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The Concept of the “Triple Teacher” in Education for a Creative Life

ABSTRACT

This article explores the concept of the “Triple Teacher” developed by Zbigniew Marek and Anna Walulik, in the context of educating for a creative life. The focus of the research is a model of education for a creative life, based on empirical studies investigating the relationship between religiosity and creative behaviors. The findings suggest that educational efforts should not be limited to shaping specific behaviors alone. This does not imply abandoning traditional educational practices but rather calls for a shift in pedagogical thinking and action—referred to here as educating for a creative life, which requires not merely cultivating creative behaviors but transforming one’s life into a “masterpiece of art” (John Paul II).

The concept of the “Triple Teacher” embodies this approach, which encompasses the relationships between the External Teacher, the Internal Teacher, and the Transcendent Teacher. In Christianity, personal God is understood as the Transcendent Teacher. The roles of these teachers overlap, complement, and interpenetrate one another. While their boundaries may be difficult to delineate precisely, they become clearly evident in the process of interpreting educational situations based on a personalistic concept of education. Each of these roles is important for educating individuals to navigate postmodernity and to live a creative life.

KEYWORDS

creative life, education
for a creative life,
relationship, “Triple
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Introduction

The experiences of teaching practitioners show a number of challenges faced by both teachers and students today. Increasingly, parents struggle to cope with their children, more children and adolescents feel “afraid” to go to school, and it is becoming rare to find teachers who are satisfied with their work.¹ The problems of adolescents—including anxiety, depression (Jęczmińska 2024), and a reluctance to learn—have motivated adults to seek alternative educational strategies beyond the dominant approaches. This coincides with the conclusions drawn from empirical research on the religiosity and creativity of young adults (Paślawska-Smęder, Walulik 2024). Statistical analyses and interpretations of the data suggest that the foundation of successful educational processes, particularly in upbringing, lies in a personalistic relationship between the participants in this process.

A personalistic approach to upbringing is based on the principle of the unity of human cognition, whose central characteristic is the pursuit of truth. Personalistic pedagogy, as a critical response to traditional pedagogical theories and practices, assumes the protection of human rights and dignity as its main postulate. It calls for treating individuals as subjects of upbringing, not objects. This approach assumes that the subject of upbringing is the person, and the goal is not to create an ideal of a perfect human being but to promote a deeper understanding of the complexities and conditions of an individual’s unique existence. Additionally, a personalistic approach to upbringing is a safeguard against the risks of ideological manipulation (Kiereś 2016).

Personalistic pedagogy integrates the essential nature of the person with existential, socio-historical, and cultural conditions. It continually seeks appropriate answers not only in theoretical realms but also in practical educational activities (Nowak 2019). In this sense,

1 These conclusions are drawn from my empirical research, which was not conducted as a separate research project but rather as part of my role as a school pedagogue. The analysis was based on existing data, including reports prepared annually by psychologists, school pedagogues, and school counselors. These reports contained information on the number of students, teachers, and parents who received psychological and pedagogical support, the reasons for providing this support, and the methods and forms of assistance employed. Between 2020 and 2024, a total of 900 students received such support.

personalistic pedagogy is not in crisis, as its foundation remains centered on the understanding of the human person. Personalistic thinking and action, particularly in relation to the connections between participants in upbringing, have been referred to as education for a creative life—one that is fulfilled and happy. The formation of such relationships in educational practice is supported by the “Model of Upbringing for a Creative Life.” This model was developed through the identification of the moderating, mediating, and synergistic effects of the relationship between personalistic religiosity and creative behavior (Paślawska-Smeđder, Walulik 2024: 206–216).

Theoretical basis for the development of the model of education for a creative life

The theoretical foundation of the model is grounded in the pedagogy of accompaniment (Marek 2017) and the psychology of creativity (Nęcka 2001; Popek 2001; Strzałecki 2003). The pedagogy of accompaniment involves identifying and describing the co-presence of the participants in the educational process. Its value lies in its connection to educational concepts that have been tested over four centuries, and that are built upon the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola (Marek, Walulik 2022). The essence of the tradition of educational accompaniment is linked to a distinct recognition of the dignity of the person and the appreciation of the subjectivity of both participants in the educational process.

The pedagogy of accompaniment specifically portrays the teacher as a subject who accompanies the other subject: the student. This relationship is grounded in trust between two individuals who are both subjects within a shared dynamic. The teacher’s task, as a companion to the student, is to understand the contexts in which the student lives and the experiences they accumulate and to provide assistance in reflecting, acting, and evaluating those actions. The personalistic nature of this relationship is especially evident in its emphasis on valuing each individual’s freedom, dignity, and autonomy. The pedagogy of accompaniment embodies the concept of *cura personalis*, which stresses the importance of individualized care, and the principle of *magis*, or striving for more (Marek 2017: 292–295).

In this understanding, accompaniment can be seen as a metaphor for a shared journey toward achieving a common goal (Walulik 2024).

The second pillar of the theoretical foundation for the “Model of education for a creative life” is creativity. The traditional definition of creativity, which has been revisited and refined by researchers across various fields—philosophy, aesthetics, art theory, and economics—includes a constant component whose scope is defined by the triad: creator, creative process, and work. These elements underpin the concept of creativity referred to as the “four P’s” (Person, Process, Product, Press). Some researchers propose adding “persuasion” or “potential” as an additional “P” (Kaufman 2011: 29), while others pay attention to factors that influence a creative attitude, such as novelty, value, and environment (Nęcka 2001: 13–14).

