but could also mean the replacement of one form of maximalism with another. This is the kind of situation we are dealing with, for example, in Descartes, who initially reduces what is rational to his own individual thinking, then erecting upon this foundation a structure that is metaphorically called a "solid home," essentially constituting a system of knowledge embracing the whole of reality, while the Cartesian builder, in his activity, takes over step by step the functions of the omnipotent God.

The picture is different with Locke and his continuators of the Enlightenment. In the former we are dealing with, firstly, a reduction of the tasks of God to matters of salvation, leaving the choice of the path along which one should follow for a uniting with God to human thought and conscience, and then, secondly, with the building on this foundation of the

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from the fact that demonstration cannot be the originative source of demonstration, nor, consequently, scientific knowledge of scientific knowledge. If, therefore, it is the only other kind of true thinking except scientific knowing, intuition will be the originative source of scientific knowledge. And the originative source of science grasps the original basic premiss, while science as a whole is similarly related as originative source to the whole body of fact." Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, in *Aristotle. Complete Works*, Hastings 2013, p. 373 et seq.

kind of system of knowledge that, although admittedly a structure devoid of a capstone, does not actually need such a capstone; indeed, such could even prove a hindrance to later generations of builders. Representatives of the radical Enlightenment went even further in this reductionism. Some (including atheists of the Enlightenment) maintained that the appearance of God in any role whatsoever would either restrict the possibilities of reason, or would signify its being led astray by various kinds of superstition and delusion. Others in the meantime—and they accounted for the enlightened majority—felt that the Supreme Being, previously called God, had already done what it was that it had to do, and had left man much room for displaying his sagacity. But this man should either not be a maximalist at all, or—should he have such inclinations—he should begin, as Voltaire put it, from "tending to his own garden," meaning that first of all he should see to himself and those closest to him. That he is unable to entirely wield control over either one or the other is entirely normal and natural; after all, he is not God. But that is not to say that he is or will remain an irrational being. Such a being he would be, though, were he to enter the role of the Christian God.

Chapter 4

Agnostics and agnosticism. An attempt at typologization

Preliminary remarks

The designations of "agnostic" and "agnosticism" have become so widespread that they tend to be used both by those who attempt to define their approach to religion as well as those who seek to situate themselves among its opponents or adherents. The appellations are also employed by those who for various reasons wish to underscore their critical attitude to theism and atheism alike, but are not quite clear as to where the dividing lines between them are or should be. This presents a major obstacle in determining whether an agnostic and their agnosticism is "for" or "against" religion and, possibly, why they are "for" or "against" it. The problem is that answering these and similar general questions is not actually feasible, because that which has been associated with agnosticism assumed—in different periods—a great variety of forms: some represented either a version of theism of at least complemented it, whereas others were a version of atheism or one of its complementary paradigms. Naturally, one might ask why even conceive such a notional entity that gives rise to so many intellectual quandaries? In my opinion, however, it has its place on the notional map of Western culture, and it by no means belongs on its fringes but at the very heart of the great disputes of knowledge and worldview that culture has witnessed previously and continues to see today, regarding such fundamental issues as rational cognition and its boundaries or belief in God and the boundaries of that belief. Still, the notion has to be made more specific, so that its occurrence on that map does not engender essential misunderstandings or assessments which indicate lack of comprehension of

what agnosticism was, is, and can be. I hope that the following deliberations may to some extent contribute to its better understanding as well as dispel at least some of the misconceptions. I set out from two thoroughly disparate viewpoints adopted in perceiving, presenting and evaluating agnosticism, i.e. the theistic and the atheistic perspective. Obviously, other approaches are possible as well, but I consider those two to be highly relevant in the discussion concerning the place of agnosticism in Western culture.

Further on, I am going to attempt to outline several types of agnosticism which have emerged over time. There were many more of those in the past; some complemented one another, others were mutually exclusive. The variants I have selected to discuss are no different in that respect. In each case, however, typologization of agnosticism does not depend solely on what the agnostics asserted, but also on the standards and evaluations espoused by those who appraised their views. This is evinced for instance by the typologization suggested by Richard Dawkins, which is quoted throughout this text. Also, contemporary literature offers a typologization which relies on meeting (or failure to meet) the criteria of scientific verifiability, as exemplified by the typologization devised by Robin Le Poidevin on which I draw on as well. However, in order to be able to assess and (possibly) duly appreciate the values of those and other typologizations, one has to attempt to determine where agnosticism began and ended or where its potential limits may have been. One of the possible ways of arriving at a pertinent answer is through reference to agnostic tradition, whereby agnosticism is approached as a historical phenomenon which underwent major transformation throughout its relatively long existence. This is also how I perceive and present agnosticism in this study.

Theistic and atheistic perception of agnosticism

Catechism of the Catholic Church provides an example of the theistic perception and presentation of agnosticism. It is discussed in Section Two, entitled *The Ten Commandments,* as an appendix to the explanation which follows the third commandment, i.e. "You Shall Have No Other Gods Before Me." It is stated for instance that "[a]gnosticism assumes a number of forms. In certain cases the agnostic refrains from denying God; instead they postulate the existence of a transcendent being which is incapable of revealing itself, and about which nothing can be said"; however, "agnosticism is

all too often equivalent to practical atheism." In *Catechism*, the entry for *agnosticism* follows *atheism,* which in its turn is preceded by *superstition, idolatry, divination and magic,* as well as *irreligion*.[1] Naturally, Catholic theism is considered the only proper doctrine, which to every member of that Church should be a matter beyond any dispute.

Quite obviously, this is at least debatable not only to adherents of other Christian denominations but also to all those who consider other religions to be proper and those who recognize none, or even find them to be particular variants of superstition. Answering what an agnostic would have to say in that matter is by all means possible, but first one has to address the question which agnostic would that be? After all, they differ quite significantly. I will attempt to demonstrate it in the subsequent sections of this text, availing myself of elucidations of agnosticism presented by such atheists as Richard Dawkins, author of *The God Delusion,* among other works. His point of departure lies not so much in the different modalities of atheism but in the various arguments to convince one to such a position and the various ways of expressing it, including the highly paradoxical 'deeply religious nonbeliever' of Albert Einstein's.[2]

Agnosticism is addressed by the author in Chapter Two, entitled *The God Hypothesis,* once Dawkins has already covered the God of the Old Testament ("arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction"), polytheism and monotheism ("It is not clear why the change from polytheism to monotheism should be assumed to be a self-evidently progressive improvement."), deism ("Compared with the Old Testament's psychotic delinquent, the deist God of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment is an altogether grander being: worthy of his cosmic creation…"), and secularism (apparently initiated by the Founding Fathers of the American republic, such as Thomas Jefferson and his associates who "were also passionate secularists who believed that the religious opinions of a President, or lack of them, were entirely his own business.") While Dawkins speaks in decidedly appreciative terms of the latter, his assessment of agnosticism is negative. The author defines it as an "erroneous notion that the existence or non-existence of God is an untouchable question, forever beyond the reach of science." In a section entitled *The Poverty of Agnosticism*, Dawkins cites

[1] CF. *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, Poznań 1994, p. 485 et seq.

[2] "This is a somewhat new kind of religion. […] The idea of a personal God is quite alien to me and seems even naive." (A. Einstein's words). Cf. R. Dawkins, *God Delusion*, London 2006, p. 15 et seq.

both those Catholic authors who—as historian Hugh Ross Williams—held agnostics to be "wishy-washy boneless mediocrities who flapped around in the middle" between theism and atheism, as well as those who perceived and presented them as persons who "refuse to commit themselves" to any of the antagonized sides.

Dawkins' polemic with agnosticism sets out from a distinction of two of its types, namely Temporary Agnosticism in Practice (TAP) and Permanent Agnosticism in Principle (PAP). The former is a "legitimate fence-sitting" (e.g. with respect to the existence of God as well as other issues), because "there really is a definite answer, one way or the other, but we so far lack the evidence to reach it (or don't understand the evidence, or haven't time to read the evidence, etc.)."[3] In contrast, "The PAP style of agnosticism is appropriate for questions that can never be answered, no matter how much evidence we gather, because the very idea of evidence is not applicable. […] And some scientists and other intellectuals are convinced—too eagerly in my view—that the question of God's existence belongs in the forever inaccessible PAP category."[4]

Further on in that section, Dawkins provides examples of scholars and philosophers who endorse one of the above types of agnosticism, beginning with Auguste Comte (whose astronomical agnosticism is "confounded daily" by researchers), through Thomas Henry Huxley (author of the neologism "agnosticism," whose coining he explained "while rising to a personal attack that it had provoked"), to Bertrand Russell (whose "parable of the celestial teapot" showed that Temporary Agnosticism works well with "the [above] spectrum of probabilities" as well as demonstrates with whom 'the burden of proof' lies).[5] Dawkins does not confine himself to B. Russell, discussing various philosophers and agnostic scholars, but Russell's understanding of agnosticism and its rationale deserve to be examined in greater detail.

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[3] "TAP would be a reasonable stance towards the Permian extinction." Ibidem, p. 47.

[4] "From this, […] they [adherents of such a view] often make the illogical deduction that the hypothesis of God's existence, and the hypothesis of his non-existence, have exactly equal probability of being right. The view that I shall defend is very different…" Ibidem, p. 48.

[5] "Many orthodox people speak as though it were the business of sceptics to disprove received dogmas rather than of dogmatists to prove them. This is, of course, a mistake." Ibidem, p. 52.

Russell presented his interpretation in 1953 in an interview for *Look*—reprinted later in the XV volume of *Principia*. Answering the question "What is an agnostic?," Russell states that "An agnostic thinks it impossible to know the truth in matters such as God and the future life with which Christianity and other religions are concerned. Or, if not impossible, at least impossible at the present time." However, an agnostic is not an atheist, as the latter "like a Christian, holds that we *can* know whether or not there is a God. […] The Agnostic suspends judgment, saying that there are not sufficient grounds either for affirmation or for denial."[6] Asked "Since you deny "God's Law," what authority do you accept as a guide to conduct?" Russell responds: "An Agnostic does not accept any "authority" in the sense in which religious people do. He holds that a man should think out questions of conduct for himself.' His answer to "What does an agnostic consider a sin?' is as follows: 'he [an agnostic] thinks it not a useful notion," because "is inflicted because it is thought a good thing on its own account that the wicked should suffer," while "this belief in vindictive punishment that made men accept Hell." As for 'Does an agnostic do whatever he pleases?", Russell responds that "[i]n one sense, no; in another sense, everyone does whatever he pleases," but "as a statistical fact, agnostics are not more prone to murder than other people, in fact, rather less so." The interview also features questions such as "How does an agnostic regard the Bible?" (which they are to regard as "enlightened clerics' do", i.e. "[h]e does not think that it is divinely inspired"), or "Can an agnostic be a Christian?" (they can, but one whose being Christian manifests itself in "wide sympathy with suffering, and [ardent desire for] a world freed from the cruelties and abominations which at present disfigure it"), etc.

It is only towards the end of the interview that the issue of the "celestial teapot" referred to by Dawkins appears, though it is somewhat differently outlined than in *The God Delusion*. It still concerns the proof of God's existence, and the possibility of formulating it in a manner that may be "reconciled with science," but its personalized, i.e. reduced to the following question: "What kind of evidence could convince you that God exists?" In response, Russell asserts that he would believe in God if he "heard a voice from the sky predicting all that was going to happen to me during the

[6] "At the same time, an Agnostic may hold that the existence of God, though not impossible, is very improbable; he may even hold it so improbable that it is not worth considering in practice. In that case, he is not far removed from atheism." Cf. B. Russell, *What is an agnostic?*, "Principia" vol. XV, 1953, p. 31 et seq.

next twenty-four hours," but the problem is that "no such evidence exists." Does it make answer to the question "what is an agnostic" easier or does it render it even more difficult? For some, the answer is indeed likely to be easier, while for others the task will be more complicated. Paradoxically, people who may find the assertions of Russell's helpful in determining who an agnostic is are not only those inclined to comply strictly with the principles of logical cogitation, but also those who are likewise inclined to follow at least some directives of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Still, one thing seems to be beyond doubt: an agnostic thus described will not be willing to yield to the authority of that Church nor accept the faith which is, or at least should be shared by its members, and thus cannot belong to that community.

Naturally, such an approach cannot be expected to be recognized by the Catholics, even those who attach considerable importance to the exercise of the powers of human intellect. Nor is it actually recognized, as attested by the reservations voiced by Józef Życiński in the disquisition entitled *Wiara wątpiących* [Faith to the doubting]. The author refers to several kinds of agnosticism, including a variant espoused by secular intellectuals who may display a "very kindly disposition towards religion" but at the same time perceive and present it as "being elementarily lost." One of those is, apparently, Russell. Speaking of his agnosticism, Życiński observes "that it may appear sensible and characterized by intellectual integrity as long as we stay in the domain of purely theoretical considerations." However, when we examine his "family ethic, social views and hierarchy of values," we find out that "in his life choices he was guided by the principle of practice, treating tangible benefits as the chief tenet of action."[7] Naturally, Russell's agnosticism has its supporters and advocates, especially among logicians and philosophers who thought likewise.[8]

The cited examples of how agnosticism has been understood and presented make it possible to distinguish at least several of its characteristics. The first was clearly defined by the Huxley, who coined the original term. It is expressed in the assertion that "agnosticism […] is not a creed." But is its a statement of unbelief? According to the scholar quoted here, it is. Does agnosticism have therefore nothing in common with religious faith? Answers to this question can be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic*

[7] Cf. J. Życiński, *Wiara wątpiących*, Kraków 2003, p. 30 et seq.

[8] For instance Jan Woleński, author of e.g. *Granice niewiary* (Kraków 2004).

Church and in the words of the aforesaid scientists, both of which—surprisingly enough—are essentially in consonance. According to Huxley, the "positive principle" of agnosticism may be formulated as follows: "In matters of the intellect, follow your reason as far as it will take you, without regard to any other consideration."[9] Admittedly, *Catechism* does not speak of any "positive principle" of agnosticism, but in a situation where the latter and "practical atheism" are put on a par, it may be presumed that it is tantamount to recognizing the human being—as opposed to God—as "the sole maker, with supreme control, of his own history" (although one should clarify what it means or might mean).

Another distinctive trait of agnosticism is that it highlights the question of existence or non-existence of God and (possibly) evidence to that effect. However, this is not the issue of prime importance with some agnostics. For those whom Dawkins labels "temporary agnostics in practice," the foremost problem is "lack of evidence" and (possibly) lack of time to collect it. Issue which are certain to ensue include: 1) what constitutes and what does not constitute evidence "in the case"; 2) how one can and should differentiate that evidence; 3) what temporal perspectives can and should be accepted (as both PAP and TAP will not be willing to wait for it indefinitely); 4) which of those problems can or should be classified as solvable by means of human cognitive faculties and which should be posed but never expected to be resolved by means of such faculties; and 5) should the latter be left to faith or considered as matters of minor relevance for the human who exercises their reason. The last of the issues listed here opens up the possibility for the God to emerge, but only as an object of more or less irrational faith or such speculations which may in fact be deemed interesting by an agnostic, but which will not bear decisively on their thinking and practical life.

Both characteristics of agnosticism are associated with making human cognition and knowledge the topmost or at least major priority, including the boundaries of that cognition and knowledge: limits which should be approached but never overstepped, as this would entail the risk of becoming entangled in speculation and superstition that has little to do with genuine knowledge. This is directly linked with the etymology of the term *agnosticism*, as is derives from Greek *agnostos*, meaning something "unknown" or

[9] "And negatively: In matters of the intellect, do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable." Cf. R. Dawkins, *God Delusion*, op.cit., p. 49.

"unknowable."[10] However, the distinction between the latter two notions is crucially significant for discriminations with respect to agnosticism, since the first meaning might suggest something which, albeit unknown, can be cognized, whereas the second denotes that it is neither known nor capable of being apprehended (Dawkins' division of agnosticism relies on that very differentiation).

Types of agnosticism in a historical perspective

Certain primeval forms of agnosticism may be found in some of the thinkers of antiquity who tend to be regarded as the first philosophers, such as Bias of Priene (born ca 570 BCE) Among other things, he is remembered in the history of philosophy thanks to the sentence "Speak of Gods as they are" (and think of them as you please).[11] Still, the general nature of his articulations and not entirely certain sources of information regarding his views leave too much leeway for various speculations; in effect, they offer no grounds for a particular type of agnosticism to be distinguished. There is no shortage of question marks in the case of such philosopher as Socrates (469–399 BCE), who left no written testimonies of his views; everything we know on that score comes from his disciples and opponents, whose accounts diverge substantially in their general conclusions and assessments of Socrates' achievements.

One of the philosopher's direct students was Plato, according to whom Socrates was not only a great philosopher but also a perfect teacher, accomplished rhetor, and the wisest of all who had ever been born, with the exception of Plato himself, whose self-appraisal was anything but modest. At any rate, he found Socrates to be wiser than the 500 members of the boule (a representative body of the Athenian polis at the time), who brought him to trial and sentenced to death. If one believes Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, one of the principal charges that his Master and Teacher faced was "failing

[10] Cf. *Słownik wyrazów obcych*, Warszawa 1980, p. 11. One should perhaps add that the word is built on the Greek root of *gnosis* or *gnoseos*, which essentially means *cognition*; *a-* in that language is a negative prefix.

[11] "When he was asked by an impious man what piety was, he made no reply; and when his questioner demanded the reason of his silence, he said, 'I am silent because you are putting questions about things with which you have no concern.'" Cf. Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Hastings 2017, p. 61 et seq.

to acknowledge the gods acknowledged by the city, but introducing new spiritual beings instead." The defendant did not answer the accusers what those "new spiritual beings" were. One may of course wonder whether he did not explain it because he believed it was beyond the capacity of his reason to do so, or whether it was beyond the comprehension of his indicters. Still, he is said to have admitted that he does "not even acknowledge [...] with the rest of mankind, that the sun and the moon are gods."[12] He thus found himself in grave trouble, because those who judged him concluded that something must be wrong with Socrates' mental faculties and reason, while public display of such a mindset is a serious threat to youth, who do not entirely know whom to believe, what to believe, and whether to believe anything at all. Worse still, the philosopher had nothing positive to say about those gods and deities in whose existence and influence over human fates the people of Athens did believe, and spoke in such a convoluted manner that either he could not be "nailed" on anything or—where he finally spoke more or less unequivocally—it would turn out that he was under the care of a deity (of god) who does not extend their care to other humans and, equally reprehensibly, cannot be called a name that would be understandable to ordinary people. Socrates himself called it a "prophetic voice" which "was continually active" and "opposed [him] even on trivial matters, if [he] was about to do anything amiss." Naturally, the voice could not be heard by any of the 500 members of the boule (because it was not their tutelary deity). Consequently, they left Socrates no other way but to transcend into the world whence that voice came, even though the latter confessed in his "final words' that no one—including himself—knows whether "he goes to what is better or what is worse."

However, there are such "keys" which may be helpful in understanding both Plato's *Apology of Socrates* as well as other accounts concerning his Master and Teacher. A number of those are suggested by Plato in his writings, while others have been highlighted by other scholars versed in the philosophies of both antique thinkers.[13] The problem is that there at least several such keys, and although some serve well to disentangle some of Socrates' statements, they may not apply and often do not apply to others, or can hardly be aligned with those at any rate. This concerns his fundamental assertions, such as "I know that I know nothing" or the somewhat

[12] Cf. Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, Indianapolis 2000, p. 29 et seq.

[13] Cf. e.g. G. Reale, *Storia della filosopfia antica, I dalle origini a Socrate*, Milan 1989.

less general but no less philosophically perplexing questions: "And yet, is this not that not most reproachable folly to suppose that one knows what one does not know?" In the case of agnosticism of the Socratic kind, at least one thing can be stated with perfect conviction: it is intellectually refined and addressed to those who are either adept at using their intellect, or at least know what they still lack to master that art and, equally importantly, want to and are capable (on their own or aided by suitable teachers) of striving to attain it with some determination.

Similarly, agnosticism of the Ciceronian type is characterized by considerable philosophical complexity. This is quite understandable because the views of Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE) echo the various transformations that the Athenian Academy witnessed with the successive generations of antique philosophers.[14] The mode in which that famed Roman politician, rhetor and philosopher conveyed his ideas does not facilitate the matter, as he would present his position through references to diverse approaches and views, while it is by no means easy to determine which he accepted completely, which he endorsed only in part, and which he rejected altogether. Cicero expresses himself in that very manner in e.g. the three treatises dedicated chiefly to religion and religiousness: *On the Nature of the Gods*, *On Divination*, and *On Fate*.

In the first of those, Cicero cites the positions and views of numerous Greek thinkers regarding such a fundamental issue as the existence of gods. Some of those philosophers, Protagoras for instance, were no more than uncertain about it, whereas others, e.g. Diagoras of Melos and Theodorus of Cyrene, "held that there are no gods at all." Philosophers were divided both on the issue of the existence of gods and their influence on human fates. "For there are and have been philosophers who thought that the gods had absolutely no direction of human affairs, and if their opinion is true, what piety can there be, and what holiness, and what obligation of religion? It is right that these should be accorded, in purity and innocence of heart, to the divinity of the gods, but only if the offering is observed

[14] Cicero is counted among representatives of the so-called New Academy, whose first scholarchs were Philo of Larissa in Thessaly (to whose teachings Cicero listened in 87), and Philo's disciple, Antiochus of Ascalon. In the treaty *On the Nature of* Gods, Cicero relates that he also attended lectures of Phaedrus, an Epicurean, and stoics Diodatus and Posidonius. At the same time, the author adds: "I consider that both in my public and private capacity I have carried out what reason and principle prescribed." Cf. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, Oxford 1997, p. 5 et seq.

by them, and if something has been accorded by the immortal gods to humanity […] On the other hand, in an empty and artificial pretence of faith piety cannot find a place any more than the other virtues; with piety it is necessary that holiness and religious obligation should also disappear, and when these are gone a great confusion and disturbance of life ensues."[15] The argumentation is to encourage acceptance of belief in the existence of gods as well as faith in their influence over human fates.

However, the addressee of the argumentation is fairly easy to determine. Without any major risk of error, one can presume that it is intended for the human community which needs peace and serenity, as well as the spiritual support of a higher power that perhaps does not help one solve their daily problems, but at least does not hinder one in doing so. On the other hand, the argument is not addressed to the great philosophers who, relying on their reason, can not only solve their own problems but also aid such endeavour of those who want and are able to follow their suggestions. One of such fundamental problems is striving for the truth and (possibly) attaining or approaching it. According to Cicero, one should rather opt for the latter, because a genuinely wise individual knows that they still know too little to warrant stating that they have attained the truth. Such a position "started with Socrates, and was taken up again by Arcesilas, and placed upon a firm foundation by Carneades," who used to 'say that nothing can be known', while it befits a wise man "solely to make suppositions' and 'realize that nothing can be thoroughly comprehended and grasped by thought."[16]

Such ideation about gods and humans, concerning their mental faculties as well, is beyond the common person and exceeds the skills of such philosophers as Plato who attempted to define the nature of gods (who are presented in his *Timaeus* as "fabricators and builders of the world"), or stoics (who speak of the "prophetic beldame"). To Cicero, those are "the prodigies and marvels of philosophers who do not reason but dream."[17] Still, the problem is not only that such "prodigies" must not be called into existence, but also that one should avoid errors committed by e.g. those

[15] "When piety towards the gods is removed, I am not so sure that good faith, and human fraternity, and justice, the chief of all the virtues, are not also removed." Ibidem, p. 13 et seq.

[16] Cf. Cicero, *On Academic Scepticism*, Indianapolis 2006, p. 87 et seq.

[17] Cicero is particularly severe in his assessment of the belief in augury and the soothsaying practice, against which he argues in *On Divination* and *On Fate*.

philosophers who, seeking "freedom from superstition" might have been superstitious themselves as "Diagoras or Theodorus, who absolutely denied their existence," or Epicurus who, "denying immortal gods kindness and beneficence, truly uprooted religion from the human soul." He was not so unwise as to "envision deity to resemble a weak man." Naturally, one could enumerate further philosophers who were criticized by Cicero for one thing and lauded for another. Also, it is possible to determine—with a fair degree of likelihood—the purpose of examination of the various "pros" and "cons" of notions and views espoused by philosophers: it does not aspire to eliminate all the question marks surrounding the issues that the human finds most important, but to reduce them to a minimum, so that they yield more benefit than cause harm, to philosophers and ordinary people like. This constitutes a singular *credo* of Ciceronian agnosticism.

The creed—just as any other—needs to be concretized in a way thanks to which it will not be a mere platitude but a guideline for all who want and can follow it in their thought and practical action. Cicero formulates such concretizations in a list of normative-descriptive assertions, such as "he [man] alone possesses reason, and nothing can surpass reason in excellence"; but that reason is imperfect and there must be something in the world that is superior ("should there be a man who thinks that in the whole universe there is nothing higher than himself shows senseless arrogance.") This may be variedly interpreted and presented; among other things, it could have been treated as a peculiar intimation of acknowledgement with respect to Christian theism, which was actually the case.[18]

In the age of the Renaissance the authority of Cicero was often invoked, though in most instances he was cited as a master of rhetoric rather than mediator between the believers and those who doubted the existence of the Christian God and his creative powers.[19] Nevertheless, the period saw thinkers who wrote new and, in their own way, original pages in the history

[18] As in St. Augustine's *City of God,* where Cicero is mentioned on multiple occasions and often tends to be shown in a positive light. Cf. Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, North Charleston 2015.

[19] According to Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Renaissance humanism was an age of Ciceronianism […] Above all, Cicero's rhetorical works provided the theory, and his orations, letters, and dialogues the concrete models for the main branches of prose literature, whereas the structure of his well-cadenced sentences was imitated in all kinds of literary compositions." Cf. P.O. Kristeller, *Humanizm i filozofia*, Warszawa 1985, p. 22 et seq.

of agnosticism. One of those was Nicholas of Cusa, theologian, philosopher and advisor of pope Pius II, as well as author of e.g. *On Learned Ignorance*.[20] The type of agnosticism found in the aforesaid treatise is a component of the so-called negative theology and, in that role, it constitutes a foundation of that kind of theism in which one does not negate the existence of God nor His nature, but where everything that may be cognized and reasonably articulated in that respect can be known and said chiefly through negation. However, no rational negation, including negation which refers to the divine Omnipotence and human powerlessness cannot do without some kind of affirmation. There is no shortage of those in *On Learned Ignorance*; one could even say that without them that ignorance—as far as God, the human and the world are concerned—would be an ignorance which affects all those whose reason and discernment falls short of being enlightened.

The first and the most significant of those affirmations is the affirmation of such a human intellect which, albeit incapable of everything, still can and even should pose a number of questions concerning its abilities and shortcomings. At any rate, this is what Cusanus sets out with in his treatise. Answering some of those questions, he concludes that human intellect can only be 'sound and free' when it "insatiably desires to attain unto the true through scrutinizing all things by means of its innate faculty of inference." In this type of agnosticism one should also resolve what happens when the intellect does not do it. Cusanus answers by stating that it is 'affected by sickness' (it is not sound), and is thus "misled" as a result. Another significant affirmation endorses inquiry which "proceeds by means of a comparative relation, whether an easy or a difficult one," whereby complex comparative relations can, and often have to be reduced to simpler ones, because when they are simpler "the judgement apprehends easily" and once apprehended, a thing becomes certain. All that is lucidly and unequivocally laid out in Chapter One of Book One of the treatise, entitled *How it is that knowing is not-knowing*.[21] It may be worthwhile to note that the author draws on the authority of ancient philosophers (e.g. Pythagoras, Socrates or Aristotle) but makes no reference to any medieval theological authority.

No such source is mentioned in Chapter Two of that Book, even though its core issue—the question of the so-called "Absolute Maximality"—had been profoundly analyzed and discussed by such authorities. Cusanus'

[20] Who, in the opinion of Kristeller, was "the most original and profound thinker" of the fifteenth century. Cf. ibidem, p. 175.

[21] Cf. Nicolaus of Cusa, *On Wisdom and Knowledge*, Banning 1996.

deliberations clearly gravitate towards the philosophy of the Original Being construed in the Aristotelian manner, as the author states that Absolute Maximality is Absolute Being, through which all things are that which they are, so from Absolute Being there exists a universal oneness of being which is spoken of as "a maximum deriving from the Absolute [Maximum]." Subsequently, Cusanus provides reasons which explain or substantiate that general proposition, for instance that "universe exists-in-plurality only contractedly," while that "oneness does not exist without plurality." In order to unveil all those reasons, the author declares readiness "to use guiding illustrations in a transcendent way and to leave behind perceptible things, so that the reader may readily ascend unto simple intellectuality," as major intellectual effort is required not to lose one bearings and ultimately comprehend what "learned ignorance" is.

In order to grasp that kind of agnosticism one should take should pay attention to how Cusanus elucidates the proposition he advances, namely that "the precise truth is incomprehensible." It is beyond fathomable because "there is no comparative relation of the infinite to the finite," and while the Maximum is infinite "it is not the case that by means of likenesses a finite intellect can precisely attain the truth about things." However, it can and should undertake the labour of determining its cognitive limitations. One of such boundaries (though only one of them) is the incapability of knowing such an "Absolute Maximum," who is a God blessed and worshipped not only by people of profound Christian faith, but also by "our Holy Doctors." The latter, according to Cusanus, include the Fathers of the Church as well as scholars and philosophers such as Pythagoras (who argued that "Oneness is trine"), or "the divine Plato who […] states in the *Phaedo* that […] there is one Form or Idea of all things'. It would be worthwhile to note that in his treatise Nicholas of Cusa expressly questions rationality of affirmative theology; one of the arguments against it is the contention that it ascribes to god such traits which are "found in created things" (while 'the pagans named God in various ways in relation to created things'). It would thus appear that the theology he criticizes is either idolatrous itself or at least harbours certain features of idolatry.

The type of agnosticism unfolding on the pages of Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary* did not draw from Christian faith but from the unbelief of such antique sceptics as Pyrrho of Elis. It may even be presumed that it constitutes a component of a modified Pyrrhonian scepticism, although the bias of the modifications introduced by Bayle is debatable.

According to Richard Popkin, Bayle sought a more radical expression of Pyrrho's arguments.[22] I would be inclined to contest that view, given that the author of the *Dictionary* questions the possibility of thoroughly certain cognition just as ancient sceptics had done, but unlike them he does not challenge the need of accepting something on faith alone, not only with respect to religion and religiousness. This is fairly evident in the entry for *Pyrrho*, for instance. In the light of the argument presented there: "the art of disputing about all things and always suspending one's judgment is most commonly called 'Pyrrhonism'"; and rightly so. Yet it is unjustly considered a threat to religious faith, because "it may have its value in making men conscious of the darkness they are in, so that they will implore help from on high and submit to the authority of the faith."[23] Still, one has to distinguish between religious faith and theology, since certain truths may be found in the first ("Its [religion's] aim, its effects, its usages collapse as soon as the firm conviction of its truths is erased from the mind."), but it would be a vain effort to look for them in theology. However, it is easy to encounter such truths there which cannot defend themselves against the argumentation of the sceptics.[24]

It would therefore seem that the sceptic and their scepticism are adversaries of theology, but they may be allies of such faith which does not look to the latter for support. Furthermore, it can be an abettor of the natural sciences; not those which are founded on "certitudes" but those which acknowledge that "the mind of man is too limited to discover anything concerning natural truths" and confine themselves to "looking for probable hypotheses and collecting data."[25] Moreover, scepticism can be an ally of all those who value serenity and social peace ('sceptics do not deny that one should conform to the customs of one's country, practice one's moral duties, and act upon matters on the basis of probabilities without waiting for certainty."). The problem is that sceptics and scepticism are approached

[22] Cf. R. Popkin, *The History of Skepticism*, Oxford 2003, p. 288 et seq.

[23] Cf. P. Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary. Selections*, transl. by Richard H. Popkin, Indianapolis and New York, 1965, p. 194.

[24] "Were Arcesilaus to return to this world, and were he to combat our theologians, he would be a thousand times more formidable than he was against the dogmatists of ancient Greece." Ibidem, p. 196.

[25] "I am quite sure that there are very few good scientists of this century who are not convinced that nature is an impenetrable abyss and that its springs are known only to Him who made and directs them." Ibidem, p. 195.

with some mistrust and their arguments are either ignored or, conversely, treated as a threat to Christian religion and those sciences which formulate their assertions in a peremptory manner.

Bayle found that the issue requires a more comprehensive explanation, therefore the clarifications provided in his *Dictionary* seek to demonstrate that a range of reservations which had been raised with regard to sceptics are either misunderstandings or ordinary slander. The first is concerned with the "praise paid to persons who deny either providence or the existence of God." Such persons not only provoked outrage among the believers but had also been alleged not to observe the applicable mores and to encourage others to do likewise through their conduct. This aspersion is rebutted by Bayle with as many as fifteen arguments. In the first, the authors states that "fear and love of God are not the sole springs of human actions" and observes in the subsequent arguments that "the love of glory, the fear of infamy or death or torments, the hope of a post act with more force on certain men than the desire to please God and the fear of violating his commandments"; that it is "quite possible that there are irreligious people who may be more strongly impelled toward a virtuous life by the springs of temperament accompanied by the love of praise and sustained by the fear of dishonor, than others are impelled by the dictates of conscience"; or that "it ought to be considered much more scandalous when it is noticed that so many people convinced of the truths of religion are yet immersed in crime"; whereas recognition is due to those atheists who in their thought and practical actions display "sobriety, chastity, probity, contempt for riches, zeal for the public good, inclination to be helpful to their neighbour" etc.[26]

In the clarification which seeks to refute the allegations made against Pyrrhonism, Bayle begins with a general thesis according to which their philosophy "cannot cause harm to religion," and provides the following rationale "the tribunal of philosophy is incompetent to judge controversies between Christians, since they ought to be carried only to the tribunal of revelation." Further on, Bayle demonstrates not only a necessity to keep those two distinct 'tribunals' separate, but also enumerates the resulting advantages for philosophers and theologians: the former do not have to occupy themselves with issues that can only be resolved through faith (e.g. "whether God requires that we believe this or that"), whereas the latter "should not be ashamed to admit that they cannot enter a contest with

[26] Cf. ibidem, p. 421 et seq.

such antagonists [as philosophers]" because to put is colloquially, it is not their "cup of tea." Bayle does not use such a phrase in his clarification, but certain equivalents may be found there, for instance "philosophy does not cure the mental wavering." We might be healed from it by prayer, which indeed can also give us true wisdom, yet this wisdom is different from the philosophical one; moreover, to "cite an apostle," "[i]f any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." Nothing of the kind could be said of the philosophical wisdom (since it is not bestowed on everyone and is not obtained as easily as God's wisdom). Naturally, this and other clarifications of Bayle's feature ambiguities which may arouse the suspicion that the author in fact appreciates the philosophical wisdom attained by the Pyrrhonists much higher than the wisdom which the Christian authorities and various philosophical dogmatics (such as e.g. Cartesians) had achieved.[27]

Nineteenth-century Western Europe witnessed a singular intellectual counter-crusade against Christian sanctities and greatnesses, including the "divine" states on earth, i.e. various kinds of visible Churches, in which the multigenerational milieus of diverse anticlericals and sceptics as well as agnostics reaped the harvest of their labours. It would be difficult to determine—more or less conclusively—who was who in that endeavour, or even who walked alongside whom in that widespread enterprise. A convincing testimony of the above may be found in the *Syllabus of Errors* promulgated by pope Pius IX in 1864, "containing the principal errors of our times," according to its authors. Although the list itemizing over 80 "errors" does not explicitly refer to agnosticism, it is nevertheless present in quite a few; it may suffice to cite the philosophical currents referred to in the title of the first section: "pantheism, naturalism and absolute rationalism."[28] In the later commentaries to the document the participants of that counter-cru-

[27] After the first edition of the *Dictionary* had been published in 1692, those ambiguities were identified by theologians and philosophical dogmatics, both of whom censured the work as a result. Also, the author—a lecturer at the École Illustre in Rotterdam at the time—had his right to teach revoked. For more on that issue cf. E. Labrousse, *Pierre Bayle*, The Hague, vol. I: 1963, vol. II: 1964.

[28] Cf. The aforementioned contributors to the intellectual counter-crusade apparently shared the conviction that "there exists no Supreme, all-wise, all-provident Divine Being, distinct from the universe, and God is identical with the nature of things, and is, therefore, subject to changes. In effect, God is produced in man and in the world, and all things are God and have the very substance of God…" Cf. Pope Pius IX, *Syllabus błędów*, "Studia Theologica Varsaviensia" 1998, no. 2(36), p. 113 et seq.

sade are mentioned by name, including Charles Darwin and a number of adherents of his theories.[29] That was just a step away from such scholars as one of the closest associates of Darwin's and a fervent proponent of his theories, Thomas Henry Huxley. Michael White and John Gribbin observe that "there is no doubt that Huxley's lectures did much to make the public aware of the name Darwin and the concept of evolution. Huxley's description of evolution was simplistic in the extreme."[30] They add, however, that "Huxley himself was delighted by the response to his lectures and frequently wrote to an appreciative Darwin telling him of his progress."

One has to remember that it was a period in the history of Western culture that confidence in scientific inquiry and the involved researchers became quite widespread and popular, while ecclesiastical authorities as well as injunctions and prohibitions issued by the Church were readily overlooked. This yielded agnosticism of the scientistic kind, represented for instance by the aforesaid British scholar, Huxley, a physician for whom anthropology and physiology became a passion and a scientific pursuit.[31] His agnosticism has already been extensively analyzed and assessed by both defenders and opponents of Christian belief and practice. Let me therefore only briefly recall that in Huxley's opinion, an agnostic is one who claims that the existence of anything above or beyond natural phenomena is unknown and incognizable. Huxley's responses to the allegations levelled by the advocates of Christian faith clearly indicate that an agnostic neither denies nor affirms the thesis of God's existence. They merely assert that neither proposition can be resolved scientifically, whereas science is concerned, or at least should be concerned exclusively with the matters its methods can determine. This does not mean, however, that an agnostic does not

[29] One of those George Spencer; the author of *Historia Kościoła Katolickiego* notes that he "continued the traditions of English empiricism and propagated the evolutionary interpretation of the world inspired by Darwin." Cf. ks. M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1991, p. 223.

[30] "There was no discussion of the ruthlessness of Nature, the cut-throat struggle for survival, but the basic tenets were conveyed by the hack journalists who attended the early talks." Cf. M. White, J. Gribbin, *Darwin: A Life in Science*, London 1995, p. 246 et seq.

[31] In recognition of his scientific achievement—alongside other accolades—Huxley was entrusted with the presidency of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1869–1870); later (in 1883) he would also become president of the Royal Society. More on the life and views of Th.H. Huxley, cf. B. Cyril, *Scientist Extraordinary: the Life and Work of Thomas Henry Huxley 1825–1895*, Oxford 1972.

respect those who believe in the truths of faith, and it does not preclude a possibility of arriving at a mutual agreement. Still, the prerequisite for that agreement is that the latter accept in the first place that knowing something on the basis of findings of the secular sciences differs from believing in something on the basis of religious accounts and such interpretations that may be found e.g. in Christian catechisms. This naturally has its particular ramifications in practice. For example, if a person is ill and wishes to find what affects them and how the ailment should be treated, they should go to an ordinary physician as opposed to a priest. In contrast, if they desire to know how they should (as a good Christian) understand such events as those on Mount Sinai, they need to refer to one of the catechisms or ask a priest or minister for explanation. One way or another, it means that the world of religious belief and the world of science are not only distinct but also possess few points of transition; one the other hand, there are many pathways which lead knowledge and faith astray.

Contemporary forms of scientistic agnosticism are discussed in Robin Le Poidevin's monograph entitled *Agnosticism. A Very Short Introduction*, in particular Chapters 4 and 5. The title of the first of those inquires *Why be agnostic?* In order to answer it, the authors provides 'case studies' (successively addressing *intelligence*, *life and the laws of nature*, *the moral conscience*, *the presence of God* and *the absence of God*) which are to "illustrate the unavoidable ambiguity of the evidence," theistic and atheistic alike. Here, I will focus briefly only on the first of those "case studies," relating to the existence of intelligence in the earthly world. Theist have attributed its emergence to Divine Providence, while to atheists it originated with "the random behaviour of atoms." Meanwhile, contemporary evolutionary biology offers an "entirely naturalistic explanation," whereby intelligence "emerges by a series of small steps, a gradual increase in complexity in living systems and their capacity to adapt and survive." Consequently, it makes "theism redundant as an explanation of intelligence." However, evolutionary biology does not supply conclusive arguments to atheists (such as Dawkins) either, as it merely renders the hypothesis of the existence of God "exceedingly improbable." The problem is that it adopts only one of the viable understandings of intelligence, which is strictly associated with the development and functioning of the human brain ("we are [not] imagining […] creatures with a different chemistry to ours"). Today, however, we also employ the notion of "artificial intelligence as a way of describing the truly astounding information-processing capacities of computers. But

would we be as prepared to talk of *artificial consciousness*? And this leads to the following thought: if intelligence and consciousness are in principle separable, then perhaps natural selection could have led to a race of incredibly intelligent zombies who used their intelligence to survive in and adapt to changing environments."[32] This might seem a fairly perverse intellectual argumentation against atheism, yet it clearly follows that an evolutionary biologist may come to see a being higher than the human looming on the horizon; it is of minor importance whether it is called by the traditional name of God or the more modern "zombie" (as appellations have not been the chief concern of atheists).

In Chapter 5 of his monograph, Le Poidevin asks whether "agnosticism rests on a mistake?" and, in response, delves into four "vital assumptions about the God hypothesis," namely: 1) "it is either true or false"; 2) "it is to be understood literally"; 3) "belief in its truth is only rational if based on reasons that don't just assume that God exists"; and 4) "those reasons must appeal to sufficient evidence for the hypothesis." In the analysis of those premises Le Poidevin draws on the authority of the Vienna Circle and logical empirism of Alfred Jules Ayer's, author of the treatise *Language, Truth and Logic* published in 1936. The work posits that only logically or empirically verifiable assertions deserve the name of scientific propositions. Those which can be verified solely by means of logic possess the so-called strong verification, whereas those whose need to be resolved through empiricism have weak verification. In his treatise, Ayer also distinguishes metaphysical judgments which in his opinion fail to meet the requirements of either standard of verifiability. This includes the contention that 'god exists' as well as the assertion that "god does not exist." In consequence, neither one nor the other can be considered true or false.[33] This also means that "all utterances about the nature of God [be it expressed by theist and atheists] are nonsensical." Nonetheless, the claim of agnostics that the evidence does not speak conclusively either for or against theism and atheism is also meaningless in Ayer's eyes, and undermines the relevance of the agnostic position. If agnostics adopt that there is no valuable proof demonstrating which of those fundamental claims is closer to the truth,

[32] Cf. R. Le Poidevin, *Agnosticism. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford 2010, p. 59 et seq.

[33] Cf. A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London 2001, p. 140 et seq.

then "the grounds for agnosticism threaten to make it redundant."[34] It needs to be added, however, that according to that philosopher the convictions of theists, atheists and agnostics should not be deemed to express the truth but they do convey emotions (feelings) and thus cannot be approached in terms of truth and falsehood.

[34] Discussing Ayer's counter-agnostic argumentation, Le Poidevin observes: 'To be an agnostic is to assume certain things about belief in God, and although those assumptions might seem at first glance entirely reasonable, the possibility remains that they are, in fact, false, or at least subject to serious objections.' Cf. R. Le Poidevin, *Agnosticism*, p. 77 et seq.

Chapter 5

Historicist and historical religious studies

Historical references in the reflection on religions and religiosities have such a long tradition that it is difficult to imagine religious studies without them. Of course in this context history has been referenced in various ways and for different purposes. Thus many times the same historical facts are used to argue for or against specific beliefs and religious, while yet another group of scholars may hold them irrelevant. It is impossible to present, in this relatively short discussion, the very broad spectrum of ways, in which studies on religion employ historical facts. This is not the aim of this paper. In this paper, I attempt to discern and draw a border line between historicist and historical reflections in religious studies, which I consider as two completely different types of reflection. Each of the types is also intrinsically diverse.

Historicist religious studies

Historicism is here used in line with Karl R. Popper's understanding of the term, which he discussed, among other works, in *The Open Society and its Enemies*.[1] Popper connects historicism first and foremost with the doctrines of

[1] In his introduction to the book K.R. Popper states that his work attempts "to contribute to our understanding of totalitarianism and of the significance of the perennial fight against it. It further tries to examine the application of the critical and rational methods of science to the problems of the open society. It analyses the principles of democratic social reconstruction […]. And it tries to clear away some of the obstacles impeding a rational approach to the problems of social reconstruction. It does so by criticizing those social philosophies which are responsible for the widespread prejudice against the possibilities of democratic reform. The most powerful of these reactionary

Plato, Hegel and Marx. The doctrines differ in more than one respect. What they do have in common, however, is such a description and explanation of the history of mankind which implies that its scenario had been written by an external force (whether from this world or another is less relevant). The quintessential fact remains that the scenario cannot be changed, even if its end is known and is a source of fear or anxiety. In short, the hallmark of all historicist doctrines is the common belief in the 'inexorable laws of historical destiny.' Popper criticised such an understanding of historicism in *The Poverty of Historicism*.[2] In this work, he tries to prove that 'historicism is a poor method, a method which does not bear any fruit,' and various scenarios presented by historicists do not rely on objective knowledge.[3]

In the *Aftermath* of *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Popper points to the existence of theistic and Christian historicism. In his discussion of this specific form of historicism, Popper claims that "[w]ith Hegel, it looks upon history as a stage, or rather, as a kind of lengthy Shakespearian play; and the audience conceive either the "great historical personalities," or mankind in the abstract, as the heroes of the play. Then they ask, "Who has written this play?" And they think that they give a pious answer when they reply, "God." But they are mistaken. Their answer is pure blasphemy, for the play was written not by God, but, under the supervision of generals and dictators, by the professors of history." One can infer from the discussion that by "the professors of history" Popper means renown Christian theologians, whereas "generals and dictators" are in fact those hierarchs and Church superiors, who oversee the conscience and reflections of the faithful, strengthening their belief that "God reveals Himself and His judgement in history." According to Popper, "to maintain that God reveals Himself in what is usually called 'history,' in the history of international

philosophies is one which I have called *historicism*." See K.R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Princeton and Oxford 2013, pp. xiii.

[2] In the *Introduction* Popper summarises his arguments against historicism. He criticises such a perspective on social life based on the following premises: "1. The course of human history is strongly influenced by the growth of human knowledge […]. 2. We cannot predict by rational or scientific methods, the future growth of our scientific knowledge […]. 3. We cannot, therefore, predict the future course of human history. 4. […] There can be no scientific theory of historical development serving as a basis for historical prediction. 5. 'The fundamental aim of historicist methods […] is therefore misconceived; and historicism collapses." See K.R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, London 2002, pp. xi–xii.

[3] Ibidem, p. 52.

crime and of mass murder, is indeed blasphemy; for what really happens within the realm of human lives is hardly ever touched upon by this cruel and at the same time childish affair. The life of the forgotten, of the unknown individual man; his sorrows and his joys, his suffering and death, this is the real content of human experience down the ages. If that could be told by history, then I should certainly not say that it is blasphemy to see the finger of God in it. But such a history does not and cannot exist; and all the history which exists, our history of the Great and Powerful, is at best a shallow comedy."[4] It is worth noticing that while criticising theistic historicism, Popper seeks the support of Karl Barth, a protestant theologian. Thus he shows that among the "professors of history" identifying themselves with Christianity, there are also those, who raise *votum separatum* with regard to the type of historicism, supported and popularized by the "generals and dictators" of the Church.[5]

Karl R. Popper's depiction of Christian 'professors of history' is in general reflecting the actual voices of some Christian theologians belonging to this very group, such as Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, the authors of the *Theological Dictionary.* Many entries in this dictionary include references to history. In each case the authors conclude that, in general, the wheels of history are turned by God's will. They all head towards the end that has already been scripted by God. This end is referred to with various names, which also have their historical meanings and justifications. Rahner and Vorgrimler's explanations of *revelation* imply that in the earthly reality, including the history of mankind, what is superior reveals itself through the self-transcendence of what is inferior. Both constitute equally true and real sides of one miracle: revelation and history.[6] Further explanations can be

[4] "[I]t is the opera buffa played by the powers behind reality (comparable to Homer's opera buffa of the Olympian powers behind the scene of human struggles). It is what one of our worst instincts, the idolatrous worship of power, of success, has led us to believe to be real." See K.R. Popper, *The Open Society*…, p. 477.

[5] K.R. Popper explains the reference to "the professors of history" in the following way: "My intention in quoting Barth is to show that it is not only my 'rationalist' or 'humanist' point of view from which the worship of historical success appears as incompatible with the spirit of Christianity. What matters to Christianity is not the historical deeds of the powerful Roman conquerors but (to use a phrase of Kierkegaard's) "what a few fishermen have given the world." Ibidem.

[6] According to Rahner and Vorgrimler this view can be juxtaposed from two perspectives. The first one is intrinsicism – a type of modernism that perceives revelation as nothing else, but the development of a religious need, which is an immanent necessity

found among other in the entries devoted to *general revelation* (Christian tradition assumes that the first people did not possess the clear, conceptual and reflective understanding of God's revelation provided in the official and public *history of salvation*. This history means that God in his grace extends his universal will of salvation to the history of mankind as a whole and in it presents all people with *salvation*. His Grace and justification were indeed revealed in humanity in historical and concrete way).

Such a perspective on history, implies or demands that Jesus Christ be presented as a historical figure. He is thus depicted by the authors of the *Theological Dictionary*. The historical existence, life, death and resurrection, as well as what Jesus spoke about himself are historically proven by the four Gospels, apostles' letters, and evidence form early-Christian and non-Christian sources (Flavius Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny the Younger, Talmud).[7] However, maybe He should also, or even first and foremost be depicted as a suprahistorical person i.e. as the Son of God, who remains with God the Father in an absolutely unique relation. This relation is reserved only for Him and off limits to other humans.[8] The case of people in His more and less immediate surrounding is similar; His family becomes the holy family; the apostles stop being simple fishermen and turn into saints, just as all others ready to pay (and paying) the highest price for the canonization of their faith and their Church.

The authors of the *Concise Theological Dictionary* writing from the religious point of view and for religious purposes are obviously entitled to such a perspective and to remain silent about facts that could contradict their laudation of the faith, which they believe in along with all the others, who perceive such literature as a stronghold for their conscience and thought. Their peace might be shattered not only by the views of Karl R. Popper's or

in the story of mankind. Intrinsicism objectifies this need in its most diverse forms in the history of different religions. Its pure objectifications are gradually realised in Judaism and Christianity. The second, extrinsecism, views revelation as God's external intervention, in which He addresses people through prophets giving them truths that would otherwise be inaccessible and providing them with moral (and other) guidelines. See K. Rahner, H. Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, New York 1965, p. 409.

[7] Ibidem, p. 236.

[8] According to Rahner, and Vorgrimler Jesus Christ is the supreme form of creation; as a member of humanity he is its Lord and its Head – a link between God and his creation. If he cannot be conceived in his humanity without the world as his surroundings, in his reality the God's will, directed towards the world in general, in a real and final sense was reflected in the historical concreteness in the world. Ibidem, p. 237.

Karl Barth's, but also by those historians who point to significant differences between the Gospels and the ambiguity of non-Christian sources, e.g. a Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, the author of *Antiquitates*, or the Roman writers mentioned in the entry devoted to *Jesus Christ* (they call Christian beliefs a "superstition," "an old-wives' tale" or "a criminal religion").[9]

Clearly, writing from the religious perspective historians also evaluate the sources critically and point to existing ambiguities, or even significant differences in issues fundamental for Christianity. This approach may be illustrated by Wilfrid J. Harrington's *Key to the Bible* – a work highly appreciated not only by Christian readers. The author, among other things, makes it clear that the early Church understood the term *evangelion*, not as a book describing the words and deeds of Jesus Christ, but as good news of redemption offered by the Messiah, the mission of redemption. When in the 2nd century, the meaning of *evangelion* shifted to a written Gospel, the written word was still believed to fulfil the missionary purposes and served the same goal, as the spoken word i.e. to awake and strengthen the faith. Harrington claims further that an evangelist is at the same time a preacher, supported by the entire authority of the living Church, for which he speaks. His work is kerygmatic in that it heralds Jesus Christ. An evangelist's task is not to write the biography of Jesus; his intentions remain purely kerygmatic and theological.[10]

This distinction between Jesus from the kerygmetic perspective (prophetic) and the historical one is today acknowledged by different churches of Christ.[11] It is true that such a distinction was introduced relatively long

[9] "We are mostly interested in three fragments of *Antiquitates* […] The fragments devoted to John the Baptist and Jacob do not raise any particular doubts and are usually believed to be authentic. […] The piece of information about Jesus and Christians, however, which is most crucial for us has been questioned for a long time…" See J. Keller, *Chrześcijaństwo pierwotne*, in *Zarys dziejów religii*, collective work, Warszawa 1988, p. 580 et seq. The cited author provides five reasons why the information about Jesus and Christians is questioned and believed to be (also by a few Christian historians) "added to Joseph's work by a Christian copyist at the turn of the 3rd and the 4th century."

[10] See W.J. Harrington, *Key to the Bible*, vol. 3, Chicago 1993.

[11] "This problem might be approached from the following perspective: Can our Gospels be traced back to Jesus of Nazareth, His Words and His deeds, or to the initial community of believers. Does the image of Jesus in the Gospels reflect historical reality or was it created by the initial community? […] This distinction was applied to Jesus long ago (12th century). Jesus was viewed from the historical perspective and as he was depicted by the Apostles, or as a historical and legendary figure, or as

ago, but a longer time span was indispensable for the Christian conscience and thought to handle facts that are difficult to question. More than once do Gospels depict Jesus of Nazareth, his words and his deeds, in a completely different way, and their authors based the relations to certain extent (according to some) or entirely (as believed by others) on second-hand accounts.[12] These facts were in the 17th and 18th century so difficult to reconcile with the Christian conscience and thought that the authors, who discovered them refrained from presenting their views publicly. Such was the case of Hermann Samuel Reimerus (1694–1768), the author of *Apologia or Defense for the Rational Reverers of God.* He was not seeking publicity. On the contrary, he could rather be described as a steady and peaceful professor teaching Eastern languages at the gymnasium in Hamburg, his hometown.[13] Nothing could prove his reluctance to publicity or recognition better than the fact

a historical or mythical figure. In line of the above, the image of Jesus presented in the Gospels is not so much based on history, but on legends or myths. Today the problem is approached from another perspective: Jesus, the historical person, lived and was active in Nazareth, while Jesus whom the initial community believed in is viewed as an idealised figure. […] There is also a different approach: historic and kerygmatic i.e. Christ of the apostles' kerygma. […] Finally, according to yet another formula, we can distinguish between Jesus, as documented by history and Christ, as perceived by the Gospels. The latter was created by the initial Church and the evangelists, and is not a faithful image of the historical figure. All these distinctions point to the fact that Christ (the object of faith) depicted in the Gospels is not the same as the historical figure of Jesus born and active in Palestine." See Rev. J. Kudasiewicz, *Jezus historii a Chrystus wiary*, Lublin 1987, p. 5 et seq. [translation mine].

[12] According to W.J. Harrington, apostles and first preachers stand between Christ and the evangelists. He believes that the first three Gospels i.e. St. Matthew's, St. Mark's and St. Luke's are closely related and only St. John follows his own path. He also reminds us that the tradition of the initial Church is unanimous and that St. Matthew was one of the Twelve Apostles and wrote it in Aramaic. Still the Gospel of St. Matthew found in the New Testament was written in Greek, and it had not been translated. The relationship between the Aramaic version and the later Gospel remains unclear. See *Key to the Bible* (vol. 3), Chicago 1993. J. Keller argues that apocryphal texts, including Gospels were written in a later period (after the death of Jesus of Nazareth) most of which date back to the 2nd century and reflect the perception of Jesus that dominated in many Christian communities of that time. See J. Keller, *Chrześcijaństwo pierwotne*, op.cit., p. 584.

[13] He authored highly valued books devoted to the defence of natural religion and the criticism of atheism: he argued in particular, that only the wisdom of the Supreme Being may explain the marvellous organisation of the kingdom of insects. See P. Hazard, *European thought in the 18th century: From Montesquieu to Lessing*, Gloucester 1973.

that he decided not to share the work of his life (written over 20 years) with his contemporaries. Were it not for Gotthold. E. Lessing, who stumbled on his manuscript, nobody would have ever learned about the professor's discoveries. But even he was not bold enough to publish the entire work of Reimerus; its part was released in 1774 under the title *Fragments by an Anonymous Writer* in his *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*. The Church felt indignant at the book. The Christian perspective on its inception and main figures was defended, among others, by Pastor Melchior Goeze. Regardless of what one could have said about the pastor, the words written by Reimerus were severe. Having conducted a philological analysis of the Bible, Reimerus questioned the grounds not only of Christianity but also of the older faith i.e. Judaism. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the sacred word is not so sacred (as it is full of contradiction and ambiguity) and that the biblical prophets resemble common people in more than one respect (such as their inclination towards vengeance). Reimerus showed also the human dimension of the relationship between Christ and his disciples, which he believed to be based on the "captivation of the mind for religious purposes."

In the same period, a few other authors were not only inclined to recognize these discoveries as historical facts, but also complemented them with others, even more difficult to reconcile with the Christian conscience and thought. One of them, Johann Christian Edelman, a theologian educated at the University of Jena perceives original Christianity in a way, which was rather revolutionary for a person with his education. He presents his arguments in *Moses with Uncovered Face* (1740). The work takes the form of a dialogue between two main characters impersonating the Christian ignorance and the enlightened reason. Their debate focuses not only on the contradictions, ambiguities and absurdities found in the Bible, but also on the embellishments made by different translators. The enlightened reason plays the main role in the debate and forces his opponent to be silent or only mildly argue with his views. The force of his arguments makes them impossible to counter, e.g. he claims that the original apostles' words are long lost and only fragmentary copies remained, which do not resemble one another.

Voltaire may be considered a classic representative of this "literature of historical facts," who made Christian conscience and thought regarding Christianity and other religions uncomfortable, among others in the *Essay on the Customs*. In this book, he reviews a spectrum of peoples' histories, starting from the Jews and ending on the French under Louis IV. Discussing his work, René Pomeau comments that the author pays special attention to such revolutionary events as the beginnings of Christianity, crusades,

colonial conquests and reformation. Although in close-up the history of mankind is dominated by a combination of crime and fear, in total, judging from a broader perspective, humanity has advanced substantially. Voltaire believes that human being, savage in nature, possesses certain values, which can save him from a very animalistic behaviour…[14] These values, however, are not associated with Christianity or Christian spirituality, as Voltaire saw these two, as major causes of the combination of crime and fear. Neither does he relate them to the *Bible,* which he views as a historical document, but the facts presented in it bewilder the enlightened reason, rather than encourage it to follow its general guidelines.[15] It is also worth noting that starting form Kalvin, Voltaire sees the history of France as anything but the history of madmen. He has even depicted this story in *La Henriade*, i.e. the history of religious wars, which took place in France in the second half of the 16th century. It must be stressed, however, that all Voltaire's works discussed here, are not viewed here as historical but historicist sources and that this particular approach aimed to retort Christian historicism (the former seeks to criticize whatever is praised by the latter). Similar is the case of other authors, whose main goal was to show how different religions may be blamed for the world's evil (and evil only).

Historical religious studies

Historical religious studies have so many faces that presenting their comprehensive typology would not only be difficult, but also boring. They all share common characteristics, but there are countless such features and an attempt to determine the most important common denominator would spark endless discussions. At the turn of the 19th and the 20th century this difficulty was reflected in polemical debates between different schools of history, e.g. the Marxist School or Annales School (named after *Annales d'histoire économique et socjale* edited by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre). The two schools had the same answer to the question: who "scripts" the history of humanity? The representatives of both, in general agreed that

[14] See R. Pomeau, *Voltaire (1694–1778)*, in A. Adam, G. Lerminier, E. Morot-Sir (eds), *Literatura francuska*, praca zbiorowa, vol. I, Warszawa 1974, p. 613.

[15] "Voltaire plays with the eccentricities of Pentateuch, such as eating manure by Ezekiel (upon God's order), love affairs of Dinah at the age of six, or Sara, who at the age of 75 is desired by Fharaoh, or at the age of 90 by the king of Gerar." Ibidem, p. 614.

people do. There was no accord, however, as to who those people were and why they and not others should be considered the main "scriptwriters." The answers had a bearing on another dilemma: what do "the professors of history" do and how should they complete their tasks? It was confirmed by *The Historian's craft* by Marc Bloch[16] and by those Marxist historians, who criticized Bloch's work (e.g. for misunderstanding the role that the economic factor or production play in determining social relations) at the same time referring to the historic role of the working class and the mandate they received to speak in its name.

A historian, including a historian specializing in religion and religiosity, needs to tackle the problems briefly discussed above, which clearly show that this kind of study is far more complex than Popper suggests in his critical approach to historicism. One may agree with his belief that history is scripted and shaped by people on earth, who experience diverse troubles, and even with the view that the script and the way it is played out is rarely "Great and Powerful," but rather usual and prosaic, which makes us indifferent to it. It is however crucial not to be indifferent to what historians examine and describe. One of their tasks is to present past events in a way that could intrigue all those people, who are not passionate about history. Historians should not embellish these facts excessively. If a story needs colouring, it still must be credible, historically viable. One way, or another, the "professors of history" play an important role. Not only them,

[16] Bloch explains that "[h]ere, as elsewhere, it is change that the historian seeks to grasp. But in the film he is examining, only the last frame remains perfectly clear. In order to reconstruct the faded features of the others, it behoves him first to unwind the spool in the opposite direction." See M. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, New York 1953, p. 71. It seems that not only 'unwinding the spool' may pose a problem. It is also difficult to reconstruct the actual events, keep track, describe and explain them. After all in formulating their opinions the "professors of history" rely on the sources, which answer only "skilfully formulated questions." The "professors" must also remember that their task is completed once the gathered material is explained. That is also what distinguishes them from judges, who issue sentences. It does not follow that a historian cannot or should not judge. If we understand Bloch correctly, it is important to be aware of the difference between establishing and explaining facts, and evaluating them. So that judgements do not replace explanations. See J. Topolski, *Marksizm i historia*, Warszawa 1977, p. 236 et seq. To be clear, Topolski does not deem Bloch a Marxist. To be a Marxist, a historian must argue for and apply class theory. Bloch was an advocate of a progressive and rationalist evaluation system, with overtones of class theory, quite similar to the Marxist approach, e.g. in the field of agrarian history. Ibidem, p. 238.

but also all these representatives of social sciences and other humanities, who place historical events in the limelight.

These professors are expected not only to know the historical facts (and not confuse them with historic events), but also to make clear historical generalisations, from which everyone would be able to infer what was at the beginning, where and how it evolved, even if the participants of the events were not fully aware of their aims or expected completely different outcomes from the ones actually achieved. It is, however, completely normal and natural that whatever happened and is happening is perceived differently by the participants and external observers, such as "the professors of history," and that the meanings associated with these events by both groups are radically different. This, in a way, answers Popper's claim that history makes no sense. This concludes the general remarks.

Historical research relies on one's awareness of two issues: what a historian may and should do, as well as what this job involves in practice. I will now present examples from the history of Christianity, whereby the Christian conscience of the historians seems to coincide with such a perspective on human history, which understands it as a work created for the people by the people. The work *History of the Popes* by Leopold Ranke, a professor at the University of Berlin may serve well as an illustration. The foreword to the Polish edition reads that Ranke preached programmatic objectivism. He formulated a directive, which for a long time used to be compulsory for the historians in Germany and across Europe. According to this directive the role of history was to judge about the past, and teach the contemporaries for the benefit of the future generations. Ranke's work, did not pursuit such ambitious goals, as it was only aimed to tell the true story.[17] The author of the foreword reminds also that Ranke used the directive to respond to his adversaries, while the supporters of Hegel accused him of pedantic attention to details, the lack of a broader perspective or appropriate criteria, narrow-mindedness, etc. And yet, his work became prominent not only in Germany. It must be noted that the book was published in the middle of the 19th century, at a time, when the first anticlerical

[17] "History should be an empirical science and establish facts after a critical analysis of the sources. A historian should observe historic events and attempt to understand them while assuming a neutral, indifferent approach. He should disregard any other goals, such as utilitarian, educational or moral, but be guided only by the need of cognition" [translation mine]. See M.H. Serejski, Wstęp do wydania polskiego, in L. von Ranke, *Dzieje papiestwa w XVI–XIX wieku*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1974, p. 8 et seq.

voices only started to emerge in the Western Europe (the anticlerical wave reached its peak at the end of the century). The book was warmly received not only among anticlerical readers, but also in a few circles related to the Church (e.g. J. Dollinger a well-known catholic historian was impressed).

It would be difficult to disagree that the book is very meticulous, or that the author provides so many details that the reader might wonder: who and what does it help? But it cannot be said that it lacks guiding principle or references to general history. Indeed, they are mentioned already in the preface to the *History of the Popes.* A short report on the collection of sources (and a review of their historical validity) are followed by the remarks on nepotism among contemporary rulers, including the Church hierarchs and generalizing statements that a Catholic "would enter on the subject in a spirit very different from [his]. By indulging in expressions of personal veneration, or, perhaps, in the present state of opinion, of personal hatred, he would give to his work a peculiar, and no doubt, more brilliant colouring; […]. In these respects a Protestant, a North German [i.e. someone like Ranke – Z.D.] cannot be expected to compete with him. He regards the papal power with feelings of more indifference; and must, from the first, renounce that warmth of expression which arises from partiality or hostility; and which might, perhaps, produce a certain impression in Europe." Another generalisation, which appears later, refers not to the approach applied by the historian, but to the object of his interest, i.e. the papal power. According to Leopold van Ranke "as the history of the world has varied; as one nation or another has gained the ascendancy; as the fabric of social life has been disturbed; so also has the papal power been affected: its maxims, its objects, and its pretensions have undergone essential changes; and its influence, above all, has been subjected to the greatest variations."[18] The general aim of the book is to present these transformations against their historical backdrop. Both are approached as historic events and are very strongly related to historical facts, thus not allowing the reader to doubt that no extra-terrestrial powers were involved.

Ranke's depictions of Popes, among other things, contribute to this effect. It is not only that the Popes varied in their mental and moral capacity, but they also first analysed the worldly events made decisions, which could have and frequently did strengthen their position. For example, when discussing Pope Gregory I (his pontificate stretched from 590 to 604)

[18] See L. von Ranke, *History of the Popes: Their Church and State*, New York 1901, p. XII.

Ranke reports: "[i]t chanced that certain Anglo-Saxons, being exposed for sale in the slave-market of Rome, attracted the attention of Pope Gregory the Great; he at once resolved that Christianity should be preached to the nation whence these beautiful captives had been taken."[19] Alexander VI (1492–1503) may serve as another example. Even historians writing from the perspective of the Catholic Church do not depict him as great.[20] It would be also very difficult to find any traces of greatness in the way he was presented by Ranke, who perceived him as a person whose great object "through his whole life was to gratify his inclination for pleasure, his ambition and his love of ease. […] His only care was to seize on all means that might aid him to increase his power, and advance the wealth and dignity of his sons: on no other subject did he ever seriously bestow a thought."[21] The history of papacy presented by Ranke is not entirely bleak. There are popes, like Leo X (1513–1521), who was a great intellectual, a humanist and a patron of the arts and sciences. According to Ranke, Leo "was a passionate lover of music" and used to hum "the airs that were performed." He was also "full of kindness and ready sympathies."[22] In this

[19] "Never, perhaps, was the resolution adopted by any pope whence results more important ensued: together with the doctrines of Christianity a veneration for Rome and for the Holy See, such as had never before existed in any nation, found place among the Germanic Britons." Ibidem, p. 12.

[20] Rev. Marian Banaszak depicts him as a strong personality, who led a life of a grand master not trying to cloud it with hypocrisy. As a Pope, he viewed himself first and foremost as a monarch, but was much more tolerant for his people than his predecessors. He reorganized the finances of the Papal State and lowered taxes despite the debts made by Pope Innocent VIII. See Rev. M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1987, p. 315 et seq.

[21] See L. von Ranke, *History of the Popes: Their Church and State*, op.cit., p. 38. Ranke calls one of his sons, Caesar Borgia a "virtuoso in crime" and reminds that such popes as Alexander VI made Luther believe that the pope was "preparing the way for antichrist, and labouring for the interest of Satan, rather than the kingdom of God." Ibidem, p. 38.

[22] "'It is true that he [Leo X] did not always attend the pontifical proprieties.' He would sometimes leave Rome – to the despair of his master of ceremonies – not only without surplice, but […] what is worst of all, even with boots on his feet!" Ibidem, p. 52). A more reserved approach in the assessment of Leo X was demonstrated by Rev. Marian Banaszak, who in his book *Historia Kościoła katolickiego* under the entry devoted to Leo X notes: "unsuccessful council"; and explains that he was selected to be the head of the Holy See mostly due to his skilful actions in the realm of politics and science and not the Church. His interest in the council was not taken into account at all, as he demonstrated none. Ibidem, p. 322.

great historical panorama, which *History of the Popes* undoubtedly is, dark pages intertwine with the bright ones much more frequently.

Crusades are an important chapter in the history of Christianity. The way they are depicted and assessed may also function as an indicator pointing to the differences between historicist and historical approach. The latter is, in my opinion, represented by Steven Runciman – the author of *A History of the Crusades* (first published in 1951). In his introductory note, the author expresses the belief 'that the supreme duty of the historian is to write history, that is to say, to attempt to record in one sweeping sequence the greater events and movements that have swayed the destinies of man. The writer rash enough to make the attempt should not be criticized for his ambition, however much he may deserve censure for the inadequacy of his equipment or the inanity of his results."[23] These words are fully understandable, when we take into account the scale of the undertaking, related difficulties and the risk of offending religious feelings as the described events are viewed as an integral element of the act of salvation. It is true that the author is related to the Christian tradition, but it is the protestant one. The protestant tradition differs from the Catholic, not only with respect to the type of historical sensitivity, but also the tendency to forgive the mistakes of the previous generations.

It is clearly visible when we compare the presentation and evaluation of the crusades by the catholic and protestant historians. The author of *Historia Kościoła katolickiego* [History of the Catholic Church], already cited in this paper, admits that the dramatic events stretching over two centuries (12th and 13th) did not help to unify the East and the West, neither in the area of politics nor the church – on the contrary, the divide was even deeper. They did have a theological justification (relating to the theory of the two swords used by St. Peter to defend Christ, and the theory of two lights created by God: the sun and the moon), a missionary justification (the secular sword was introduced not only against the Muslims, but also against the pagans), a cultural justification (the Church-driven Western culture has developed so fast, that it could leave the Byzantine and Arab culture far behind), a historic-social justification (the Tomb of Christ was constantly endangered by the Muslims, while the crusader states were like a magnet for the Western knights) and other.[24]

[23] See S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 1, Cambridge 1951, p. xii.

[24] See Rev. M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego*, vol. 2, op.cit., p. 151 et seq.

Steven Runciman differently presents the circumstances, which led to and surrounded individual crusades. Already in the first chapter of his extensive work, he doubts that the Muslims posed any danger to the Tomb of Christ and Christian pilgrims heading in that direction. It is true that in the lifetime of the Prophet Mohamad the doctrine of the sword was "unashamedly" applied. The sword struck, however, first "at the provinces of the Roman Empire," and once the Prophet was dead, at the Persians, Jews and other infidels.[25] The title of the second Chapter of the book is intriguing: *The rein of Antichrist.* The chapter shows that Christians "accepted with good grace" the reign of the Arabs, as the Arabs "like the Persians before them, were prepared to accept religious minorities, provided that they were People of the Book."[26] Two general conclusions follow from this chapter: 1. "[g]ood Christians were happier under infidel rule"; 2. in the first centuries of Christianity, it was the eastern Christians who played the dominant role, not the western, thus "[t]he eastern Christians were more nearly interested in the renascence of Byzantine power."[27]

The III chapter of the book is devoted to 'The Pilgrims of Christ' and their pilgrimages, among other things, to the Tomb of Christ. The picture sketched in this chapter indicates that practically until the end of the 11th century, the Arabs never seriously hindered pilgrimages, and "[s]o long as the pilgrims were orderly they could count on hospitable treatment from the peasants of the Empire." Thus '[t]hroughout the eleventh century till

[25] "By the year 700 Roman Africa was in the hands of the Arabs. Eleven years later they occupied Spain. In the year 717 their empire stretched from the Pyrenees to central India and their warriors were hammering at the walls of Constantinople." See S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 1, p. 19.

[26] "The Christians, together with the Zoroastrians and the Jews, became *dhimmis*, or protected peoples, whose freedom of worship was guaranteed by the payment of the *jizya*, […]. Each sect was treated as a *milet*, a semi-autonomous community within the state, each under its religious leader who was responsible for its good behaviour to the Caliph's government. […] The Christians had therefore no cause to regret the triumph of Islam. Despite an occasional brief bout of persecution and despite a few humiliating regulations, they were better off than they had been under the Christian Emperors." Ibidem, p. 21 et seq.

[27] Runciman concludes the Chapter as follows: "[i]n the middle of the eleventh century the lot of the Christians in Palestine had seldom been so pleasant. The Moslem authorities were lenient; the Emperor was watchful of their interests. Trade was prospering and increasing with the Christian countries overseas. And never before had Jerusalem enjoyed so plentifully the sympathy and the wealth that were brought to it by pilgrims from the West." Ibidem, p. 37.

its last two decades, an unending stream of travellers poured eastward, sometimes travelling in parties numbering thousands, men and women of every age and every class, ready, in that leisurely age, to spend a year or more on the voyage.[28] The motives for pilgrimages were of course as diverse, as the pilgrims heading to the Tomb of Christ – from average mortals to kings. For example, "the half-Danish Swein Godwinsson set out with a body of Englishmen in 1051 to expiate a murder, but died of exposure in the Anatolian mountains next autumn."[29]

Chapter IV entitled: *Towards disaster*, has been introduced with an excerpt from the *Book of Job: In prosperity the destroyer shall come*. Although, one cannot say that this chapter identifies the *destroyer* with the pilgrims from the West, it is true that the forces destroying the peace and wellbeing of the eastern people include some travellers from the West, such as "large numbers of Norman adventurers from northern France, pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem," or Pope Leo IX, who in the summer of 1053 "set out southward with an army of Germans and Italians, proclaiming that this was a holy war." The conflict between the Western and the Eastern Empire and between the theologians of the Eastern and Western church (which deepened the divide) had an impact on the entire situation. It was not the Christians, who gained the most, but the Muslims, such as 'the first great Moslem Turk, Mahmud the Ghaznavid, who during the first decades of the eleventh century built up a great empire stretching from Ispahan to Bokhara and Lahore'. The "confusion in the East" was the reason why, although' [t]he pilgrim traffic had never entirely ceased, […] the journey was now very difficult' and dangerous.

Book two of this publication bears the title: *The preaching of the crusade* and includes, among other things, a detailed historical analysis of the "sword theory," or as it was put by Rev. Marian Banaszak, "the theory of two swords." Already in the first paragraphs, Runcimen, questions this theory claiming that Christianity is 'the religion of peace', about which 'the earlier Christian Fathers had no doubts', but the Eastern Church had a negative opinion in this matter. When, Eastern governors, such as Basil II, launched a quest "against the Bulgars to recover imperial provinces," the

[28] "But the success of the pilgrimage depended on two conditions: first, that life in Palestine should be orderly enough for the defenceless traveller to move and worship in safety; and secondly, that the way should be kept open and cheap." Ibidem, p. 47.

[29] "He had gone barefoot because of his sins. Lagman Gudrodsson, Norse king of Man, who had slain his brother, sought a similar pardon from God." Ibidem, p. 45.

Church believed that "[p]eaceful methods were always preferable, even if they involved tortuous diplomacy or the payment of money."[30] Also in the West, there were a few governors and theologians, who condemned wars and feared the sole thought of solving conflicts with a "sword" (such as Bruno of Querfurt, who "had been outraged by the wars waged by the emperors of his time against fellow-Christians"). But at the turn of the 10th and 11th century it was common and theologically justified to speak not only of the "holy peace," but also of the "holy war," "By the close of the eleventh century the idea of the holy war had thus been carried into practice' assuming the shape of the, so called, people's crusade. Although, it was initiated by a monk, Peter the Hermit, its promoter and protector was the Pope supported by the hierarchs from the Western Church.[31]

The approach of Steven Runcimen and Karl R. Popper converge at least in the case of crusade – the most dramatic chapter in the history of the Western Church. The fact that they both present, evaluate, and justify the crusades positively stems from the cult of power and constitutes in itself a glorification of power. It is not extraterrestial, but purely human, guided by earthly needs, ambitions and desires. Such conclusions may be made based on historical facts and history written by those professors, who distance themselves from the Roman-Catholic perspective.

[30] "To western historians, accustomed to admire martial valour, the actions of many Byzantine statesmen appear cowardly or sly; but the motive was usually a genuine desire to avoid bloodshed." Ibidem, p. 83.

[31] "Christian knights and soldiers were encouraged by the authorities of the Church to leave their petty quarrels and to journey to the frontiers of Christendom to fight against the infidel. To reward them for their service they might take possession of the lands that they reconquered, and they received spiritual benefits. […] The Papacy was taking over the direction of the holy wars. It often launched them and often named the commander. The land that was conquered had to be held under ultimate Papal suzerainty". Ibidem, p. 91.

Part II

Getting to grips with transformations and innovations

Chapter 6

Religious authorities of Christianity in the process of modernisation

No religion could and no religion can manage without figures of authority. That is obvious. As too is obvious that these authorities were understood, created and modernised in various ways, just as their impact on the social position of the different religions varied. However, this is generally the case with authorities and religious figures of authority. And it is worth taking a closer look at how the process of understanding and creating these authorities in Christian religion unfolded in certain periods, as it could lead do some profound reflection. Monitoring these processes in other religions as well, and carrying out a comparative analysis, would probably enable indication of both the similarities and differences occurring between them. However, Christianity was and remains the most important for western culture. Although it no longer holds such a dominant position today as it still did at the turn of the 20th century, it still towers over other religions not only in terms of the number of followers, but also in its figures of authority acknowledged by a significant portion of western societies.

Pre-reformation Christian authorities

From the moment Christianity emerged, people have discussed over who and what is, or at least can perform the role of, an authority in this religion, and in what manner they may and should fulfil it. To begin with, however, I shall refer not to these discussions, but to what is relatively the simplest (as that of the dictionary) understanding and presentation of an authority by Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, authors of *Theological Dictionary*.

They maintain that, for a start, authority is "the palpable, demonstrable trustworthiness or legal claim of a person or thing (a book), capable of convincing another person of some truth or of the validity of a command and obliging him to accept it, even though that truth or valid character is not immediately evident"; and secondly, that an authority in the Church proves its legitimacy by fulfilling the mission of Jesus, and this authority cannot be taken as the same as the authority of Jesus or invoke the authority of Jesus to reject objective criticism referring to how a Church authority belongs to a Church that listens and believes.[1] There is a fair amount of caution in these definitions, most probably to some degree resulting from the authors' understanding for the controversies that have surfaced in the past regarding Christian authorities, which instead of uniting Christians within a single Church and in one faith, divided them into numerous religious communities of the kind that frequently found it easier to enter dialogue with infidels than with one another.

Those Church Fathers who stood up not only to the figures of authority of other religions, but also to those for whom religion and religiousness did not constitute a priority, expressed themselves more explicitly on this matter. One of these was Augustine of Hippo (Saint Augustine), author of theological-philosophical treatises against—among others—the kind of Earthly authorities that the Greek philosophers were for many an educated person of his era. He waged his intellectual battle against these authorities throughout his life as a Christian, from the moment in the year 386 AD when, at the age of 33, he adopted Christianity, to his death in the year 430. This is expressed, inter alias, in his philosophical works, such as the dialogue *Against the Academicians* (in which he questions the intellectual authority of the sceptics from the so-called Middle Platonic Academy), *Soliloquies* (written in the form of a prayer to God for support in the kind of faith that would become an authority not only for the human conscience, but for human reason as well), *The Teacher* (the kind whose teachings everybody would listen to, and whose authority nobody of sound mind would question) and *Concerning the Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans* ("The highest good, that which there is no higher, is God"; Augustine places His authority higher than all other authorities).[2]

[1] K. Rahner, H. Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, New York 1965, p. 42.
[2] Saint Augustine, *St. Augustine collected works*, Hastings 2016.

Augustine's *opus magnum* of a kind is his *The City of God*, a work written—as the author states in the *Preface*—in defence of the "glorious city of God," and against all those who defend the earthly city, or more precisely the city "which, though it be mistress of the nations, is itself ruled by its lust of rule."[3] Such a city in those times was the Roman Empire. Hence everything that determined this empire's power was the object of his criticism in this voluminous work. One of the mainstays of this particular city was the Roman rulers' tolerant policy towards diverse religions and forms of religiosity present in the empire's provinces, including in Palestine—the cradle of both Judaism and Christianity. The defenders of such policy included Roman writers, a significant position among whom was held by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC), author of *On the Nature of the Gods* and a speech entitled *De haruspirum responso*. The former constitutes a great commendation of the pluralistic religion of the Romans, while the latter contains the assertion that the religiosity nurtured by the Romans outrivals the religiousness of all other peoples and nations.[4] It is quite understandable here that Cicero could hardly have been a positive protagonist of *The City of God.* And he is not. Although he is cited in this work by Augustine on many an occasion, this is mainly as a defender of bad faith, of a bad cause, and ultimately as a co-perpetrator of the bad that the Romans visited upon other peoples and nations, and which finally they experienced themselves as visited upon them by the latter. In *The City of God*, the only fully positive protagonist is God. For Augustine of Hippo this matter was indisputable. But for many of his contemporaries, it was up for discussion. Hence his enormous intellectual effort towards convincing disbelievers that without faith in a Christian God and without depending on Him, man could not achieve any of the crucial goals of his life.

Of course the sense of the statements appearing in the first paragraphs of this work—that "God is my helper," that He "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," and "show[s] pity to the humbled soul, and crush[es] the sons of pride"—may be interpreted and presented in various ways. One could also find various ways of interpreting and presenting the sense of the statement expressed in the closing fragments, that when there is no evil and no lack of good, when only God is praised, God who is everything in everything, then great will be the happiness. Yet however

[3] Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, North Charleston 2015, p. 7 et seq.

[4] For more on this issue, cf. M. Jaczynowska, *Religie świata rzymskiego*, Warszawa 1987.

we interpret it, it always turns out to be saying that for a truly believing Christian, there is no and can be no higher authority than divine authority. However, there can be authorities of a lower order—for example the authority of those who have come to know the true God, and who feel obliged to share their knowledge and their faith with those seeking Him yet who frequently go astray in their searching. And theologians such as Aurelius Augustinus are acknowledged to be authorities of this kind. Besides, there is no doubt that he also considered himself an authority. What is more, he put a great deal of effort into ensuring that his position as a Christian authority was not questioned.

His *Confessions* may be seen as an interesting work, inclining one towards more profound reflection, written at a time when Augustine had already acquired his position of theological authority in certain Christian circles, but while there were also those who did not recognise him and who questioned his interpretation of Christian faith. Without becoming embroiled in the theological complexities of the *Confessions*, I shall but recall that the work reads as an intellectual autobiography. Augustine himself is not the main protagonist (the position that God occupies), but as a person who, before finding the right path, went astray himself on more than one occasion, and may perhaps err again—though no longer in the matter of this faith, which can lead him to union with God.[5]

Another interesting contribution to the discussion over Augustine's creation of his theological authority could be his polemics with another influential theologian of his day, Pelagius, who among other things questioned his interpretation of original sin (according to which all people took part in it) and the grace of God (in which light it is only granted to a few).[6] Although the two synods convened for this matter in the year 416 ruled in favour of Augustine's interpretation, this did not halt the process of Pelagianism spreading or how this theology grew in influence in numerous, diverse Christian communities.[7]

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[5] For more regarding the narrative style of this work of Augustine, cf. Z. Drozdowicz, *Style narracyjne teologów chrześcijańskich*, "Przegląd Religioznawczy" 1/2012, p. 19 et seq.

[6] For more on the issue of the views of Pelagius, cf. R.B. Rees, *Pelagius: A Reluctant Heretic*, Wolfeboro 1988.

[7] "The Pelagian movement won over large groups of followers in the West, in Rome, in Sicily, in Northern Africa, Spain, Gaul and in Ireland, as well as in the East,

The missionaries who Christianised various European peoples in the Middle Ages also wrote a significant chapter in the history of creating Christian authorities. The Church sanctified some of them in recognition of their services, while those for whom they devoted their lives acknowledged them as their religious patrons. One such missionary was Winfrid, or Saint Boniface—the patron saint of Germany (also called the Apostle of Germany). He began his missionary activity in the British Isles, and later among the Germanic peoples inhabiting Europe's north-western reaches; he died the death of a martyr in 754, in Frisia). Boniface provided his superiors in Rome with written accounts of this activity, and many of his texts contain descriptions of the pagan beliefs and practices of these people, as well as of the missionaries and their assistants whose habits could have provoked consternation in many a Christian conscience. Mention is made of them by Stanisław Piekarczyk in his book on the Christianisation of the Germanic peoples. For example he recalls, inter alios, Saint Leoba, "companion and helper to Saint Boniface," who spoke of herself as "the enemy to all asceticism, while her 'abstinence' meant that she would drink wine from a smaller goblet."[8] Although this missionary condemned behaviour of this nature, he had nothing against such practices as persuading listeners about the impotency of pagan gods or the power of the Christian God by "destroying statues or trees of cult significance, or spilling drinks intended for ritual libation, etc."[9] Needless to say, the methods proposed and applied by Augustine himself for turning one to the Christian faith could hardly be used with these illiterate peoples.

The contribution by Saint Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Catholic Church, towards the creation of Christian authorities is also indisputable (as confirmed, among other things, by the fact that the interpretation of

in Palestine, Ephesus, and Constantinople." Cf. Fr. M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1986, p. 186 et seq.

[8] "The defence placed on the tongue of St Goar, of the right to eat and drink 'to the glory of God,' sounds no less symptomatic. He voiced such defence against his ascetically disposed opponents, achieving distinct success in the discussion. [...] He characterised in a similar matter the relations in England, where – as he wrote – the bishops not only get drunk, but even encourage others to do so." Cf. S. Piekarczyk, *Barbarzyńcy i chrześcijaństwo. Konfrontacje społecznych postaw i wzorców u German*, Warszawa 1968, p. 104 et seq.

[9] "The absence of any signs of anger or revenge whatsoever on the part of these gods was supposedly the best possible proof that the pagans worshipped inanimate objects made by human hands." Ibidem, p. 293.

faith that he proposed was acknowledged at the Council of Trent as binding for this Church). However, the amendments he proposed to the Augustine interpretation proved controversial for many Christian theologians. Those who acknowledged these changes as necessary and reflecting the Church's requirements claimed that as a result "the relationship between reason and revelation was perfectly resolved," while the "system of theological knowledge" proposed by Thomas Aquinas was harmonious and constituted the "peak of scholastic development." However, even they admitted that "the teachings of Thomas evoked discussion"; they were condemned by such as Étienne (Stephen) Tempier, a bishop of Paris, and William de la Mare, author of *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, "in which he discussed critically 117 of the theses in the works of Thomas."[10] Had these theological figures of authority been created solely via the canonising deeds of the Catholic Church, that would have probably given rise to quite a comfortable situation for this Church; but not for other Churches and Christian faiths, or for all those considering themselves believers, but not identifying with Christianity.

Modernisation during and following the Reformation

The approaching five hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses against the selling of indulgences in the Roman Catholic Church to the door of St Peter's Church in Wittenberg provides an opportunity for discussing this turning point in western Christianity. This bold act by an educated yet low-ranking member of the clergy was like the drop of water that caused the wave of bitterness to overflow among those Christians outraged by the relations within the Church, including at the highest levels of the Church's powers. Although Luther did not actually mention any pope by name in his theses, this did not improve his standing among the Church's hierarchs; on the contrary, his position deteriorated further as a result, because he was questioning in general the authority of each

[10] "This work is simultaneously a kind of manifesto of the New-Augustinian theological and Franciscan school. The leaders of the Dominican order in turn obliged their theologians (in 1266) to keep well away from the teachings of Aquinas on pain of excommunication. […] The canonisation of Thomas Aquinas (1323) removed all doubts regarding the orthodoxy of his views." Cf. Fr. M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1987, p. 216.

and every one of those clergymen, who—pointing to their apostolic succession—felt entitled to decide over who was to be redeemed, and—of course—to collect payment for this service.[11] Among other things, this meant challenging the authority (that had evolved with such difficulty) that the Church's Magisterium, its teaching authority, was for Christians. The authors of *Theological Dictionary* cited in my preface described as not receiving its power via an enactment of members of the Church, while these members' authority and 'infallibility' was only feasible within that eschatological community of faith.[12]

It soon turned out that Luther's continued presence within the Catholic community was not an option. After all, he first of all refused to report to Rome and explain his actions of 31 October 1517, following which—standing before the papal legate in Augsburg—he refused to retract his theses. Then during a theological debate in Leipzig (in 1519) he questioned the primacy of the bishop of Rome, and even the forbearance of Pope Leon X, highly receptive towards various types of novelty and innovator, had been stretched too far; on 3 January 1521 the Pope excommunicated Luther "for ever." This did not, quite naturally, stop the latter from criticising the Pope or his immediate and further removed colleagues, and neither did it halt the measures that initiated the establishing of the Lutheran Church, independent of Rome. In answering the question as to what could and should constitute the fundamental authorities in this Church, Luther ascertained that: 1. *Sola scriptura* (only the Scripture), 2. *Sola gratia* (only grace), 3. *Solus Christus* (only Christ), and 4. *Solus Verbum (*only the Word).[13] Perhaps it was out of modesty that he did not add his own authority as the theologian who presented in relatively the most accurate way a justification for these authorities. However, it was simply taken for granted by those who followed his teachings.

Things proceeded similarly with other inspirators behind the great opposition to Rome that the Reformation constituted, such as Ulrich Zwingli (author of the treatise *On Providence*) or Calvin (author of works including *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, in which the authority of God Himself is once again put in first place). What they had in common included their reference to the authority of Augustine, and their questioning

[11] Cf. M. Luter, *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*, in *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelpia 1915, pp. 29–38.

[12] K. Rahner, H. Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, op.cit., p. 268 et seq.

[13] Cf. R. Friedenthal, *Luther*, London 1970.

of the authority of Thomas Aquinas. However, they differed—among other things—in how they read and presented the Augustine interpretation of faith, and in their sequential additions that led to the emergence of significantly different Churches and faiths, as well as significantly different ways of Christian life. The latter was pointed out by such as Max Weber in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and in treatises in which the main subject of analysis was the modernisation and transformation (as broadly understood) of western culture, including society and social coexistence. It is worth recalling, at least briefly, Weber's general theses related to the issue of religious authorities of a new kind emerging.

Among others, the authorities of Luther and Calvin are analysed and appraised in *The Protestant Ethic*. Weber is less interested in the theological divergence between them, and more in the differences in their understanding and presenting of a "calling" (in German *Berufen* – "to appoint, to summon"). Although this word was not new, "at least one thing was unquestionably new: the valuation of the fulfilment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume. This it was which inevitably gave every-day worldly activity a religious significance, and which first created the conception of a calling in this sense."[14] From Luther's point of view, the monastic way of life was not only devoid of value, but was "the product of selfishness, withdrawing from temporal obligations." According to Weber, this theologian "read the Bible through the spectacles of his whole attitude; at the time and in the course of his development from about 1518 to 1530 this not only remained traditionalistic but became ever more so." That traditionalism was treating a calling as meaning that the individual should "remain in the station and in the worldly occupation in which the call of the Lord had found him, and labour as before."[15]

[14] "The conception of the calling thus brings out that central dogma of all Protestant denominations which the Catholic division of ethical precepts into *praecepta* and *consilia* [commandments and counsels] discards. The only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfilment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by this position in the world. That was his calling." M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London 2001, p. 39 et seq.

[15] "And in its further development, orthodox Lutheranism emphasized this aspect still more. Thus, for the time being, the only ethical result was negative; worldly duties were no longer subordinated to ascetic ones; obedience to authority and the acceptance of things as they were, were preached." Ibidem, p. 45.

This was presented differently by Calvin, Calvinism ("in the form which it assumed in the main area of its influence in Western Europe"), the Pietists, Methodists and "sects growing out of the Baptist movement" (such as Zwinglianism or Arminianism). According to Calvin, "God does not exist for men, but men for the sake of God," while "to apply earthly standards of justice to his sovereign decrees is meaningless and an insult to His Majesty, since He and He alone is free, i.e. is subject to no law."[16] This lofty vision of God and extremely pessimistic vision of man admittedly inspired Puritan thinking (as confirmed, among other things, in the "strikingly frequent repetition, especially in the English Puritan literature, of warnings against any trust in the aid of friendship of men"), but was hard for ordinary Calvinists to bear. "For them the *certitudo salutis* in the sense of the recognizability of the state of grace necessarily became of absolutely dominant importance. [...] So, wherever the doctrine of predestination was held, the question could not be suppressed whether there were any infallible criteria by which membership in the *electi* [the chosen ones] could be known." The understanding of occupation as a calling was imparted here. However, it was connected not with the attitude of "humble sinners to whom Luther promises grace," but "self-confident saints whom we can rediscover in the hard Puritan merchants of the heroic age of capitalism."[17] This without a doubt constitutes modernisation and adaptation to specific social needs of Calvin's theory of grace, which in turn undoubtedly constituted a modernisation of the Augustine theory of grace.

This modernisation and adaptation is visible among other things in the changes to the list of those Christian authorities who were acknowledged by the proponents of "ascetic Protestantism." For obvious reasons, neither the Pope nor any other Catholic hierarch is or can be among them. Admittedly, it does have room for such traditional Christian authorities as Augustine, but one has to be clear here: his place is not among the most

[16] "In its extreme inhumanity this doctrine must above all have had one consequence for the life of a generation which surrendered to its magnificent consistency. That was a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual. In what was for the man of the age of the Reformation the most important thing in life, his eternal salvation, he was forced to follow his path alone to meet a destiny which had been decreed for him from eternity." Ibidem, p. 60.

[17] "[...] in order to attain that self-confidence, intense worldly activity is recommended as the most suitable means. It and it alone disperses religious doubt and gives the certainty of grace." Ibidem, p. 67.

important. And that is because such places are held either by those who inspired the Reformation, such as Luther or Calvin, or by other "epigones" (a term used by Weber) of theirs, such as Menno Simons (founder of the Mennonite community), George Fox (founder of the Religious Society of Friends, known as Quakers), the Presbyterian theologian Richard Baxter or the Quakers' preacher, Robert Barclay.[18] Although attempts were made to challenge the legitimacy of the way in which these new authorities linked the supernatural to the worldly, or such an understanding of Christian authorities that ordinary Protestant preachers could aspire for such a role, the process of these changes could no longer be either reversed or halted—even though its opponents sometimes found unexpected and unwitting allies in certain philosophers of the Enlightenment.[19]

Contemporary Christian figures of authority

If one were to believe such experts on western culture as Alasdaire MacIntyre, then today is on the whole the same as what was relatively recently, during the Enlightenment—just a little different. Such is the suggestion given by his portrayal of modern-day and contemporary culture in *After Virtue*; in his opinion, those virtues first properly understood and presented in Aristotle's theory, and expressed most perfectly in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, had already practically been cast away.[20] This culture does of course cultivate its own virtues (such as a critical approach to everybody and everything), and its own authorities (such as the authority of an aesthete, therapist and manager, or in other words an expert). A closer look at their creation, and at how they function, reveals how radically different

[18] Weber writes that Barclay's C*hristian Directory* "is the most complete compendium of Puritan ethics and is continually adjusted to the practical experiences of his own ministerial activity." Ibidem, p. 103.

[19] An example of such an ally could be Voltaire, who in *Letters concerning the English nation* derided, inter alios, the Quakers, although the last thing he could be suspected of would be a desire to defend the Catholic Church or some other Christian Church or faith. Cf. Voltaire, *Letters concerning the English nation*, London 1733, p. 2 et seq.

[20] "Aquinas in his treatise on the virtues treats of them in terms of what had become the conventional scheme of the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, courage) and the triad of theological virtues." Cf. A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame 2007, p. 177 et seq.

they are from traditional Christian authorities. For defenders of the latter such as MacIntyre, "both aesthete and therapist are doubtless as liable as anyone else to trade in such fictions [...] With the manager, the dominant figure of the contemporary scene, it is quite otherwise. For besides rights and utility, among the central moral fictions of the age we have to place the peculiarly managerial fiction embodied in the claim to possess systematic effectiveness in controlling certain aspects of social reality."[21]

I evoke this image of the state of contemporary western culture sketched out by MacIntyre not because I share his extremely pessimistic assessment of its condition, or his nostalgia for the times when the great theologians of Christianity demarcated within it the standards of correctitude in thinking and conscience, but because he quite accurately identified some of those changes that largely caused these theologians to lose their position of widely acknowledged authorities and the ability to create such authorities. People who benefited, on the other hand, were those who either did not exist in the past at all, or who—if they wanted to make a broader mark in society—had to adapt the way they thought, spoke and functioned to match the said theologians. Such is the case, for example, with those managers. Counterparts of a kind may be found in the Middle Ages—for example among those in the milieu of those secular and clerical rulers who frequently managed enormous estates, yet had neither the time nor the will, and indeed neither the appropriate skills, for this managing to be not only "to the glory of God," but also to the glory of those whom God had raised to their earthly dignity. However, those under their rule had to be persuaded that these rulers really were the right people in the right place, and that they held their positions as a result of divine judgment. But then, that was what the sizeable group of diverse apologists for their rule was for.

Needless to say, such are heard today as well. And what is more, they make use of the same means of social influence as those for whom any or almost any ruler can be the object of criticism. Such broadly used means of social influence today include the media, and in particular television. Their social function and usage is extolled above all by those reaping relatively the greatest benefits as a result, meaning the journalists and

[21] "For the whole concept of effectiveness is [...] inseparable from a mode of human existence in which the contrivance of means is in central part the manipulation of human beings into compliant patterns of behaviour; and it is by appeal to his own effectiveness in this respect that the manage claims authority within the manipulative mode." Ibidem, p. 74 et seq.

so-called experts of diverse ilk whom they invite to speak out in public. Significantly more critical in their appraisal are, on the other hand, those sociologists who recognise that "television poses a serious danger for all the various areas of cultural production—for art, for literature, for science, for philosophy, and for law."[22] Their opinions also constitute an important voice in the discussion regarding the creating and functioning in society of religious authorities, including the authorities of contemporary Churches and Christian faiths.

This of course is manifested in different ways in practice in different countries, because they have different religious traditions and the so-called consumer's market—including that of the consumer of television broadcasts of religious content—varies. In the United States (although of course not only there) the demand is strong for so-called televangelists. One has but to enter such a term in an online browser to find out which of them have relatively the largest audience, the most money, and sometimes also significant political influence. In commentary on the topic, one can read among other things that "Priests have been known to be controversial. For centuries. The more pronounced the views of a particular preacher, the greater the ferment. Luther, Skarga, Popiełuszko. But many clergy today arouse emotions of a kind typical of politicians or the most controversial celebrities. The examples that come to mind from the backyard of the Polish Catholic Church are nothing compared to what is happening across the Ocean. Controversies provoked there by the clergy are an everyday occurrence. [...] Recently there has been a great deal of coverage particularly regarding pastor Kevin Swanson, a radio preacher who shone with his claim that hurricane Sandy was the United States' punishment for the growing support in society for abortion and tolerance towards homosexuality. In his programme, Swanson insisted that the hurricane hit with such force because the Americans had really annoyed God with their sins [...]. And

[22] "[...] television poses no less of a threat to political life and to democracy itself. […] I could prove this claim easily. I could analyse how, precisely because its goal is the largest audience possible, television […] has treated individuals who make jingoistic or racist statements, and/or act accordingly. Then again, I could simply run through all the compromises television makes every day with a narrow and narrowly national, not to say chauvinistic, vision of politics." Cf. P. Bourdieu, *On Television*, New York 1996, p. 10 et seq. Characteristically, this highly valued French sociologist is not particularly concerned by the fact that religious content is being "washed out" of what the most popular television channels are broadcasting.

in moments, he transformed from a preacher on a niche radio station to a person people were talking about all over the world. Several thousand read about pastor Swanson's deductions in *naTemat*. He evoked a similarly high level of interest in Germany, France, Great Britain, and even in the Pakistani media. But above all in the USA. Whether this is good or bad—what's important is that they're talking about it. [...] Kevin Swanson has a radio programme, while one of the most impassioned critics of Islam, Rod Parsley, is a popular spiritual guide on American cable TV, and John Charles Hagee, who has enraged American Catholics, Jews and Muslims simultaneously on more than one occasion, even has his own network: Global Evangelism Television."[23] Of course these comments are not an entirely credible source of information regarding how televangelists function, but they do nevertheless show to some degree what their authority is grounded on, and how they are perceived by those who display (whether more or less consciously) a certain attachment to traditional figures of authority.

Another interesting contribution to the discussion regarding how religious authorities function today could be the book by the American philosopher and theologian (and professor at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington) Michael Novak, *Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Institutions*, and in particular its fragments regarding the teachings of John Paul II and how he was perceived in the United States. In the Polish media, the Polish Pope was and is—as a rule—presented positively, even by those not identifying with the Catholic Church. This was not and is not the case in the United States. The author of the above monograph writes that he "was praised by the Wall Street Journal in particular for calling for 'reform of the international system of trade [...] and revision of the existing structures of international organisations.'" However, this Pope "drew our attention to the decadence prevalent in American movies, on video tapes, in music, in the television shows, magazines, newspapers, novels and books that our culture sends around the world as its emissaries."[24] According to Novak, who himself identifies with Catholicism, "John Paul II reaches the heart of the most glaring weakness of our system." But this opinion was and is not shared either by American intellectuals citing the liberal traditions of western culture, or liberal politicians and journalists speaking out in the

[23] Cited from: natemat.pl/37981,telewizyjni-kaznodzieje-opylaja-zbawienie-za-dolca-czyli-skad-sie-biora-amerykanskie-skandale-religijne [2.04.2017].

[24] Cf. M. Novak, *Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Institutions*, New York 2017, p. 219 et seq.

popular media. Moreover, the *Sollicitudo rei socialis* encyclical (meaning "The social concern"), treated as a kind of *credo* of the social thinking of John Paul II, is also criticised by those Catholics who believe that the concern expressed within it for the issues of this world is contributing to a weakening in the concern for redemption in that other, higher world.[25] The fact that the Pope's position expressed in the above document is discussed so broadly and criticised from various angles strongly suggests that in the United States its author is considered neither the highest figure of authority, nor—and even more so—the sole moral authority.

A few questions and suggestions

Such a presentation of religious authorities, in which questions regarding these authorities' fundamental goals are not posed, contains gaps that one could compare to a lack of reason in *homo sapiens*. But for the latter it was and is not only important to ask these questions, but also to seek and to find such answers for them that, even if they do not possess the power to resolve, they do at least inspire serious discussion. Such is my conviction, and it is with this conviction that I pose a few such questions at the end.

The first of them concerns the purpose of the activities of the highest religious authorities. Of course there may be many answers to this question, and some at least were and are justified. Much here depends obviously on whether the answers are given from a religious or non-religious point of view. Here as well, though, various answers are possible in each case. For deeply believing Christians (among whom, after all, one can class not only the saints of the Catholic Church, but also many of those who seriously questions their saintliness), the highest authority is God. Many of them have maintained that it is not God who is for man, but man who is for God. This does not facilitate finding answers to the question posed above. The simplest of them could be boiled down to the assertion that essentially God does not need man for anything. Because were it otherwise, that would go to prove divine imperfection, or—which essentially means the same—the existence of certain shortcomings in God. And what kind of perfect being would that be, one with shortcomings? Such shortcomings may and even have to exist in the world created by God, and a rational justification of

[25] M. Novak admits that none of the hitherto encyclicals had aroused as much controversy as *Sollicitudo rei socialis*. Cf. ibidem, p. 223 et seq.

some kind can be found for their existence. But that is a totally different issue, or in any case one not concerning God directly. One could also indicate the kind of impossibility of giving answers to the question posed above as indicated by such great theologians of the Middle Ages as Augustine, and afterwards their continuators of the Reformation, that is to say that the Christian God is, by his very essence, a "hidden God" (*Deus absconditus*), to such a degree that even with the utmost intellectual effort man is incapable of giving conclusive answers to questions regarding His activities. However, only some found such a solution satisfactory. Among those who did not were theologians of the measure of Thomas Aquinas. He indicated such clues (also called evidence of the existence of God) that were supposed not only to lead to belief in the true God, but also to constitute a satisfactory answer to questions regarding his essence. Is there, among them, an answer to the question about the goal of his activity as an authority? That is a matter up for discussion.

Perhaps, though, one should seek the answer not so much in what the great theologians of western Christianity proclaimed, as in what the authors of texts acknowledged as sacred had to say and believed; and—as a reminder—they proclaimed that although they penned these writings with their own hand, the hand was guided by God himself. The problem is that many such texts were produced in the first period of Christianity, and only a few were acknowledged as sacred. One could, of course, ask who guided the minds and hands of those who made this selection. And undoubtedly many of them believed themselves the successor to God's will and knowledge. What is more, they managed gradually to convince ever broader circles of believers that this was so. But now this is no longer the problem of divine, but human authority—a problem that, at first glance at least, seems easier to resolve. After all, if one were to follow the beliefs and indications of these authorities, then they were also granted their mandate and tasks to fulfil by God, or to be more precise, by the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Because it is on the doctrine of the Incarnation that the visible Church is constructed in terms of belief and conviction, including the vision of such apostolic succession whose beginnings hark back directly to the disciples of Jesus, but were later passed on to ever lower rungs in the Church hierarchy—all the way down to those clergy whose main task was to perfect their own soul such that it could be relatively the closest to God. It goes without saying that even these could fulfil the role of a religious authority, and indeed they did—for example of the kind fulfilling defined

models of Christian life. An example could be Szymon Słupnik, a saint of the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches, who survived for almost 40 years on a stone pillar, praying and preaching, and conversing with the people gathering around his place of ascetic religious practices.

Figures of authority of this type have admittedly not appeared on a mass scale, but they were not just isolated cases—as testified to by the emergence of diverse hermitical and cave-dwelling movements, or strictly contemplative monastic orders. The answer to the question about what constitutes these authorities' purpose is relatively simple. However, it becomes more complicated when taking into account the fact that it was not only perfection of the soul of those relatively rare ascetics, but also the creation of models of Christian life for those numerous people who neither found within themselves a readiness for ascetic practices, not intended to seek such readiness. And it becomes more complicated still when bearing in mind the practices of those about whom, though they hold the status of clergy and aspiring for the role of crowd-swaying missionaries, the only thing certain in their activity is that they manage to draw large audiences before the television screen, and have a healthy balance on their bank accounts. One could of course reply with remarks of the kind that "all times have their own religious authorities," or—more specifically—"every society has its requirement for authority figures, and they change together with the change in this requirement" or—more generally—"each has authorities of the kind they deserve," while some "have the kind they didn't actually deserve, but received them as a kind of gift from others" (less here of whether more or less deserved)." But thinking and talking thus blurs the differences and boundaries between what was acknowledged as *the sacred*, and what as *the profane*. Perhaps, though, the problem is that these differences and boundaries have essentially always been fluid, while today we are only better aware of this than was the case in the past.

Chapter 7

Modern-era innovations in perceiving and presenting religion

A few preliminary remarks

One could probably find areas in every religion and religiosity in which innovations are admissible, expected, and sometimes even demanded. As a rule, however, these areas are limited and frequently constitute a kind of fig leaf for treating the changes emerging in them as something *profane* or at least a threat to what is *sacred.* This is to some extent explainable, as in many of them the focus is above all on permanence, on what can be treated as a foundation of religious belief and religious practices. Such is the case, among others, in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the first of these, the Pentateuch, known as the Torah, is treated like a book containing ultimate truths (disclosed to Moses on Mount Sinai), while the law derived from it is treated as providing timeless recommendations for the religious practices of followers of Judaism.[1] In Christianity one speaks of the revelation of the Word of god in the Bible, while the question regarding the essence of the Revelation is treated as a question regarding the highest and most radical case of cognition, which suggests that the real, grassroots becoming of what is higher thanks to the self-transcendence of what is lower, *and* the constant "top-down" creation are only two equally true and real sides of the single miracle of becoming and of history.[2] The

[1] "One of the foundations of Judaism is the conviction that the *Torah* was given by God. This means that the source of the values expressed by the *Torah* is God. They were not established by man, but by God, which means that man can neither recant nor amend them." P. Jędrzejewski, *Judaizm bez tajemnic*, Kraków 2012, p. 28.

[2] K. Rahner, H. Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, New York 1965, p. 409 et seq. For a broader treatment of this matter, cf. Z. Drozdowicz, *Opozycje katolickie wobec transformacji sacrum*, "Przegląd Religioznawczy" 3/2012, p. 107 et seq.

transition within the *sacred*, from that which is lower to that which is higher, is also acknowledged in Islam, but at the moment of the birth of Muhammad (circa 570 AD) there is no prophet above him; this belief is expressed by the *Shahada*, that is, the assertion that "There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God."[3]

In every case, holy books were the foundation of the religions and their related forms of religiosity. And in each case their reading and interpreting led at a different place and time to the appearance within these religions of significantly different beliefs and religious practices. This naturally generated resistance both towards specific innovators and in general towards attempts at undertaking innovative solutions—in particular such attempts made by those whom the faithful did not acknowledge as their masters or teachers. Yet this resistance was unable to hold back innovations proposed by diverse innovators, either within specific Churches and denominations, or situated outside of them. Sometimes this led only to the emergence of schismatic groups, some small and others larger, colloquially known as sects. But certain innovators also became the initiators behind the establishing of new, significant Churches and denominations, such as Lutheranism and Calvinism.

However, in these deliberations I would prefer not to dwell either on the inter-religious resistance to innovators appearing, or those of them who were the initiators behind the establishing of new Churches, denominations or schismatic communities. Though I mention them in this introduction, it is mainly in order to emphasise the specific character of the modern-era innovations presented here, in the way in which religion and religiosity is perceived and presented. What they share is that they attempt to examine the religions from a non-religious point of view, or at least one not embroiled so deeply in religious beliefs that it would be hard to say what testifies to knowledge, and what solely or above all to faith. These attempts were frequently accompanied by a conviction that they had much in common with science, or even that they constituted a kind of science, such as secular religious studies. In many a case one can have significant reservations regarding their scientificity, and this is particularly the case regarding those attempts made during the Enlightenment.

I shall begin with precisely these attempts in my deliberations—not because it was only in that era that innovative experts on religion emerged,

[3] Declaring the *shahada* three times in public is the condition or becoming a Muslim. Cf. J. Danecki, *Podstawowe wiadomości o islamie*, Warszawa 2007, p. 125 et seq.

but above all because enlightenment innovations in the perceiving and presenting of religion and religiosity actually did contribute to the later emergence of religious studies as a scientific discipline. The examples of such innovations cited here are not, of course, any proof that innovativeness in the modern-day perceiving and presenting of religion and religiosity has gradually brought us closer to a scientific understanding of this important and enormously diverse area of human life and coexistence. The general goal of these deliberations is not so much to formulate such proof, as to encourage believers to shed their fear of any such innovation that does not derive from their religious leaders, and non-believers to shed their belief that every such innovation is scientific in character.

Innovations of the Enlightenment

Before I give examples of these innovations, I would like to express two general remarks: the first concerning the character of innovativeness itself, and the second—the character of that era. And so, firstly, the innovativeness presented here in the understanding and presenting of religion and religiosity—just like the innovativeness occurring in other areas of culture—is relative in character. This means not only that one can find equivalents of a kind in earlier eras, but also that it is conditioned by the place and time of its occurrence, and—naturally—that it changes together with this place and time. Secondly, the era of the Enlightenment was enormously varied and varying in character. This, among other things, means that that which could be acknowledged and was acknowledged as a manifestation of enlightenment in France could not necessarily be acknowledged as its manifestation (and frequently was not) in England, in Scotland, or in the German states. Because of this diversity, many an enlightened Frenchman spoke out against many an enlightened Englishman, while the latter in turn spoke out against many an enlightened German. This of course constitutes a certain hindrance to answering the question as to what can and what cannot be recognised as a manifestation of enlightenment, including enlightenment in the perceiving and presenting of religion and religiosity. I have attempted to deal with this difficulty on another occasion.[4] Here, on the other hand, I would like to move on right away to presenting those

[4] Z. Drozdowicz, *Filozofia Oświecenia*, Warszawa 2006.

innovators whom I am inclined to acknowledge as representatives of the enlightened French, English and Germans.

Doubtless the greatest radicals in breaking with the traditional (meaning Christian) perception of religion and religiosity are to be found among the French. And as their precursor one can recognise Jean Meslier, author of the voluminous (written on over 1000 pages) *Testament*.[5] He was inspiration for speaking out in public among those enlightened French who acknowledged traditional religions, including Christianity, as one huge cultural deception.[6] Many innovative discoveries of the kind that are meant to justify this conviction are to be found on its pages. In the first sentence Meslier writes that "there is no particular sect that doesn't claim to have been truly founded on God's authority and to be entirely exempt from all errors and impostures that can be found in the others, it is up to those who claim to establish the truth of their sect to show through clear and convincing proofs and testimonies that they were divinely instituted. Lacking this, it must be taken as certain that they were of merely human invention, full of errors and falsehoods." One could conclude this with the assertion that until such proof is presented by the followers of one of the religious communities (which Meslier generally calls "sects"), then there will be nothing to discuss. One could do so, but then we would not find out about many of other innovative discoveries by the enlightened priest—such as the one that the miracles referred to by Christ-lovers "can just as well be imagined to have occurred in favour of vice and falsehood as of justice and truth," that "many […] celebrated historians on the subject of Moses and his nation […] are looked upon as a horde of thieves and bandits," that "Jesus Christ was nothing but a man like the others," that the Old Testament is "a mix of a number of laws and ordinances or superstitious practices touching on sacrifices," while Aesop's fables "are certainly more

[5] The work's title was given by the publisher, as the author himself intended to call it: *Memoir of the Thoughts and Sentiments of Jean Meslier, Parish Priest of Étrepigny and Balaivesi*. "The manuscript was found after Meslier's death in the papers he left behind. A few copies were drawn up, which circulated throughout France in the 18th century, influencing circles enemy to the regime." Cf. *Od redakcji*, in J. Meslier, *Testament*, Warszawa 1955, p. IX et seq.

[6] Perhaps this group was not actually that numerous, but they were certainly not just social outcasts since, in November 1793, they managed to bring about the adoption by the National Convention of a resolution for "raising a monument to Jean Meslier, the first priest with the courage and conviction to renounce religious errors." J. Meslier, *Testament*, op.cit., p. 15.

ingenious and instructive than all those crude and low parables that are told in the Gospels." There are so many such revelations in his *Testament*, that it would be hard to count them, or even to point out those that could aspire for the greatest or most original of Meslier's discoveries. Hence I shall only remark that in the summary to his particular testimony of disbelief in the value of everything that Christianity has to offer, the author declares himself a lover of justice and the truth, and appeals to all those wailing in the servitude of injustice and falsehood to "stigmatise, condemn and fight all disgusting errors, abuses and the despotism of which he spoke until they are totally disheartened and annihilated."

A certain portion of the enlightened responded to this appeal—and not only among the French, although they were relatively the most numerous in France. One of these was Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet; the pseudonym he adopted derives from the French verb *revolter*, meaning "to revolt"). With his numerous opinions, which—one cannot deny—provoked strong opposition from persons attached to traditional understandings of greatness and value, he earned his reputation as one of the most significant innovators of his times. However, one has to state clearly that he was not a born innovator. In his youth, he was rather a propagator and populariser of innovations deriving from others, and in particular from those who considered their mission in life to be to dispose of Christianity. This is confirmed by, among other things, his pronouncements from the period when, as a fledgling philosopher, he turned up at the home of Guillaume A. de Chaulieu in Temple. He is credited with having then described the Old Testament as an "accumulation of stories and fairy tales," the apostles as "naïve, credulous idiots," and the Fathers of the Church as "charlatans and cheats."[7] Assertions of this nature are also to be found in Meslier's *Testament*, a work that Voltaire not only knew, but also popularised among France's libertines (including through bringing about the publication of its excerpts).

Slightly more originality is to be found in his *Letters on England.* Perhaps this is because they were written on the basis of participative observation, if one may thus call his four-year sojourn in exile in England. Except that this was the type of observation in which not only what the observer is capable of noticing and describing matters, but so too are the assumptions with

[7] J.S. Spink, *French Free-Thought from Gassendi to Voltaire*, London 2013, p. 289 et seq.

which he commences his observation. One of these was the assumption that every religious community constitutes a sect of some kind. Hence his conclusion that "England is a country of sects," differing to such an extent from other countries (such as France, which comes across poorly in these comparisons), that an "Englishman, as one to whom liberty is natural, may go to heaven his own way." Yet in England he no longer had this freedom, as the path to a public career in the country was open only to those of its population who belonged to the "sect […] called the Church of England."[8] Another of these assumptions was expressed in the conviction that the Old Testament is a description of bizarre Jewish practices and beliefs, that the New Testament is a pile of rubbish, while those who base their religious practices on one and the other may not be "gullible idiots," but are certainly so strange that in their behaviour they may only evoke the amazement or amusement of incidental observers—such as in the case of the Quaker who "partly from his nose and partly from his mouth" delivered his sermon, "after making a variety of wry faces."[9] I do not believe that these descriptions of religion and religiosity differed much from those that Voltaire could find in Meslier's *Testament*. The case is much the same with those that appeared on the pages of his *Treatise on Tolerance*.[10]

Despite Voltaire sketching an essentially comic picture of the beliefs held by the inhabitants of the British isles in his *Letters on England*, there were those there who treated his innovations sufficiently seriously that they were prepared not only to accept them, but also to disseminate them in their own writings. Gertrude Himmelfarb classes such philosophers as Richard Price, Joseph Priestly, Thomas Paine and William Godwin among such advocates. She calls them "radical dissidents," and recognises them as

[8] "No person can possess an employment either in England or Ireland unless he be ranked among the faithful, that is, profess himself a member of the Church of England. This reason […] has converted such numbers of Dissenters of all persuasions…." Voltaire, *Letters concerning the English nation*, London 1733, p. 35.

[9] Ibidem, p. 5 et seq.

[10] However, the most interesting of them appear not in the main section of this treatise, but in its supplements, such as *An Address to the Public concerning the Parricides imputed to the Calas and Sirven Families.* Assertations to be found here include such as the following: "Humankind always was given to the spoil of errors, but not all errors were fatal"; "Poor legislation increases the number of crimes"; and "Only tolerance can make life in society bearable." Although there is no doubt that they contain a fair degree of common sense, there is little innovation that could be described as clearly going beyond what the philosophers of antiquity had already discovered.

having belonged more to the history of the French and American Enlightenment than to the British.11 However, even these relatively few Voltaireans did not share all the views of their master.[12] Although one should add that deists, even more radical, also appeared in the British Isles, their impact on British culture was rather slight.[13]

One of the few exceptions here was the Scottish philosopher David Hume (a contemporary of Voltaire, the former dying in 1776, the latter in 1778). However, he owed his significant position in the Enlightenment not so much to his philosophical treatises (such as *A Treatise of Human Nature*), as to his six-volume *The History of England*. The latter work was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church (placing in on the list of forbidden books in the year 1761).[14] It was innovative in its own way (for example presenting the battle between the main political antagonists in England during the reign of James I and Charles I—the Wigs and the Tories—as a battle of par-

[11] She writes that Paine spent most of his life in America and France, and was a member not of the British Parliament but of the French Convent, while Price and Godwin spent their entire lives in England as ardent proponents of the French Revolution. G. Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity. The British, French, and American Enlightenments*, New York 2004, p. 93 et seq.

[12] The author cited here writes that Paine was a follower of Deism in its best-known and most extreme form, but that he demanded justifications in both religious and political matters. Price was initially an adherent of Unitarianism, later Arianism; he tied his transition to Arianism with Lockeanism, which he considered the political equivalent of Arianism. Priestley was an advocate of Adam Smith's economic theories, and accentuated the role of the "invisible hand of the market" even more so than these theories' author, while also speaking out against the state's interference in the economy and the living standards of specific social groups, including the poor, whom state aid could "only encourage to be idle." Ibidem.

[13] Georges Macaulay Trevelyan counts Deists from the early 18th century among them, such as John Toland, Matthew Tindal or Anthony Collins, and they were even recognised by Voltaire as his teachers; they "were allowed to print their cautiously expressed views without being prosecuted; while they were answered not only by the satire of Swift but by the arguments of men who outmatched them in intellect – Bishop Butler, Bishop Berkeley, Bentley and William Law. Voltaire, the bolder and more formidable disciple of these English Deists, found no such antagonists in France, but had more to fear from active persecution by Church and State." G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*, London 1945, p. 364 et seq.

[14] Stanisław Jedynak writes that "Hume achieved publicity as a result of the atmosphere of scandal surrounding his *History of England…* People were snatching the book from one another, and the entire print-run soon sold out; a French edition was also published." S. Jedynak, *Hume*, Warszawa 1974.

ticular interests; they did not hesitate from applying the cruellest of means in it) and sacrilegious, in regard not only to Christian beliefs (for example belief in the love of one's fellow man), but also secular rulers such as the King of England, Henry VIII, who according to *The History of England* was guided by the Machiavellian principle that the end justifies the means, and James I, who is presented in it as a spendthrift ruler, lazy and apodictic.[15] Hume also wrote two treatises on the philosophy of religion: *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and *The Natural History of Religion*. Within these one can find such innovative discoveries as the one that polytheism ("in other words idolatry") is a more natural religion than monotheism (which, in the light of his discourse on the history of natural religion is an even greater idolatry). These conform to the then popular mode of thinking that came to be called "naturalism," while their accompanying justifications and explanations constitute a component of the Enlightenment campaign conducted against Christianity and other traditional religions.

The German states also experienced such "radical dissidents" as in England (one of them was the author of *Moses mit aufgedeckten Angesicht* [Moses with unveiled face], Johann Christian Edelmann).[16] However, not only were there few, but also they were not very representative of the approach held by enlightened Germans towards religion and religiosity. There were also few enlightened Germans defined in literature as "philologists." On the other hand they are more interesting from the point of view of the aspirations of the Enlightenment to transform the knowledge of religion and forms of religiosity into a scientific discipline. One of these was a teacher of oriental languages at a Hamburg high school, Hermann Samuel Reimarus, author of *An apology for, or some words in defense of, reasoning worshipers of God*. This may, without exaggeration, be acknowledged as his lifework; not only because he wrote it over the course of around 20 years, but also because he presented in it discoveries that even he was surprised by. The philological analyses of the Bible that he conducted inclined him to formulate the general conclusion that these holy books of Christianity not only contained contradictions, but also portrayed persons of the greatest

[15] Cf. L. Bongie, *David Hume: Prophet of the Counter-revolution*, Oxford 1965.

[16] The protagonists in this treatise, written in the form of a dialogue, are Blindling (blind), identifying with Christian religion, and Lichtlieb (lover of light), representing enlightened deism. The latter shows the former the kinds of contradiction and absurdity that the Bible contains. J. Ch. Edelmann, *Die Göttlichkeit der Vernurft*, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1969–1987.

significance for Christians as frequently behaving irrationally. Reimarus also remarked that "two of the Gospel writers, namely Mark and Luke, only knew of what they were writing from hearsay. They were not apostles, and even after his death they do not dare say they saw Jesus with their own eyes. Matthew and John, who as apostles supposedly saw Jesus, contradict themselves the most often, such that one can calmly say that almost no circumstance from the moment of Jesus' death until the end of the story was told alike by both."[17] Perhaps one could speak of this calmly, but preferably not among Germans highly attached to what they hold sacred. This is confirmed, among other things, by the sharp polemics between Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (who published excerpts of Reimarus' works as *Fragments of an Unknown Wolfenbüttel Author*) and pastor Melchior Goeze, representing the said Germans. It was easier for them to accept such faddists as Johann Gottfried Herder, author of what in its own way was an innovative work in the philosophy of history—particularly as he concluded that the heir to all of what was best in history was German culture, including the Churches and denominations present in the German states.[18]

Weberian innovations

I believe one could defend the thesis that Max Weber was a multi-innovator. After all, he conducted scientific research in numerous areas of society and social coexistence, and many of his conclusions bear the marks of innovativeness.[19] This was not, of course, innovation of the kind for which no tradition was of any importance; "innovators" of such ilk are quite easily found, for example, among dilettantes in scientific research. Weber referred to diverse traditions, including that of classical German philosophy (especially Hegel's philosophy of history), classical British economics (in particular Adam Smith), and liberal thought (the list of whose

[17] "Worthy of particular attention is the fact that both completely omit the Ascension of Jesus. In their tale, he disappears and one does not know what happened to him; it is as if neither of these Evangelists knew about it, or as if it was a minor detail of no importance." H.S. Reimerus, *Fragmenty pism Anonima z Wolfenbüttel*, in *Filozofia niemieckiego Oświecenia. Wybrane teksty z historii filozofii*, Warszawa 1973, p. 265 et seq.

[18] J.G. Herder, *Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, London 1803.

[19] This is indicated by authors who analysed his works in such areas of research as the economy, politics, power and religion. Cf. S. Turner (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Weber*, Cambridge 2000.

modern-era precursors is highly varied). He amended and supplemented every one of them in some way or other, and in certain cases this was of fundamental significance. An example could be his amendment to Hegel's history of philosophy. The leitmotiv in this thought is the self-realisation of the World Spirit (*Weltgeist*), while man is but a less or more conscious participant in this historical process.[20] In Weber's approach, however, the self-realisation of man is such a motive; self-realisation not only as a being in possession of bodily needs of the kind that may only be satisfied via practical action (needless to say, not only within the area of manufacturing goods satisfying man's bodily needs), but also, or even above all, as a being in possession of spiritual needs—but needs that can only be satisfied once suitably activated and directed towards what is achievable; and needs that can be achieved include rationality in thought and conduct. The fundamental innovativeness in the Weberian way of perceiving and presenting man does not involve either showing that that which is most human in man is spiritual in character, or demonstrating that man is capable of rational thought and conduct (ancient sages had already indicated one and the other), but involves the fact that perhaps that which is called the "spirit of capitalism" (thus named "rather pretentiously" in Weber's opinion) should indeed depend not on some kind of supernatural power, but on those powers that concern man—and which are supposed to be found both in his reason and in his emotions and desires.[21] In my opinion, all of Weber's other innovations derive from this fundamental one.

Quite how this comes across in the details is shown, for example, in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. This relatively brief treatise constitutes a historical sketch of the birth of the powerful force in today's world (starting from the 18th century) that capitalism was and continues

[20] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit,* Oxford 1977, p. 467 et seq.

[21] This is contained for example in his definition of "social action." According to this, "Social action, like all action, may be oriented in four ways. It may be (1) instrumentally rational, that is, determined by expectations as to the behavior of objects in the environment and of other human beings; these expectations are used as 'conditions' or 'means' for the attainment of the actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends; (2) value-rational, that is, determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior, independently of its prospects of success; (3) affectual (especially emotional), that is, determined by the actor's specific affects and feeling states; (4) traditional, that is, determined by ingrained habituation." M. Weber, *Economy and Society. An outline of interpretive sociology*, Berkeley 1977, p. 24.

to be. The work's general aim is not of course to show all the powers of the human spirit, but to indicate those that were born at a particular place and time, and which caused the appearance of "modern […] Western European and American capitalism," differing not only from capitalism on other continents, but also from that seen in Europe in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages. It would be pretty hard to discern innovativeness in Weber's distinguishing of modern-day European and American capitalism from its Asian versions (such differentiation had already been shown by Adam Smith). However, one can find a certain innovativeness in his indication of those American preachers and teachers who together "with the help of small bourgeois, craftsmen and yeomen" created the foundations of the American capitalist economy, as well as in his observation that the "spirit of capitalism" driving their activities "had to fight its way to supremacy against a whole world of hostile forces," such as miserliness, indolence, avarice and unconscientiousness. And all these forces, the "most important opponent with which the spirit of capitalism, in the sense of a definite standard of life claiming ethical sanction, has had to struggle, was that type of attitude and reaction to new situations which we may designate as *traditionalism*."[22]

Weber's use of the term "ethical" in regard to these forces seems traditionalistic—as they were traditionally associated either with an absence of ethics or the kind of "ethics" that deserved to be reproved. However, he parts ways pretty quickly with this traditionalism, and proceeds to show and demonstrate (using concrete examples) that the desire to achieve a profit, a driving force behind human activity condemned in Christian tradition, may be acknowledged—but does not have to be—as something bad. It is something bad, for example, when maximising the employer's profit causes a decline in the efficiency of the workers. There are more such innovative observations and related reassessments in thinking about what is, and what is not, ethical in *The Protestant Ethic*, for example in indicating the "most favourable foundation for the conception of labour as an end in itself, as a calling which is necessary to capitalism," and that "the chances of overcoming traditionalism are greatest on account of the religious upbringing." Later in this work both one and the other are analysed more broadly, and presented as components of the foundations of today's capitalism.

Relatively the most significant innovations in the perceiving and presenting of religion and religiosity appear in the book's final chapter,

[22] M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London 2001, p. 23.

Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism. The main roles here are taken not by those philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment who criticised Christianity, but by preachers representing ascetic varieties of Protestantism, and whom Voltaire portrayed in his *Letters on England* as crackpots. They are leaders of the Quaker movement, such as Robert Barley (author of *Apology*, containing a discourse on ascetic ethics) and Richard Baxter, a Presbyterian non-conformist ("His *Christian Directory* is the most complete compendium of Puritan ethics, and is continually adjusted to the practical experiences of his own ministerial activity"). Where Weber shows innovativeness here is, firstly, in showing what their religious and social (meaning pro-capitalistic) force was based upon, and secondly (and perhaps even more importantly) in demonstrating that appropriately oriented thoughts, feelings, desires, beliefs and deeds could and really do contribute to achieving such worldly success as multiplying riches—directly one's own and those of one's loved ones, and indirectly the riches of society. It is obviously labour that constitutes the foundation of these successes, and this labour is performed such that one's vocation becomes a calling, while one pursuing this becomes a kind of missionary of the modern world.

Interestingly enough, Weber himself did not feel that he had made any particularly ground-breaking discovery here. On the contrary, he believed that in his perceiving and presenting of the ascetic varieties of Protestantism he was drawing on the earliest Christian traditions, such as in the Book of Job (containing the message that "God would bless His own in this life […] and also in the material sense"), or the message of St Paul, expressed in the conviction that "if a man will not work he shall not eat." However, where innovation and innovativeness are concerned, what is important is not only what and whom they draw upon, but also (and sometimes even above all) how general conclusions and appraisals are deduced from them. In Weber's case, they signify a fundamental revaluing of hitherto ways of perceiving and presenting, among others, those religious communities whose strength lay not in their numerousness or skill of organising themselves into a new Church (and possibly taking a significant position in public life), but in the kind of spiritual mobility that caused them to become leaders of the capitalistic world.

How much this revaluation meant and continues to mean for later researchers of religion and religiosity is shown by, among other things, research conducted by those sociologists of religion who referred to it—frequently criticising and correcting. An example here could be the research

and conclusions of the American sociologist Peter L. Berger and the German sociologist Thomas Luckmann (their treatise entitled *The Social Construction of Reality* is testimony both to them following in the footsteps set down by their predecessor and making significant corrections to it).[23] Research conducted by the German sociologist of religion and religiosity, Niklas Luhmann, could also serve as such an example; his scientific *credo* is essentially the same as the scientific *credo* of Max Weber. This is because it boils down to the conviction that the task of the academic investigating society is to research not individual manifestations of religious life, but of "structures of complexity" (such as "belief complexes"), while the said research cannot be restricted to sociology, but should also be conducted in such disciplines as history, cultural studies, and religious studies.[24] This means in practice that the contemporary sociologist of religion should collaborate with an expert on culture, an expert on religion, and with specialists in other disciplines as well (since one cannot today be a high class specialist in all of them).

A few supplementary remarks

The first of them is connected to the question as to whether religion and religiosity constitute an area of human life and coexistence that is particularly susceptible to grassroots innovations, deriving from specific individuals. I am inclined to answer in the affirmative due, among other things, to the individualisation of religious beliefs and practices, and their changeability—even in the relatively short time span of a human life. Representatives of various disciplines obviously attempt to investigate this phenomenon, and even to grant it the rank of some kind of rule, for example the research conducted by such experts in religious studies as Gerardus van der Leeuw or experts on culture such as Mircea Eliade.[25] This thesis also seems to be confirmed by the conclusions of contemporary sociologists, such as Rodney

[23] In the introduction to this treatise that assert that they would like to combine Weber's approach to manifestations of social life with Durkheim's approach, while in the conclusion they state that their theory of social action "does not lose the inner logic of either" of their positions. P.L. Berger, T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, London 1991.

[24] Cf. N. Luhmann, *Funktion der Religion,* Frankfurt am Mein 1982, p. 9 et seq.

[25] For broader discussion of this research, cf. Z. Drozdowicz, *O racjonalności w religii i w religijności (raz jeszcze)*, Poznań 2010, p. 81 et seq.

Stark and William Sims Bainbridge.[26] In addition, everyday observations of the beliefs and practices among acquaintances, in closer and more distant circles, reinforce such a conviction; after all, it is not often the case that Church authorities say what they have to say, while ordinary believers know and do their own; and this does not particularly hinder them in feeling fully-fledged members of their Church or some other religious community. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the consent for such grassroots "innovations" (with or without parentheses) is greater in some communities and lower in others.[27]

The scale of these innovations is, of course, a problem. Many an innovator who, though declaring Christian belief, was not too concerned about their belief fitting within the canon defined by the Church authorities, has come to realise this. This in turn shows that in such a sensitive and touchy sphere of human life and coexistence as religion, it is sometimes not worth demonstrating one's innovative convictions too boldly. By no means is this meant as an encouragement to opt for some kind of hypocrisy or opportunism, the motto of which is so-called peace and quiet. But it is a suggestion not to cast doubt on their cultural or social value without thorough familiarisation with the existing religious beliefs and practices—and not only because one can thus risk serious problems in life or offend the beliefs of those with whom one has come to live and to coexist, but also because one can thereby display one's incompetence. Such accusations may be levelled not only at more than one of the critics of traditional religions of the Age of Enlightenment, but also at their successors of today who consider themselves representatives of the kind of scientific approach to religion that excludes the possibility of finding any rational kind of justification whatsoever for traditional religious beliefs and practices.[28] One could of course dedicate more than a single thorough study to the various forms of rationality occurring in different religions. However, I presume that they know at least some such studies, although they either find them unconvincing or only see in them arguments favouring confirmation of their own way of keeping religion and religiosity at a distance. In such a situation there is little more one can do other than revealing their derivativeness in regard to the innovators of the Enlightenment, and how they

[26] R. Stark, W.S. Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*, London 1996.

[27] This is written about by, inter alios, Eileen Barker in her monograph *New Religious Movements*, London 1989.

[28] Successors of this kind may be found, for example, on the website Racjonalista.pl.

diverge from the conclusions of innovators in religious research such as Max Weber and his continuators of today.

My next remark concerns the issue of the ease in recognising innovation in approaches to religion and religiosity. They are relatively the easiest to recognise when occurring in the form of a black-white contrast. Many of the innovations of the Enlightenment were of such a character. As too were many an innovation in religious studies that appeared in the 19th century, such as Feuerbach's "discovery" that it was not God that created man (as the followers of many religions claim), but Man that created god (and possibly the gods).[29] One could of course describe such a portrayal of the matter as too simple to be true. This could be said if not for the fact that this depiction also appears in the research of those experts on religion, who—like Max Weber—show that the world of religious beliefs and practices was not, is not, and cannot be black-and-white—and that instead it twinkles in so many colours and shades, that even seasoned researchers find it hard to recognise and appraise them all. In this and in many other cases of a scientific portrayal and presentation of religion and religiosity, it was and is the problem of the "first glance" (if one can thus call a simplified glance of this enormously varied world of beliefs and practices); however, in order for its place in the scientific approach to be defendable, one has to step back and descend into deeper layers of this world. Needless to say, there are specified procedures that have to be observed in this "stepping back" and "descending." These are indicated by experts on religion of both the Enlightenment and later ages, including those who question the value of procedures that were a showcase of scientificity not that long ago, for example the contemporary theory of symbols and symbolic actions.[30] This is nothing new in science, of course. And it may be treated as testimony to religious studies having achieved the level of maturity achieved earlier by other social disciplines (such as psychology and sociology).

[29] L. Feuerbach, *Lectures on the Essence of Religion*, Eugene 2017.

[30] Cf. J. Drozdowicz, *Symbole w działaniu. Akademickie konteksty nurtu symbolicznego w antropologii*, Poznań 2009.

Chapter 8

Between the temptations of privatizing and globalizing religion

Both the temptations mentioned by the title above have been – and are – present within many religions and beliefs, as well as the religion-driven actions of individual believers. No in-depth research is needed to state that these temptations are of a character pertaining to inner- and outside-religion, but the research makes it possible to show a variety of these conditions, and how they vary along the means of expression of the above mentioned temptations. One of the inspirations for further research has stemmed and still stems from the comparative analyses of religion sociologists. Max Weber is one of the iconic researchers, but it must be noted that his studies were biased within the scope of the field. He was interested mainly in the impact of religious ethics on the economy. Modern Weberists see that this way of thinking had its good features, but that it is also characterized by many significant limitations, hence the need to adjust this approach. They consider that not only is the impact of religious ethics on the economy cognitively important, but also that the impact the economy has on ethics, and other ingredients of religion, should be considered as well. In other words, the contemporary Weberian view is, too, actually in opposition to Max Weber, who prioritized the causal relations, and emphasized the functional relationships.[1] My consideration will analyze the subject stated in the title, and will base it on the assumptions, research

[1] "Weber was interested in the impact the religion related ideas, mainly the various forms of ethics, had on the economy," but this problem was Eurocentric there, i.e. he considered it through the light of the "emergence of the Western capitalism, rationalism of the Western civilization in the economy." Cf. Z. Kransodębski, *Max Weber i jego analiza religii światowych*, in M. Weber, *Socjologia religii. Dzieła zebrane – Etyka*

questions and meanings of *privatization and globalization*, in the eyes of the modern Weberian approach.

Assumptions and statements

Functional research first – this approach is pursued *inter alia* by Niklas Luhmann in his work entitled *Function of Religion,* and Peter Beyer, who follows-up Luhman's directions in his work *Religion and Globalization.* The former, justifying the functional analysis, claims that this approach is better than the causal analysis when it comes to answering the following question: Is religion functioning or not as an *integration* factor within *macro-systems* such as civilizations and societies?[2] Peter Beyer, on the other hand, sees the advantages of the functional analysis in its possibility of describing the Western culture and the Western religious culture within the scope of relativization, and particularization directly related to relativization.[3] Both sociologists make the meaning of the *privatization of religion* and the *globalization of religion* so wide that it is possible to state a question about the secularization, which is so widely discussed nowadays.

According to Luhmann, *secularization* is semantically misunderstood, because it was and often still is related, especially by the persons who are in the position of faith, to ridding the Church (as an institution) of its most prominent social functions or getting rid of its background – the religious beliefs, attitudes and motivations for actions in a variety of social situations. Luhmann understands secularization as a "socio-structural relevance of privatization of the religious choices."[4] This means that "participation in

gospodarcza religii światowych [Sociology of religion, Collected works: The economic ethics of world religions], Cracow 2006, p. I et seq.

[2] By answering this question, he claims that it is no longer functioning, as "the religious movements […] weaken or even disintegrate the system"; Such movements were present in the past, and are present nowadays. Cf. N. Luhmann, *Funktion der Religion*, Frankfurt am Mein 1982, p. 11 and further pages.

[3] "In this view, relativization is a positive phenomenon, and an open stance towards the changes becomes a basic guarantee that the tradition is authentic. This kind of religion is driven by the values of the emerging global culture." Cf. P. Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, London 1994, p. 10 et seq.

[4] "Neither conceptually nor theoretically we claim that the religion is function- or meaningless overall. […] This concept is rather to define the evolution structure of the social system, which is historically documented, if it has an impact on the

the religious communication (Church) and demonstrating faith must be based on the decisions of the individuals […]. Back in the days not-believing was private, now believing becomes private. We are resigning from institutionalization of the consent. The situation in which you act in a proper way, once you accept what is normally accepted, is removed or reduced just to ordinary Church membership."[5] The author also clarifies that "privatization in a holistic view is not […] a private matter;" it is not and it has not been a private matter ever since the Churches have been forced to compete against other Churches and other social institutions such as TV or sport clubs, when it came to free time management; losing this competition may mean, and meant, that not only was the church often marginalized, but also the Bible work was marginalized, or, which is equally wrong for the traditionalists, the theologists and theology started to replicate these social and cultural models, the models which were the basis of the success of the competitors – those Churches which started to function in accordance with the marketing rules, or considered the mass media as a sufficient way to contact the believers.

The beginnings of the secularization process in this shape within the Western culture are placed in the late middle ages, namely, the period when "dogmatic theology and organization are reinforcing the internal mutual relationships" ("which, in effect, led the Christian Europe to the period of the schisms"). The first great, and well-organized campaign against the secularization conducted by the Roman Catholic Church is known to have happened in the 16th century and to be related to the Council of Trent (the introduction of the provisions made there meant that the "priest proletariat is to be marginalized, quality of life is to be raised, and hence the priests may achieve an existential reference to the organization"). Luhmann and Weber relate the first counter-offensive to the ascetic protestants of 17th

religion's system and its environment. Hence, this concept will not […] be defined by referencing it to religion as a phenomenon, but rather to the structure of the social system. It is oriented towards a general problem of privatization, which is driven by the structural requirements, and it having sociocultural consequences; additionally, it imposes relevant limits on the form of the social order, which is not yet plausible. It also describes the consequences of the structural circumstances regarding religion." Cf. N. Luhmann, *Funktion der Religion,* op.cit., p. 233 et seq.

[5] "At the same time, the stochastic confidence is offered by the anonymous waiting for devout participation, regardless of the private motives. Solely on this basis, the rituals and dogmatic values could pretend to be 'true' and neutralize the ability of their symbols to be negated." Ibidem, p. 239.

and 18th centuries (including the Pietists, who did not "burden the believers with time-consuming rules of the monastery life").

In light of the stages above, it seems that when describing and clarifying the changes in the Western culture, the collective character contained within the organizational forms presented temptations of privatizing and globalizing the religious beliefs. One of the forms of this temptation may be seen when one's own Church is presented as the Common Church. The name of such a Church is obvious, but at the same time it is placed in the background. The members' beliefs are in the foreground, and they believe that they create the only authentic, unique religious community and that it is just a matter of time to convince the non-members about its status.

These two temptations complement each other and at the same time they contradict themselves. They generate a variety of problems, both for ordinary Church members, as well as for the hierarchy. Luhmann points out some of them in his monograph, e.g.: "if a high number of the evangelical Church members is in favour of the baptism of the adults, then the process of the Churches becoming similar to the religious associations presents itself" (and the members of those Churches would not be in favour of that). If the authorities within these Churches are obliged to consult their decisions with the ordinary members, then the authority value may be questioned, and no consent satisfactory for both of the Parties may be reached. The latter problem is becoming more difficult to solve when the ordinary members of the Church are well educated. According to Luhmann (and probably other scholars), these members are "have stronger reservations about the Church," and the Church hierarchy.[6] This means that the Church, as a religious system, is going to be decomposed. This decomposition may be looked at, evaluated and presented by the Church authorities as a danger for faith and the Church itself. On the other hand, the ordinary members of the Church may consider it as a sign of the authenticity of their belief, and as a factor which increases the chances for salvation. This, in short, sums up Luhmann's notes on privatization, globalization and secularization.

Peter Beyer, in his studies, starts from the globalization thesis, namely he claims that we live in a "globalizing social reality in which the communication barriers, which existed earlier, are non-existent," which makes the "world more and more 'singular.'" Nico clarifies the issue, stating that

[6] "Reinforcing the social moralizing efforts will rather enlarge this distance, which does not necessarily mean that the person will step out of the Church." Ibidem, p. 214.

"the globalization thesis assumes that the social communication network is worldwide and is constantly getting more tight."[7] This has a variety of consequences, which have an impact on the "global social system," such as the Western civilization and its societies. It also influences smaller social groups and their individual members. The results include conflicts, which emerge because of the clashes of culture, lifestyle, language and other forms of cultural communication.

Beyer carries out an in-depth analysis of the results, which include "corrosion of the inherited cultural and personal identities," and the "encouragement to create and animate particular identities which are to help to take over the control of the whole system." Both phenomena are present in the functional relationship and in both cases religion plays, or tries to play, a significant part. Particularly it refers to a variety of religions. It does not matter whether you are Christian, Muslim or a Jew – all believers feel endangered by the "globalizing of society" or the marginalization of the religious symbols which, in the eyes of the believers, have a power to help them in communication with the "transcendental partner."[8]

It is clear that this "globalizing social reality" offers – in accordance with the beliefs of its proponents – its own religious symbols, but it does not offer any space for the main dichotomy of the traditional religions; in other words, it has no clear distinction between *immanence* and *transcendence* ("The main issue here is the holistic nature of the former concept"), and there is no space here for a transcendental partner, whose extraordinary power would make ordinary wishes, thoughts, words and actions meaningful, thus creating a stance for belief in getting transferred into the transcendental world, which, if not perfect, is at least more perfect than the immanent world. Religious symbols of this social reality which is globalizing itself, have lost their purposes, because they are based on an assumption that this – the transcendental world – does not exist, hence the difference between transcendence and immanence has no metaphysical or ontological nature – it is purely semantic, i.e. it is a peculiar combination of

[7] "To be more down-to-earth – this means that the people, cultures, societies and civilizations that so far were separated, nowadays are in constant, unavoidable contact." P. Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, op.cit., p. 2 et seq.

[8] "That transcendental partner may become a fish, a waterfall, an 'inner' self, invisible mighty god or a number of saintly symbols. The communication may become a conversation, ritual, myth, a sacred book, mystic insight, wisdom, ecstatic trance or any combination of these forms." Ibidem, p. 6.

meanings of these concepts. The function of this combination is communicative – and solely communicative – crossing the line between the "lack of definition of and definition of the source" or at least "coping with these phenomena and their consequences." Getting rid of this metaphysical, or even ontological difference between immanence and transcendence may be considered as the "core" of the secular processes present within the culture of the West.

The secularization as understood in the manner mentioned above resulted *inter alia* in the case of Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*. The fact that it became "the main topic covered by the press and the news services all around the world and inspires many public comments worldwide" has a very deep meaning. It reveals how mighty the ICT, which gets rid of the communication barriers, is. Nevertheless, the deep meaning carried by the issue presented by this British writer of Iranian origin, struck many Muslims. The exposed motif of the "changeability of the human personality in the globalized world" has been interpreted by the Muslim religious leader ayatollah Ruhollah Chomejni as an "insult of the most sacred values, and hence negating their [Muslims] own role as the subjects of the global society. […] Ultimately, the anger of the Muslims does not stem from the fact that the Rushdie's book questions their faith – not many Muslims are going to read it anyway. The Muslims are rather worried about the need of getting rid of their beliefs – the constant sacredness of the Koran – as a price for full participation in the global world dominated by the non-Muslim community."[9]

This issue shows just a fragment of a more complex problem which is met by the traditional religions in the modern, globalized world, which is still undergoing the process of globalization. Believers of the other religions which have a "leading role in the world community" (such as Christianity or Judaism) are in a similar position as the Muslims, even though their religious traditions are marginalized in a similar way as the Muslim tradition is. According to Beyer, this is because "globalization means the relativization of some particular identities, along with the relativization of religion as a means of social communication. In this way we have a situation where animating religion is a way of manifesting the (group) identity. This is a perfect way to gain power and influences in the

[9] "Chomeini, similarly to other Muslims, claims that the Satanic Verses relativization of Islam is equal to a marginalization of the Muslims in the global community." Ibidem, p. 3.

global system."[10] These aims are not related to the traditional conflict of the believers, the aim of which is to get oneself transferred into the world which is free of any worries.

Case study

A case study is shown in the second part of the monograph written by Beyer, and it regards five cases i.e. the New Christian Right in the USA, the liberation theology movement in Latin America, the Muslim revolution in Iran, the New Religious Zionism in Israel and the Religious Ecology Movement. None of these are going to be described here. I will only refer to the conclusion of Beyer's analysis of the Religious Ecology Movement. He claims that "despite the internal tensions between the liberal and conservative tendencies, this movement is surely a liberal form of religious expression. The main reason is, without any doubt, the global character of the environmental problems, which leads to cooperation, directly or indirectly, of a variety of representatives of many religious groups interested in ecology, and thus creates a pluralistic tolerance or even adjustment of the religious/cultural pluralism, which contradicts the conservative views." He also notes that "among the Roman Catholics you may spot many proponents of eco-spirituality, many social Catholic organizations are involved in the environmental issues, and even the Pope John Paul II himself refers to the environmental issues in a way, which is typical for an eco-traditionalist."[11] These are sole issues related to Poland which present themselves in Beyer's analysis.

I would like to refer solely to Polonica in my case study, in particular I have two cases in mind. The first case is the vividly discussed issue of Wojciech Lemański, who is the parish-priest from Jasienica. He is an above-average person, not only because of his functioning in the Church, but also because of the way of his social communication about the issue he faced applied in this case. Because of it, his issue became public and known across Poland. The event also features some elements that make it international, hence it may be related to Beyer's globalization. Lemański writes a blog and does not care about the opinions of the Church Authorities and their social position.

[10] Ibidem.

[11] Ibidem, p. 219 and other pages.

In other words, the issue would not have emerged had it not been for the critical blog posted by Lemański which regards the Church authorities and the bio-ethical document issued by the Episcopate, in which the Church leaders express their opinion against *in vitro*, abortion, euthanasia, emergency contraception and contraception in general. The Argument of the Warsaw-Praga Curia that rid the disobedient parish-priest of his Canonical rights, including the rights to evangelize on behalf of the Catholic Church and to conduct masses, includes the fact that he breached the violation according to which priests cannot file in court motions in the secular courts privately (Lemański did it against the headmaster of the local school and two teachers). His "sins" also include involvement in the Jewish community issues – he officially stated that he was against the Jedwabne massacre.

In the case of Lemański the line between globalization and privatization cannot be finely drawn; nevertheless, some points might be indicated. These include: 1) treating the freedom of speech and a right to state opinions publicly as an inalienable right of every citizen, regardless of their affiliation with any Church and regardless of their position in that Church; 2) using the right to reach as many people as possible with the information, using the mass media accessible to each and every citizen; 3) submitting one's own *votum separatum* regarding every issue which seems to endanger the basic human and citizen rights; 4) treating the secular world if not as more important, then at least as if it had the same importance as those issues related to the non-material world.

What allows priest Lemański, and other priests who share his views, to maintain their stance? There is only one answer to this question: their own conscience, independent thinking, life experience and perception of their own position within the social life. Without any doubt, this is definitely a form of privatization, which is sanctioned and regulated by the secular law, but, as the actions of the Church hierarchy present it, is also in conflict with the rights of the Church hierarchy and which questions their rights and position – not only within the Church structures, but also in the places where the Church was and is influential. In this situation, appealing against the Curia's decision to the Vatican and expecting that the latter would be in favour of the person who filed the appeal might be treated as a sign of naivety. Maybe the priest wanted to show that not only the local Church hierarchy is mistaken, but also that it is possible that (by maintaining the same stance as the Curia does), the Roman hierarchy has also made an error. And this has a global impact. In the past, and even

nowadays, this kind of disagreement usually led to the attempts of establishing a new Church or fractions within the older Church, which would become a danger for the Roman authorities.

The second case of a priest who did not comply with the Church's official stance is even more convincing. Priest, Piotr Natanek, PhD habillitated, became – as it was written in Super Express, one of the Polish tabloids, in the article entitled *Ks. Natanek: Człowiek, który ma telefon do boga* [Priest Natanek – a man who can call god on the phone] – "a new star of the Internet. But not a star of the Church. His sermons are illegal, since the Curia of Cracow banned him from conducting the masses. It is a penalty for disobedience. The priest confuses the facts: angels, divine encounters, Masonry, Harry Potter..." and so on. This piece of information seems to be sensational mainly because of the context – it was published in the media outlet, which is sensation-driven. The pieces of information published by the Curia in Cracow are no less sensational; the media release from 18 April 2014, published on the official website of the Curia, says that in connection with the "questions coming from the people about the controversial statements of Piotr Natanek, priest, PhD, habilitated, who is a priest of the Cracow Archdiocese," a theological commission brought to life by the decree issued by the Archbishop of the Cracow diocese made on 3 July 2009, stated "a negative assessment of the Priest's activity, claiming that his activity and public statements were theologically erroneous," the Archbishop has "suspended, until revoked, the [Natanek's] right to do scientific work within the Catholic universities" and "banned Priest Piotr Natanek from the public appearances, publishing texts and disseminating his own materials (including video and audio recordings) and sharing them for distribution by the third Parties." The release also reminds the audience that "Piotr Natanek, speaking to the Cardinal, stated that as a faithful son of the Church he will act in compliance with the above decisions."

Was this statement true? One can check it by entering the website of *Christus Vincit* Online TV, led by *Społeczny Ruch Zapotrzebowania Wiary z siedzibą w Norwegii Filia Pustelnia Niepokalanów Księdza Piotra Natanka* [Social Movement of Faith Needs with a seat in Norway, the Pustelnia Niepokalanów Branch led by Priest Piotr Natanek]. The name of this medium itself is both global and particular. The former is shown by using the Internet as a means of communication with the believers (according to Natanek, the Internet is a "gift from the Holy Mother"), and presenting the movement as a general social movement acting outside the borders

of Poland. Everything is complemented by Natanek's self-presentation as one of many warriors of the new crusade against non-believers and those who believe in God without any compliance with the standards the warrior has to comply with. Everybody who has joined him is called "King Jesus Christ's Chivalry" by Natanek. He even designed proper clothing for them (purple vestry with elements of a knight's armor, featuring an effigy of the crowned Jesus), a proper ceremony of group admittance (during the masses conducted by Natanek), or even a Sacrament (which is called "a renewal of baptism," and its purpose is to change pagan names to the names of the Christian saints).

When he was asked by the believers about the sources of knowledge and inspiration which drive his activity, he claimed that he had received a phone call from heaven, directly from God himself. God was to tell Natanek that Satan, along with the masonry, who are his Earthly contractors, are either in power all around the world or are close to reaching full control. Natanek claims that this state is confirmed by the provisions of the Second Vatican Council (in his opinion they are a success of the Masons), the government, the European Parliament (which consists of members of the Mason's) and even fashions among the youth, including "Iroquois hairstyle and hair styling gel," "metal near the eyes" or "bright colors of the fingernails" ("black as hell and red as fire"). It is clear that the youth will pay a high price for being tempted. But this regards not only the youth, as the late bishop, Józef Życiński, is already in Hell, while archbishop Dziwisz will probably pay a high price for supporting the evil powers and for his sins committed against Natanek and his movement. The judgement is going to be delivered to all the Poles, unless the Episcopate, Parliament, Government and the President of Poland do not recognize Jesus as the King of Poland and consider God's law as supreme over the secular law.[12] All of the above contains some elements of globalization; however, these are also quite thoroughly mixed with particularization.

The latter present themselves when the person of this "new prophet" of the old faith is taken into consideration along with the place of his activity – The Grzechynia Hermitage (which is a part of the private property of ks. Natanek). Other ways in which the particularization is shown are

[12] In February 2010 he published a "List otwarty do Biskupów Polskich, Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej i Premiera Rządu Rzeczypospolitej" [Open Letter to the Polish Bishops, President of the Republic of Poland and Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland]. He specified the deadline of this enthronement – the year 2017.

contained within the way Natanek conducts the cult's activity (as witnessed through its damnation of the TVN24 TV station), referencing himself to private divine encounters, including conversations with Jesus Christ and the Holy Mother, or his public denial of obedience to "his beloved Bishop, because he is a servant to the Church's enemies." It is clear that the definition of enemies and friends is a matter of Natanek's personal opinion, his conscience, and that it stems from his being haunted.

The case of the priest and his movement described above is not an isolated phenomenon within the Roman Catholic Church. It is quite traditional and phenomena like this one have often occured, especially during the periods of important changes being introduced in the Church. Changes like these were sanctioned for instance by the Canon Law introduced by the Second Vatican Council. During the Council the internal Church forces emerged, which were against the changes and which later led to the emergence of e.g. the Lefebvrist movement, under the official name of *Fratenitas Scerdotalis Sancti Pii X*. Father Natanek defended that movement, and his assessment of the post-Council situation in the Roman Catholic Church is quite compliant with the assessment created by the initiator of the described movement, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.[13] Nevertheless, Natanek does not consider himself as a Lefebvrist, and the same applies to his "Knights of King Christ." This is because the Lefebvrists were excluded from the Roman Church (by excommunication by John Paul II, made in June 1988), and were later included in its structures again by Benedict XVI, in January 2009. In the eyes of Natanek, this is a bad publicity for the Church, and questions the opposition of the Lefebvrists. The contemporary situation of the Church was outlined by Natanek in his "List otwarty do kapłanów Kościoła katolickiego" (Open letter to the priests of the Catholic Church), written on 2 November 2010. The letter states that the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, Roman Catholic Church is covered with Darkness. This church has become Satan's playground. […] being a priest in it has become solely a craftsmanship, and the priests have become materialized professionals of the God's Redemption."

[13] Abp M. Lefevre, *Church Soaked with Modernism*, Chorzów – Poznań 2010. According to the official data, the brotherhood, in 2010, included 529 priests along with 750 churches in 63 countries, it was leading two higher schools, 90 schools at lower levels and 7 residential homes. Its activity in Poland started in the early 1990s. It has its priories in Warsaw, Bajerze and Gdynia, and churches in Cracow, Lublin, Lodz, Olsztyn, Poznan, Torun, Szczecin, Wroclaw and Rzeszow. Back in 1998, the Polish Episcopate considered this movement to be schismatic.

Chapter 9

Radicalism in religions and narratives in the study of religion

The various forms of radicalism have provoked and tend as a rule to provoke vivid reaction from those who perceived and perceive them as a kind of challenge to their world of values, to what they hold great and sacred. Where that radicalism meant the questioning of these values, it frequently encountered responses from their defenders that were just as radical. But when it meant their reinforcement, it either met with their recognition or at least a certain degree of understanding or tolerance. Issues related to Islamic radicalism receive the greatest level of publicity today; however, one has to emphasise that radicalism was and is a component of other religions as well, and its identification, explanation and evaluation constituted and constitutes a significant portion of diverse types of description, explanation and appraisal issued for diverse religions and forms of religiosity. In these deliberations I refer both to the great historical narratives and to somewhat smaller ones. I posit within them the general thesis that extremes converge in their multifarious consequences. The answer to the question regarding what these extremes and what these consequences are demands that specific narratives be referred to.

Radicalism in the grand historical narratives

Narratives that I class among the grand historical narratives are those referring to books acknowledged as sacred, and seeking in them justification for their general messages. One of the periods when such narratives appeared in European culture was when Christianity "knocked" on the gates to the

Roman Empire, and—to begin with—demanded the right to practise its beliefs and practices—without risking repressive measures from those who ruled the state and decided what was and what was not correct in regard to cults. Historians tracing the image of this religion from the position of external observers recall that the Romans' first reactions to its appearance in their lands were decidedly unfavourable. This is confirmed by, among other things, the *Annals* by Tacitus (in which he called Christian beliefs "ruinous superstition"), in Pliny the Younger's *Epistulae* (in which Christianity is called "madness," and Christians themselves are referred to as "criminals" who should be severely punished), and by Suetonius—author of a biography of Emperor Claudius (in which the author describes Christians living in Rome as "professing a new and criminal faith").[1] These radically negative appraisals were later followed by anti-Christian edicts (such as the edict of Emperor Septimius Severus or the edicts of Emperor Decius) and such measures that resulted in Christianity and the Christians finding themselves among those religious communities excluded from society and persecuted by the rulers of Rome. At the same time this is a period in the history of Christianity in which the great Christian apologias were written (by Justin Martyr, Tatian, Tertullian and Cyprian); above all they were directed against non-Christian religions, and presented Christianity as the sole religion worthy of recognition and cultivation. These were oriented beyond a doubt to a radical confrontation with the so-called pagan religions, and were grounded on radical convictions (such as the firm belief that outside of the Christian Church there was no and could be no salvation).

This historical confrontation of Christian radicalism led not only to an internal reinforcing of this religion, but also first of all (during the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great) to the recognition of its right to be present in public life, and later (during the reign of Emperor Theodosius I) to its recognition as the only one worthy of support from imperial rule.[2]

[1] Cf. J. Keller, *Chrześcijaństwo pierwotne*, in *Zarys dziejów religii*, collective work, Warszawa 1988, p. 581 et seq.

[2] Fr. Marian Banaszak, describing this period of 324–451 in the history of Christianity, recalls that the Emperor Theodosius I "initially restrained towards the heathen world […] applied harsher tactics from the year 388. A campaign was undertaken to shown down pagan temples, and when resistance was encountered the pressure of state administration was increased." However, during the reign of his son, Theodosius II (408–450) "the pagans were excluded from holding offices of state, writings hostile to Christianity were ordered burned, while outrages against the pagans

This specific triumphalism of Christianity meant neither that heathenism had vanished from the map of the world civilised in the Christian manner (on our continent alone, the Catholic Church conducted Christianising campaigns practically up to the 16th century), nor that within the Church itself a doctrinal interpretation and such cult practices had been drawn up that would entitle one to assert that it really was in fact, and not only by name, catholic—meaning universal. What kind of universality could one talk about in the situation where within this Church its greatest theological authorities argued and fought (for example at its synods and councils) over the fundamental truths of faith, its highest-ranking hierarchs strived to retain for themselves relatively as much power as possible, and for their local churches relatively the greatest independence, while for many subsequent centuries many ordinary followers still combined aspects of traditional beliefs and pagan practices with elements of Christian beliefs and practices.[3]

In this enormous mosaic of beliefs and practices there was no shortage of those one could recognise as displays of religious radicalism. These could include various strains of asceticism, starting with Cenobitic monasticism in the style of Saint Pachomius (entailing strict rules in monastic life), and ending with the stylite movement (the best-known representative of which was Simeon Stylites, who survived for over 30 years on a pillar).[4] Some of these ascetics (Simeon Stylites among them) were to join the ranks of Christian saints. The case was similar with those radicals who were prepared to lay their temporal lives down on the altar of their faith (and more than one of them did so). Their cult was and continues to be vibrant in various Christian Churches.

However, not only the ascetics influenced the direction taken in later centuries both in the development of Christianity and by theologians commanding the greatest authority and by those holding the highest positions

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were treated leniently." Cf. Fr. M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1986, p. 136 et seq.

[3] In regard to this last matter, cf. S. Piekarczyk, *Barbarzyńcy i chrześcijaństwo. Konfrontacje społecznych postaw i wzorców u German*, Warszawa 1968.

[4] The historian of the Catholic Church cited here recalls that this movement derives from the tradition of Syrian asceticism; in the fourth and fifth centuries Syria had "thousands of monasteries and hermits in grottos, cellars and caves. Some commanded that they be walled in or chained to the wall, so as to never return to the world." Cf. Fr. M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego*, vol. 1, op.cit., p. 169 et seq.

in the Church hierarchy. In western Christianity, such a theologian in the decadent period of Antiquity and in the early years of the Middle Ages was (Saint) Augustine of Hippo. The answer to the question as to whether he was or was not a religious radical cannot be unequivocal. After all, in one respect he was a radical (for example in perceiving and presenting God as a being who could do anything, and man as a being who could not do any good without the support of the power and grace of God), while in another he was not—or at least he was not as radical as those Church Fathers who totally negated the value of the pre-Christian legacy of Greek and Roman culture. In his theological and philosophical treatises, Augustine of Hippo performs a reckoning with this legacy, but does not deny it a certain cultural value and greatness.

Things are different at least with some of the continuators of the Augustine tradition, such as John Calvin. The fundamental formulas of his religion (*sole fides* or *sole scriptura*) are essentially a far-reaching religious radicalism, and they entail radicalism in religious practices. The latter have also been subjected to comprehensive studies, if only to mention Max Weber's studies into the ascetic varieties of Protestantism.[5] However, I am inclined to class these and similar studies into the category of lesser historical narratives.

Lesser historical narratives

Although these narratives also frequently refer to the religions of scripture, such writings are treated in them as one of the historical sources of knowledge regarding the said religions. Works that I class among such historical narratives include those by experts on religion who—convinced that a deep sense of religion and religiosity may be indicated in the historical description—drew a picture of what was and is happening in them. The authors of such narratives include Max Weber, already mentioned here, and Mircea Eliade. These experts on different religions and different forms of religiosity differ both in their approach to research and the conclusions and appraisals they formulate. However, they are linked by their conviction that in such grand historical processes as the transformation of different religions and different forms of religiosity, the battle is being fought for achieving an ever-high degree of rationality.

[5] M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London 2001.

This is indicated both in Weber's *The Protestant Ethic* and—in an even broader scope—in his series of treatises dedicated to other religions based on scripture, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, or ancient Judaism. In the picture he sketches of these significantly different religions, one of the reoccurring elements is radicalism, appearing at different moments in history, and in diverse forms. In early Confucianism this radicalism was expressed in, among other things, the convictions and religious practices of the anchorets, meaning those who—taking Confucius and his rival Lao Tzu as their model—"had retired from the world […] and office."[6] But, in Weber's opinion, the social communicativeness and weaknesses of this religion were determined not by that radicalism, but by its entanglement in officialism and rituals, and in the politics and governments of the landed rulers (its dependence on cash and the ruling class). When appraising the social significance of this religion, Weber asserts that "Confucianism and Confucian mentality, deifying 'wealth,' could facilitate political-economic measures […]. At this point, however, one can observe the limited significance of economic policy as compared to economic mentality." And this is because the right methodology of life and ethics is essential, for example that as promoted and applied in practice by ascetic forms of Puritanism.

When comparing Confucianist ethics with Puritan ethics, M. Weber emphasises that "both ethics had their irrational anchorages, the one in magic, the other in the ultimately inscrutable resolves of a supra-mundane God. But from magic there followed the inviolability of tradition as the proven magical means and ultimately all bequeathed forms of life-conduct were unchangeable if the wrath of the spirits were to be avoided. From the relation between the supra-mundane God and the creaturally wicked, ethically irrational world there resulted, however, the absolute unholiness of tradition and the truly endless task of ethically and rationally subduing and mastering the given world, i.e. rational, objective 'progress.'"[7] In the light of this narrative, it turns out that the social weakness of Confucianism was determined not so much by the marginalising of the radicalism present

[6] "They were the 'scholars, who sit at home', i.e., did not accept office […]. As with all true mysticism, absolute indifference to the world was self-implied; and, it is not to be forgotten that the macrobiotic goal was […] one of the anchorets' strivings. According to the primitive 'metaphysics' a thrifty and rational management (one might say economy) of the obvious bearer of life, i.e., one's breath, seemed important." M. Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*, Glencoe 1951, p. 179.

[7] "Here, the task of the rational transformation of the world stood opposed to the Confucian adjustment to the world." Ibidem, p. 240.

within it, as by its lack of orientation towards what provided a chance of social success, and the fact that it lacked the methodology and ethics that led to the Puritans and Puritanism becoming a kind of avant-garde of the modern social (meaning capitalistic) world.

In early Buddhism, the founder of this religion—Sidharta, known as the Buddha—was this kind of model of religious radicalism. He is said to have abandoned a comfortable and affluent life and begun his long path (taking approximately 45 years) to spiritual perfection, called *nirvana* (from the Pali language, meaning "quenching") and understood as a condition of eternal, transcendent happiness. By translating this model to religious practices, his disciples—seeking salvation from the "struggle for existence"—renounced a life of "sex, alcohol, song and dance, practising vegetarianism, shunning spices, salt and honey, living from door to door by silent mendicancy."[8] They initially constituted a community of "wondering disciples" (arhats). "The unavoidable discipline, then, forced a fixing of forms. Hence the community became an order" ("Very soon after Buddha the order must have been constituted with head-shaving and yellow costume"). However, in Weber's opinion, "a rational economic ethic could hardly develop in this sort of religious order" ("The Buddhistic monastic mores not only exclude work but also the otherwise usual ascetic means"). In accentuating the need for an escape from the temporal world, early Buddhism proved incapable of evolving the religion of secular followers.[9]

Things were different in ancient Judaism. According to Max Weber: "Ritual correctitude and the segregation from the social environment imposed by it was but one aspect of the commands upon Jewry. There existed in addition a highly rational religious ethic of social conduct; it was free of magic and all forms of irrational quest for salvation; it was inwardly worlds apart from the paths of salvation offered by Asiatic religions. To a large extent this ethic still underlies contemporary Mid Eastern and European ethic." The question that thus arises is: how did "the position of Jewry as a pariah people" come about?[10]

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[8] M. Weber, *Jainism and Buddhism in India*, in A. Sucnila, *Western Sociologists on Indian Society*, Bombay 1959, p. 168.

[9] "Its inner consequence, and thereby also its external weakness, lay in the fact that in practice it confined salvation to those who actually followed the path to the end and became monks, and that at bottom it hardly bothered about the others, the laity." M. Weber, *Religion in India. Sociology of Buddhism and Hinduism*, Glencoe 1958, p. 233.

[10] Ibidem, p. 302 et seq. M. Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, New York 1967, p. 4.

In his answer to this question, M. Weber indicates among other things forms of radicalism occurring in their religion and religiosity such as the distinct differentiation between "kin" and "other," strictly-worded socio-ethical precepts (such as in the matter of the Sabbath), that they "lack all traits of personal heroism" and display "devout humility and good nature admixed with a cunning shrewdness, supported by their God" (in the age of Israeli prophets these are expressed, among other things, by "Jacob's deception"). At a later period, when the Israelites transformed from farming tribes that cultivated pacifist ideas into tribes of warriors ensuring military defence, this list of radicalisms was supplemented with the phenomenon of the "ecstatic berserk" of battle, and—serving to achieve the latter—the "ascetic training of a body of professional warriors" who in addition "abstained from alcohol and originally, also, from sexual intercourse."[11]

There are mentions in *The Protestant Ethic* not so much regarding the radicalism of the ancient Israelites' practices and beliefs as about a certain convergence between their ethic and the spirit of the ethic of ascetic forms of Protestantism.[12] Anyhow, in the light of the Weberian historical narratives, certain forms of religious radicalism proved socially destructive in the long term, and others—constructive. In this portrayal the measure of this constructivism is the achievement of a level of success in life that is manifested, among other things, in the accumulation of one's earthly riches, and the satisfying of one's spiritual and material needs.

Whereas in Weber's historical narratives, rationalism and rationality, as well as their opposites, are distinctly linked to the socio-economic formation, in Mircea Eliade's narratives they are connected to the socio-cultural formation—and specifically they display a radical contrast between

[11] "Not only did a considerable part if not all of the charismatic war leaders of the so-called 'time of judges' have the character of warrior ecstatics, but this is especially transmitted of the first king of Israel [Saul] in connection with relations to the Nebiim. […] Upon another, allegedly accidental, visit to Samuel's Nabi-schools he was seized by ecstasy and went around naked, spoke madly and for an entire day was in a faint." Ibidem, p. 98.

[12] "But still, through its numerous related features, Old Testament morality was able to give a powerful impetus to that spirit of self-righteous and sober legality which was so characteristic of the worldly asceticism of this form of Protestantism. […] It is necessary, however, not to think of Palestinian Judaism at the time of the writing of the Scriptures, but of Judaism as it became under the influence of many centuries of formalistic, legalistic, and Talmudic education." M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, op.cit., p. 110 et seq.

archaic and modern-era societies. Terms such as myth, the *sacred* and the *profane*, and also *homo religious* play a leading role in Eliade's narratives, and this is because the fundamental concept in them is that of the myth. Eliade situates myths between man's unconscious and conscious experiences. These differ from other experiences occurring in this area (such as dreams) in, among others, the fact that 1) they constitute revelation at once creative and exemplary; 2) they always say that something really did happen; 3) they unveil the fundamental structures of reality and various ways of being in the world, and that 4) they signify everything that has opposed earthly reality, while at the same time they make the retention of this reality dependent upon existence.[13]

It is but one step from myths, thus understood and presented, to the *sacred*. This, Eliade explains, is because ontophany always implicates theophany or hierophany. It was the Gods or semi-divine Beings that created the world and established uncounted manners of being in the World, from that which is appropriate to man to the way of being of an insect. By revealing the story of what happened *in illo tempore*, the entrance into the world's *sanctity* is revealed at the same time. This "entrance into the world's *sanctity*," thus depicted, differs—through the dialectic opposition—from its *profane*, constituting the second of the fundamental forms of "being in the World," described by Eliade as the second existential situation shaped by man during the course of his history.[14]

This reference to history proves essential in Eliade's depiction, not only for understanding the nature and structure of myths and of the *sacred* and the *profane*, but also the nature and structure of *homo religious*—meaning religious man. Eliade wrote of this man, that he "attempts to remain as long as possible in a sacred universe, and hence what his total experience of life proves to be in comparison with the experience of the man without religious feeling, of the man who lives, or wishes to live, in a desacralized world. It should be said at once that the *completely* profane world, the wholly desacralized cosmos, is a recent discovery in the history of the human spirit. It does not devolve upon us to show by what historical processes and as the result of what changes in spiritual attitudes and behaviour modern man has desacralized his world and assumed a profane existence. For our

[13] M. Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, New York 1975, p. 18 et seq.
[14] M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York 1987, p. 14.

purpose it is enough to observe that desacralization pervades the entire experience of the nonreligious man of modern societies…"[15]

Contrasting religious man of archaic societies with non-religious man of modern-era societies constitutes the leading theme in his *Treatise on the History of Religions*. A significant portion of this work, richly documented with factual material, comprises a description of the life of archaic communities. In his studies into the structure and morphology of the *sacred* in these communities, Eliade begins by attempting to answer the question as to how the sky appears in them ("the sky itself directly reveals a *transcendence*, a *power* and a *holiness*"), and why it appears to them thus and in not some other manner. "Simple contemplation of the celestial vault already provokes a religious experience," although this "is not arrived at by a logical, rational operation," but both from that which creates the subconscious of man and from that which constitutes the loftiest expression of his inner life; and that which is supposed to constitute this is the desire to exceed the mundanity, routine, finiteness, variability and temporariness of the natural world and enter the realm of the sublime, the immutable, the infinite and the eternal. One could therefore say that for these communities, the sky "exists because it is *high, infinite, immovable, powerful*."[16]

In a section balancing and generalising these occasionally very detailed analyses, Eliade asserts that: 1) "In every case we have observed the same phenomenon of the withdrawal of the sky gods in face of more dynamic, concrete and familiar theophanies," and 2) that everywhere, "everything nearer to the sky shares, with varying intensity, in its transcendence," while human participation in this transcendence ("the transcending of the human condition") takes place "by some ritual consecration, or by dying," and is expressed as a "passage," a "rising" and "ascension" (myths, rituals and the symbolism of "ascension" are of particular significance in this); and 3) that in each of these cases of transcendence there is a centre of a kind, and "it is only at a 'centre' that a break-through can occur, a passing from one cosmic zone to another." These conclusions are like historical generalisations in character.

Chapter three of this work contains an analysis and presentation of the place the sun has in the cult beliefs and practices of archaic communities. In its introduction, Eliade warns against an "error of perspective which

[15] Ibidem, p. 13.

[16] M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, New York 1950, p. 39.

might easily become an error of method." He has in mind the applying of a contemporary measure to these beliefs and practices. Putting it briefly, "what is clear, and therefore easily grasped, in any sun hierophany is most often only what remains after a long process of rationalization has worn it away and it is brought to us, without our realizing it, by way of language, custom and culture." Putting it differently, their rationalisation (initiated by ancient philosophers) not only leads to their significant transformations, but also to deformation and to a weakening of the force with which lunar cults influence human mentality.[17]

One could therefore say that in the solar cults of archaic communities there was more spontaneity, abandon, sensuality and mystery than in their contemporary counterparts. Eliade strives to demonstrate this in examples of the "solarization of supreme beings" occurring in many tribes in various parts of the world, incidentally indicating the excesses sometimes accompanying these diverse cults, such as "the excesses of those ascetic Indian sects whose members go on staring at the sun till they become totally blind." Although he claims that he does "not propose to conclude this brief study of the nature of sun hierophanies with any general summing-up," he does actually formulate such conclusions. One of these is the assertion that "unlike other nature hierophanies, sun hierophanies tend to become the privilege of a closed circle, of a minority of the elect," while another—complementing the first—is the claim that the "result is the hastening of the process of rationalization."

In subsequent sections of this treatise Eliade analyses and presents hierophanies connected: 1) with the moon and lunar mysticism—claiming that "even by intuition modern man cannot get hold of all the wealth of meaning and harmony that such a cosmic *reality* (or, in fact, sacred reality) involves in the primitive mind," and formulating the general theses that "the phases of the moon give us, if not the historical origin, at least the mythological and symbolic illustration of all dualisms"; 2) with water and aquatic symbolism—stating that "waters symbolize the universal sum of virtualities; they are *fons et origo*, 'spring and origin', the reservoir of all the possibilities of

[17] Admittedly, "no one, indeed, would maintain that a modern [man] was *ipso facto* closed to the hierophanies of the moon" (since the fact is that "the 'diurnal domain of the mind' is dominated by solar symbolism"), although this symbolism is largely "often the result of a chain of reasoning. This does not mean that every rational element whatever in the hierophanies of the sun must automatically be a later and artificial development." Ibidem, p. 125.

existence," and adding that in "whatever religious complex we find them, the waters invariably retain their function; they disintegrate, abolish forms, 'wash away sins'; they are at once purifying and regenerating"; 3) with sacred stones—stating that "nothing was more direct and autonomous in the completeness of its strength, nothing more noble or more awe-inspiring, than a majestic rock, or a boldly-standing block of granite," and adding that "there are some forms of stone worship which show traces of a regression to infantilism, and others which, either as a result of new religious experiences, or because they are fitted into different systems of cosmology, change so totally as to be almost unrecognizable," but are treated by modern man as something rational or at least possessing the attributes of progression towards rationality; 4) with "earth, woman and fertility"—ultimately asserting that in these sometimes significantly different cults, "the same central intuition comes in as a constantly repeated *leitmotiv*: the earth produces living forms, it is a womb which never wearies of procreating" (although the "turning of the Earth-Mother into the Great Goddess of agriculture is the turning of simple existence into living drama"); 5) with vegetation and the related symbols and rites of renewal—asserting that "what are generally known as 'vegetation cults' are really seasonal celebrations which cannot be accounted for merely in terms of a plant hierophany, but form part of far more complex dramas taking in the whole life of the universe"; and 6) with agriculture and cults of fertility—claiming that the former "displays the mystery of the rebirth of plant life in a more dramatic manner," while the latter may bewilder or are at the very least be fairly bemusing to the reason of modern man (for example when "among the Finns, women used to bring the first seed to the fields in a cloth worn during menstruation, in the shoe of a prostitute, or the stocking of a bastard"), yet for the man of archaic mentality, not only does this have its sense, but it also has its deep justification (as it contributes to better harvests). Besides, the ritual orgies that Eliade only mentions when discussing the fertility cults are or at least could also be similarly perceived by either man.[18]

It is also worth drawing attention to issues connected to the centre of the world and how this has been symbolised in legend and myth. Because among the generalising conclusions to these analyses is the assertion that "all the symbolisms and equations we have looked at prove that, however

[18] "Orgies were not found only in the setting of agricultural ceremonies, although they always remained closely connected with rites of regeneration […] and fertility." Ibidem, p. 358.

different sacred space may be from profane, *man cannot live except in this sort of sacred space*" and that this can be acknowledged as an expression of a *"nostalgia for paradise."*[19] There also appears the issue of a return to primordial time (an "eternal present") and the "Eternal Return"—constituting not only confirmation that man has the "longing to destroy profane time and live in sacred time" ("what may be called the '*nostalgia for eternity*'"), but also that he "longs for a concrete paradise, and believes that such a paradise can be won *here*, *on earth*, and *now*, in the present moment." Later in these deliberations one finds, among other things, the claim that "man, whatever else he may be free of, is forever the prisoner of his own archetypal intuitions, formed at the moment when he first perceived his position in the cosmos."[20]

At the end of these historical analyses, Eliade observes that "almost everywhere in the history of religion we have come across the phenomenon of an 'easy' *imitation* of the archetype, which I have termed infantilism. […] infantilism tends to carry hierophanies on *ad infinitum*; that it tends, in other words, to put the *sacred* into every slightest thing, or ultimately, to put the Whole into every tiniest part. Such a tendency is not in itself aberrant, for the sacred does in fact tend to become one with profane reality, to transform and consecrate all creation. […] But there is something else: the desire to *make all creation one and do away with multiplicity*. This desire is also, in its own way, an imitation of the activity of reason since reason also tends to unify reality—a tendency which, carried to an extreme, would abolish Creation," while whereas the former of these tendencies largely involves "creations of the subconscious," the latter is to a greater degree a product "of the conscious."

A little later, Eliade adds: "the dialectic of hierophanies tends endlessly to reduce the spheres that are profane and eventually to abolish them. […] On the other hand, we have also observed the existence of the contrary tendency—resistance to the sacred, a resistance which appears even at the very heart of religious experience. Man's ambivalent attitude towards the sacred, which at once attracts and repels him, is both beneficent and dangerous, can be explained not only by the ambivalent nature of the sacred in

[19] "I mean by this the desire to be always, effortlessly, at the *heart of the world*, of reality, of the sacred, and, briefly, to transcend, *by natural means*, the human condition and regain a divine state of affairs…" Ibidem, p. 383.

[20] "And primitive spirituality lives on in its own way not in action, not as a thing man can effectively accomplish, but as a nostalgia which creates things that become values in themselves: art, the sciences, social theory." Ibidem, p. 434.

itself, but also by man's natural reactions to this transcendent reality which attracts and terrifies him with equal intensity."[21] This is not only a kind of dialectic between the *sacred* and the *profane*, but also a particular logic of human behaviour, logic that sets out the directions, dynamics and character of the changes taking place in the history of religion and religiosity. Eliade leaves no doubt that this logic is based on radical oppositions.

Post scriptum

In this post scriptum I would like solely to touch upon issues related to the radicalism occurring in the realities of religious life in Poland, and in the narratives of certain Polish experts on religion. Even distinguishing what is and what is not radicalism in both one case and the other can be highly problematic. For example: in the conditions in Poland, are the views and deeds of Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, and of the people speaking up on the Radio Maryja and TV Trwam that he runs, a manifestation of radicalism or not? If they are, how does this radicalism compare to the radicalism of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X also functioning in Poland (and questioning not only the authentic religiosity of those in secular power today in Poland, but also the authentic religiosity of numerous hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church, including Pope John Paul II), or the radicalism of Father Piotr Natanek (seeing in many people's deeds confirmation of Satan's influence, and building his own church within the Catholic Church). Yet if they are not, then how should one treat the religiosity of those many Poles who, though acknowledging their relationship with Catholicism, and even participating in its ceremonial rites, simultaneously value their freedom of conscience, thought and speech sufficiently to either not listen to Radio Maryja and not watch TV Trwam, or—if they do listen and do watch—claim that these media are harming Polish Catholics more than helping them? Barely a few percent of the population regularly use these media, and even fewer watch the online Christus Vincit TV founded by father P. Natanek.[22] On the other hand, those who in today's Poland, at least formally, are Catholics (they were baptised in the Roman Catholic

[21] Ibidem, p. 460.

[22] Cf. E. Stachowska, *Między tabloidyzacją a afiliacją religijną na Facebooku. Religia i media we współczesnym świecie*, part 1: *Prasa i telewizja*, "Przegląd Religioznawczy" 2011, no. 1, p. 249 et seq.

Church), account for approximately 95% of the population. Can one recognise that it is this majority, and not the minority, that determines the quality of Catholicism in Poland? This question is essentially rhetorical. As such, my main reason for posing it is to encourage serious discussion regarding religion and religiosity in our country.

Although one cannot of course say that there are no such discussions, neither can one say that they do not include issues that lead participants to occupy predetermined positions and to attribute the other side with attempting to besmear what they hold sacred. The issues of alcoholism, homosexuality and paedophilia among the clergy were, and to some extent still are, such issues. Obviously no serious research will allege that these phenomena are on a mass scale. But not one of them will state, or at least should not, that they are of such marginal significance that essentially there is either nothing to talk about, or that if the topic is raised then it is among a narrow group of specialists, and occurs without significant publicity for the findings of these discussions. And if somebody does not comply to this recommendation, even if they have many years of research experience to their name, or a long list of thoroughly documented publications, it may happen (and on more than one occasions has) that there is no room for this person either in higher places of learning run by the Church, or among those with whom a significant portion of the Church's representatives would be prepared to hold serious discussion. Such incidents of exclusion are known to me personally. However, I shall not be giving the names of those excluded here, as I would not care for this discussion into radicalism in religion and in the narratives of the study of religion, to ultimately boil down to personal matters.

Chapter 10

"Replacements" of traditional religions

The list of these substitutes is diversified, with some of them being of longer and others of shorter tradition. The list embraces all sorts of social ideologies. A relatively shortest tradition characterizes jogging with its concomitant belief that running might be a successful remedy for various ailments. I would like to pay a little attention to each of these substitutes.

The cult of science

The beginning of this cult should be traced back to those who, in ancient times, made attempts at self-determination through their opposition to magicians. As time went by, they started to call themselves philosophers – the name signified not only those who particularly strongly cherished wisdom but also made a lot of effort to attain it. In the first period – falling on IV–V century BC – it had more to do with such human skills as practical adeptness or such a skill that allowed for achieving specific benefits than with human knowledge, which meets the requirement of truth, verification or intersubjective validity. And without these, it is difficult to speak of any science.

Still, such sciences also appeared in those distant times. Mathematics was one of them. Pythagoras (born around 572 BC) was one of its most outstanding representatives in that period. However, not a single written work by this Greek philosopher and mathematician survived and all the information upon his scientific achievement comes from his followers or from his later biographers, such as Diogenes Laërtius. According to his account, "Pythagoras brought geometry to perfection," and "used

definitions in mathematics."[1] He points out the close connection between then religion and religiosity, including his being initiated into Egyptian misteria, while also pointing out such disciples and adherents of his that treated him as God ("his disciples were called prophets of the word of God"). What had a great bearing on the conception and foundation of this cult was Phytagoras' taking over some of the elements of Orphism. On the other hand, what had a bearing on his survival into the forthcoming ages was him being granted such „monuments" as the ones that appear in Porphyry's *Life of Pythagaros*.[2] Even in Augustine's *Civitas Dei* – a work debunking false beliefs and cults from the Christian point of view – one can find many a positive comment on Pythagors' achievements. It confirms to some degree the thesis that for religious and quasi-religious cults to last, it is important not only for them to be practiced but also to be held in high esteem by somebody of authority.[3]

In the Middle Ages, the cult of science did not die out as much as it was situated in such a way that it should not threaten the Christian beliefs and practice; and, even more hopefully, that it should support this religion. In many periods of this highly diversified epoch, it look different. I will only refer to this period in which what appeared was first universities and the people who felt affiliated more with universities than with Church. One of such people was a professor of the university of Paris and that was Pater Abelard (1079–1142). Jacques Le Goff, in his monograph dedicated to intelligentsia in the Middle Ages, calls him "a pride of Parisian centre," "the first great modern intellectual – as far as modernity in XII century was possible at all – the first professor, "a knight of dialectics."[4] In the history of scholarship, he is recorded as a grand logician and a participant in the medieval dispute over universals; in the said dispute he was in favour of moderate universalism – also labelled as *sermonism*. The problem was that a diametrically different position was adhered to by the so-called conceptual realists, including such Christian authorities as St. Bernard – also a professor of the university of Paris and one of the main opponents of Abelard. After all, that was not the only divergence between his views and the ones proclaimed by the Church. What follows from the list of his

[1] Cf. Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Hastings 2017, p. 472.

[2] Cf. Porhyry, *Life of Pythagaros*, Cambridge 2014.

[3] Cf. Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, North Charleston 2015.

[4] Cf. J. Le Goff, *Les Intellectuels au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1957.

fallacies as recorded by the Council of Soissons is that he also misconceived of the issue of Trinity as well as the divine and human nature of Christ. What should a good Christian and a member of a church community do in this situation? It is simple: he should submit to those on the part of whom there was a magisterial authority. However, Abelard had been long resisting such a submission. What is more, he embarked on „an intellectual crusade" against church authorities, including "the most famous of the Parisian masters, William of Champeaux."

In the next centuries, there appeared different opinions on both Abelard and his academic opponents. Those who inclined towards the cult of science perceived him as a sort of saint defending such a grand cause as the freedom of inquiry or free speech. It is exactly in this context that the scholar is presented in the above-cited work of Jacques Le Goff, an exquisite medievalist but also a scholar evaluating the achievements of that epoch from such a point of view that has little to do with the Christian faith or, say, with a deeper understanding for those reasons the Church representatives were driven by.

Certainly, one can enumerate more examples of building such "altars" to science and of presenting particular scholars as "martyrs" in the fight for its values and grandeur. Still, I would prefer to go on to invoke the case of building these "altars" in such a way that at least at the first glance it is difficult to recognize that we do deal with this very altar-building activity. The case is derived from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* by Max Weber. In principle, one normally pays attention to the said ethic, or the said spirit, and most hopefully – to both of them. However, the author of this work believes that the basic issue at stake is, first, the Western culture in its successive stages of development; and second, proving its peculiarity; or else – its distinctness from other cultures, such as, say, Far Eastern cultures. At the very least, this hierarchy of the importance of the issues under examination is indicated by him in his *Introductory Remarks*.[5]

As for the question about the said peculiarity of the Western Culture, he points to science "at this stage of development that we commonly perceive as 'valid' these days" and he successively enumerates – ancient and modern astronomy "with its mathematical foundation"; geometry with its rational proofs; mechanics and physics with their observation and rational experiments; chemistry with its laboratories; biology and contemporary

[5] Cf. M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London 2001.

biochemistry with their rational concepts and methods; and even law with its rational legal frameworks and such forms of thought that appeared in the Roman law and laid "foundation of the Western legal system." The common denominator for these and other achievements of the West is rationality. It constitutes a certain bridge between the achievements of the Western art (alluded to in the further part of *Introductory Remarks*) and the achievements of religion and religiosity of the Western world. Still, one cannot say that if rational science had not appeared in the Western Culture, Christian churches, Christian confessions or Christian sects would not have appeared either. However, one can say that without the former, the latter would have not assumed the forms of expression they actually did at a specific time and place.

Secular social ideologies

The concept of *ideology* became commonly familiar by virtue of many-volume work by Destutt de Traycy called *Les élements d'ideologie* [Elements of Ideology] (published in 1801–1815).[6] The concept let him distinguish a philosophical school which subsumed such enlightened philosophers as Hélvetius or Holbach, and such natural scientists as Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis or Constantin François de Chaseboeuf de Volney. In later years, the concept was given significantly different meanings, and due to Marx, it started to be associated "not only with false ideas but also with hidden particular needs of social groups." In my considerations to come, I would not like to follow Marx' recommendations as much as I would the ones appearing in the work by Karl Mannheim *An Ideology and Utopia* (1929).[7] Its author made an attempt of such sharpening of the concept of *ideology* that it should not give rise to any misconceptions. He suggested the distinction between "particular concept of ideology" ("operating on the psychological level") and the "total concept" (operating on the noological level). Simultaneously, he pointed out the historical variation of meaning of the concept and such semantic universal of it that make one, for example, "interpret the beliefs of one's adversaries as deceitful." Ideology allegedly achieved such stage of development in Enlightenment. The next stage in its devel-

[6] Cf. B. Head, *Ideology and Social Science: Destutt de Tracy and French Liberalism*, Dordrecht – Boston 1985.

[7] Cf. K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, London 1954.

opment was "historicization of the total (but still timeless) perspective on ideology." Let us note that my delineation of secular ideologies means not only distinguishing them from religious ideologies but also acknowledging that one of their common property is presenting all sorts of Churches and confessions as more or less ideologically threatening opponents.

One of such ideologies was and is – in my opinion – liberalism. Its beginnings fall on XVI century and converge with those religious movements which – such as puritanism in England or all sorts of reformation movement in Continental Europe – claimed a right to practice such a religion which, in the opinion of the members of the said movements, is the most proper. In the next century, their actions led up to – first, political protest in the parliament and when it proved insufficient – to the confrontation of its own forces with those forces that supported the king Charles I and Anglican Church. It must be admitted that they were victorious in the battlefield but it was not this sort of success which would protect them from the possible dangers emanating from monarchy and Anglican Church. Hence, among others, there appeared all sorts of ideologues endorsing their interests by virtue of the former's intellect and writing skills.

One of them was John Locke, the author of – among others – *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. What is put in the foreground in *A Letter* is the issue of freedom of conscience – a freedom subsumed under – at the more mature stage in the development of liberal ideology – the so-called personal freedoms (with freedom of thought, of speech and of press to complement the former). Locke made it clear that freedom of conscience will not be devoid of serious risks as long as till one legally separates the state from church.[8] Thus, conceiving of Man (capitalized by Locke) and of the state and church (written with small letters) was enthusiastically recognized by those who regarded themselves as enlightened to such an extent that they could make reasonable use of these and some other freedoms (such as political or economic freedoms).

In France, they largely contributed to the confrontation with the forces of the so-called *ancien régime*; and later on, to depriving them of the most significant positions in the state apparatus. These events were recorded in history under the label of The Great French Revolution. One cannot maintain that its main driving force were liberals and their ideology. After all, these forces were highly diversified. In this group, there were also

[8] CF. J. Locke, *Four Letters on Toleration*, London 1870.

individuals not having anything in common with liberalism, which was very conspicuously evidenced in 1792–1795, that is in the period of the terror of the most radical political movements (such as Sans-cullotes or Jacobins). Before it happened, though, it was moderate parties that came into the limelight. It in exactly in this movement that one should seek for pioneers of liberalism. At the first stage of this revolution, what could be counted as more significant success was not only integrating the Catholic Church – functioning as "a state within the state" – into state organizational structures; but also bringing about the enactment of *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* 26th August 1789 by the France's National Constituent Assembly.

This classical document may be severely criticized and there were indeed many serious indictments directed against it. Still, the document is definitely not bereft of faith in the abilities of "The Man and the Citizen" to reasonably lead their lives and to get on well with other individuals similar to him. It should be noted that its title does not speak of "men and citizens" but of "man and citizen." Most certainly, it is no accident since its ideological forefathers were convinced that what really matters is an individual, whereas the society is an aggregate of better or worse organized individuals. It should be also noted that the documents speaks only of earthly rights of the said man and citizen – such as "liberty, property, security and opposition to repression" (art. II).[9] At the same time, it almost entirely skips the issues related to religion and religiosity. Only in art. X there is a short note on these issues – however, still related to the problems of this world. What is stated there is that "nobody should be repressed because of his beliefs, even religious ones, providing that revealing them should not interfere with the public order as stipulated by the legislation." Certainly, it does not mean that those for whom the document was an expression of their social hopes did not suffer any conscience-related inconveniences. However, there is no doubt that they did not find it proper to manifest them in such a way that they would become a public matter. In France – the country in which it was reiterated for centuries that it is the eldest daughter of the Catholic Church – it was stated most clearly and openly when liberals found themselves in bodies wielding power and their ideology became a benchmark for judging the propriety of a conduct in public sphere. However, it happened as late as in the half of XIX century. Before liberals got their success, they

[9] Cf. Ch. Fauré (ed.), *Les déclarations des droits de l'homme de 1789*, Paris 1988.

were to fight many a battle with the old and new opponents – to give but a few examples: Restoration period (it falls on 1815–1830) or the times of the Second French Empire (1851–1870). Then, French liberals had to fight one more ideological battle for social recognition and the establishment of their ideology – such as the battle with the Catholic Church raging about freeing public education from the umbrella of the latter; or the battles with the growing in strength labour class and its leftist ideology. In the half of XIX century, there appeared a formidable competitor for liberals when it comes to winning people's hearts and minds, that is Marxist ideology, referred to by its ideological forefathers as – first 'socialist' and a bit later (after them realizing that then socialism "did not suit them") 'communist.' As time went by, the ideology was adhered to by quite a numerous bunch of followers from all over the world; and also by experts thereupon who analyzed it thoroughly and they answered the question: how could it happen that what was first perceived as one of many voices of protest against social injustice could have given rise to the declaration of faith or a large "mass of labourers of cities and villages" as well as their respective leaders and the intelligentsia solidarizing with them.

The list of studies over Marxism and communism is not only long but also enormously diversified. It is because some of them were done for apologetic reasons, whereas the others – for critical ones. The same applies to the studies devoted to liberalism and religious traditions. However, there are such analyses of this ideology that the authors of which try to maintain neutrality or at least maximum scholarly objectivity. What fits the above description is the monograph – often cited in the present paper – *An Ideology and Utopia* by Karl Mannheim; or the monograph *The End of Ideology* by Daniel Bell.[10] The author of the former treats socialist and communist ideology jointly, labelling them as "socialist-communist utopia." He equates it – within his framework of „decisive turning points" – with the fourth form of the Utopian consciousness; the remaining three of them being "the orgiastic chiliasm of Anabaptists," "the liberal humanitarian idea," and "the conservative idea." Distinguishing first three utopias and the ideologies connected therewith has an important bearing on the characteristics of the fourth of them because the latter determines and manifests itself externally both through the opposition to the first three of them and

[10] Cf. D. Bell, *The end of ideology: on the exhaustion of political ideas in the fifties: with a new afterword*, Cambridge, Mass. 1988, p. 397.

through making such proposals that seem – at least at the first glance – to be "advancing the same cause" as the former three. The example might be the articulation of – the same as on the ground of liberal Utopia – "the idea of freedom" or "the vision of the kingdom of liberty and equality." However, "socialist-communist utopia" – as opposed to the "liberal humanitarian idea" – is supposed to emerge "during the collapse of capitalist culture." This utopia appeared and immediately started a "relentless fight" with its ideological opponents.

It is also Daniel Bell who pays attention to that fight in his *The End of Ideology*, by recalling – among others – Marx' *The German Ideology* and, sketched in this very work, the picture of the so-called bourgeois state and by justifying its existence and the functioning of bourgeois ideology. "The implications of all this are quite direct (for Marx and Marxists – remark mine) […]. What people say they believe cannot always be taken at face value, and one must search for the structure of interests beneath the ideas; one looks not at *the content* of ideas, but their *function*. A second, more radical conclusion is that if ideas mask material interests, then "the test of truth" of a doctrine is to see what class interests it serves. In short, truth is 'class truth.'" Certainly, from the Marxist point of view, their truth is the truth of the working class – without any qualification – because they find the truth binding for all people of labour; and the one who does not work does not deserve to be respected or even sympathized with. On the other hand, "the truth of liberals" is principally "the truth of bourgeois class"; the class in which only some members work; and even that part is not without a fault because they charge for their labour more than they deserve. Such thinking is certainly only a fragment of the ideologically developed Marxist doctrine.

It is important complement are these forms of cult that were first practiced by a minor group of "associates" in conspiracy organization and later on by not only the members of more and more numerous communist parties but also large social masses. The latter appeared in the countries in which one started to implement such social justice that fit the standard of Marxist ideology. Such forms of cult were – among others – group performance of songs of labour, paying homage to those distinguished in putting the ideology into practice and organizing such manifestations supporting it that would leave no doubt as to its justifiability and driving force. Each of them could assume and did oftentimes assume various forms of expression – starting with hanging out the portraits of the founding fathers

of the ideology; and concluding with more or less forceful participation in the manifestations whose aim was the support therefor. Some of them were derived from traditional religions. The others were simply hijacked from those social organizations which – such as trade unions – were much older than Marxist ideology itself. This emulation and hijacking oftentimes proved useful in grounding this – very much alike any other – ideology. However, the revelation of this fact is not in the interest of any of them; or at least, not in the interest of those in which one is underlining the distinctness from everything that preceded it and may follow it. And which 'total' ideology does not underline this aspect?

Contemporary particular ideologies

By the phrase *particular ideologies* I refer to the distinction put forward by Karl Mannheim. Particular ideologies differ from total ones not only in the scale on which they operate but also in the degree of consciousness on the part of their respective opponents and proponents. What is more, standard ideas are less grounded in particular ideologies than in total ones. Finally, particular ideologies have a meaner theoretical background. However, it all varies across different particular ideologies and accounting for this variation requires to refer to the specific cultural realities upon which the said forms of expression are contingent. It also applies to those contemporary ideologies that are connected with doing so-called jogging.

Answers to the question: *Upon which cultural realities are they predicated on?* are highly varied. Much depends on who describes and judges them; what sort of criteria of value he applies; what ideology lies behind them; whether one has a positive or negative attitude towards them; and whether one does jogging oneself. I will not analyse those issues at length here. After all, they were subjected to scrutiny by many a significant philosopher or cultural anthropologist and there is a vast professional literature thereupon. In my perception and evaluation of the contemporary culture, I refer to some of those experts on Western culture, one of them being Alasdair MacIntyre. In the light of his determinations, in contemporary Westerm culture one holds on to the following attitudes: particularism, individualism and instrumentalism.[11] In the realm of consciousness, one

[11] Cf. A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame, 1984, p. 23.

sticks to such a self that is an aggregate of "open possibilities," In the realm of propriety of conduct, one cherishes such standards that imply the lack of "anchoring in the stable social structure." Generally, I find this recognition of essential properties of this culture correct. Still, I do not side with this author's belief that it means "hopeless drifting: without orientation, compass and harbour of destination" – which sooner or later must bring about a catastrophe. I believe that man of the contemporary culture has a certain orientation – yet, it is being oriented at here and now, sometimes even at what is literally within his reach. In my perception and presentation of particular ideologies, I also make use of some suggestions appearing in *Sources of the Self* by Charles Taylor. What I find particularly incisive is his claim that what is implied in the determination of the contemporary man's self is "the affirmation of ordinary life." I shall add that this "ordinariness" may, but does not have to, mean making no room for sacredness or any celebration. Sometimes it signifies an almost daily celebration – alone or in a community of followers of such a particular ideology that is tailored for their needs and possibilities of the satisfaction thereof.[12]

That seems to be the case when it comes to jogging. The mere fact that the proponents of this ideology make use of this English term is of no little significance. This term is supposed to emphasize the fact that jogging belongs to this elite of Western culture the access the which is granted by – among others – speaking English. If we were to normally say that it is all about casual running, we would not only strip this activity off the symptoms of extraordinariness but also we would weaken the belief that doing it would work such wonders as allowing us to keep fit, strengthening our immunological system or preventing cardiac disorders until the old age. What is more, in the opinion of many a proponent of jogging, doing it does not call for any exceptional spendings, and neither for exceptional efforts. Certainly, the former and the latter can occur, but it would already imply being seriously initiated into it and having already entered a circle of the chosen ones who can afford to buy branded shoewear, clothing and equipment to measure one's track, velocity and blood pressure etc. The initiation can be instantiated to even a higher degree when it comes to doing jogging for the sake of preparing for marathons and semi-marathons. There is no shortage of people willing to take them up, which is evidenced by the

[12] Cf. Ch. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge 1989, p. 211 et seq.

growing number of marathons and participants therein. Still, they do not rank as a mass phenomenon (after all not everybody can afford to make the effort connected therewith and covering the cost of participation in them).What is significant, though, is not only the sheer number of people participating in marathons but also of those who support them and follow the best of them in their mind's eye – being comfortably located in front of their TV sets or watching them live; and note how many "professional" comments and criticism is directed at those who run in marathons but actually lag behind.

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