As a research category, creativity requires further elaboration of terms like creativity, innovation, and novelty, particularly in relation to creative behavior (Popek 2016: 17). Creative behavior is expressed through a novel approach to the world, courage in seeking effective solutions, and defying stereotypes. It is characterized by nonconformity, heuristic thinking, an appreciation of life, ego strength, inner direction, self-fulfillment, and cognitive flexibility (Popek 2000; Strzałecki 2003: 83). Creative behavior is a component of creative attitude, which itself results from the integration of intellectual abilities and personality traits (Stasiakiewicz 1999: 65). However, features describing creative behavior or attitudes alone do not fully encapsulate the concept of education for creative living. Upbringing for a creative life involves complex interactions “between” and “within” educational relationships and the cause-and-effect dynamics that unfold over time. Its goal is to foster thinking and actions that “awaken what is human in man” (Grzegorzewska 2002: 131), or in other words, to shape one’s life into a “masterpiece of art” (John Paul II 1999: No. 2). A central element in this process is the concept of the “Triple Teacher” (Walulik, Marek 2020b: 63).

Methodology of the research on the “Model of education for a creative life”

The model of education for a creative life, in which the relationship between the subjects of upbringing plays an important role, was

constructed as a result of reflection on the results of an exploratory empirical study. The study included women and men in early adulthood: third- and fourth-year students from four Krakow universities. Data from the questionnaires were collected from 180 individuals: 74 women and 106 men studying in various fields (31 women in vocal arts studies, 43 in commodity studies, 34 men in cultural studies, and 72 in telecommunications).

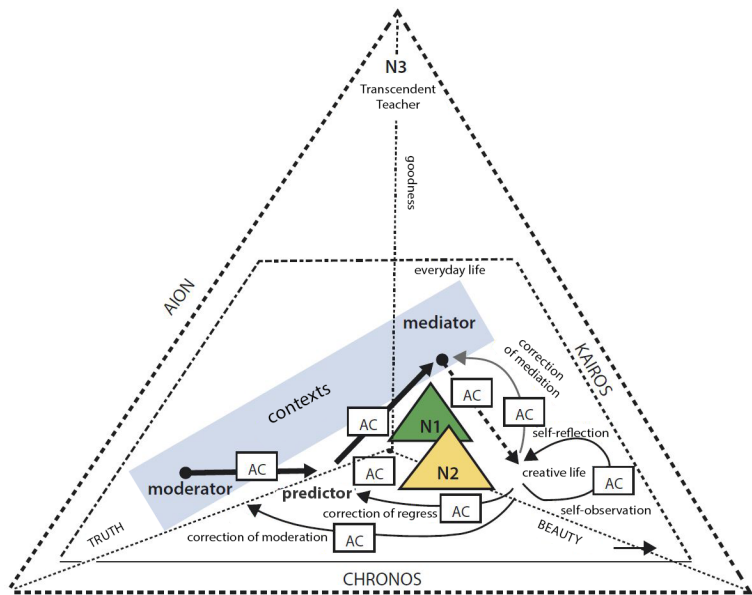
The data for the analysis was gathered using several research tools. The first was the Questionnaire of Creative Behavior (Polish abbreviation: KANH), by Stanisław Popek, which examines conformism and non-conformism, as well as heuristic and algorithmic behavior (Bernacka, Popek, Gierczyk 2016). The second tool was the Personal Religiosity Scale (Polish abbreviation: SRP) by Romuald Jaworski, which assesses faith, morality, religious practices, and religious self-concept (Jaworski 1998, 2001). Another instrument used was the Creative Behavior Style Questionnaire (Polish abbreviation: STZ) by Andrzej Strzałecki, which diagnoses creative behavior based on parameters such as approval of life, ego strength, self-fulfillment, cognitive flexibility, and inner direction (Strzałecki 2001). Additionally, the Scale of Reciprocal Relationships (Polish abbreviation: SWO), developed by the author of this article, was used to describe attitudes toward oneself, others, and God. Finally, the Psychopedagogical Aspects of Creativity (Polish abbreviation: PAT) Questionnaire, also created by the author, examined openness to new ideas and concepts, striving to create original solutions, participation in culture and the arts, sharing good ideas and practices, as well as striving to improve everyday life (Paślawska-Smęder, Walulik 2024).

The subject of the study was the areas of young adult activity, defined by two categories: religiosity and creative behavior. The participation of young adults in the research is significant because they provide a perspective shaped by their experiences as both adults and as individuals who remember their childhood and adolescence. Their perspective on education for a creative life is both fresh and reflective. The results of the study showed that, for young people, one of the most essential elements of upbringing is being in a multi-context intra- and interpersonal relationship, including a transcendent relationship. The category of religiosity was examined from the perspective of Christianity, while creative behavior was assessed based

on self-perception along two continua: conformism versus non-conformism and algorithmic behavior versus heuristic behavior. The relationships between variables in the areas of religiosity and creativity are dynamic and can form a strategy for self-fulfillment and finding one's place in the world. The constructed model is the outcome of achieving the theoretical goal (Paśławska-Smęder, Walulik 2024: 129) and can serve as the foundation for developing a coherent concept of education for a creative life.

The model of education for a creative life presents a triadic view of the educational process, incorporating a triple pedeutological dimension ("Triple Teacher"), a triple temporal ontology (Chronos, Kairos, Aion), and a triple structure of cause-effect relationships (direct, mediating, and moderating interactions). Within this framework, education for creative living emerges as a complex interaction "between" and "within" these processes (see Fig. 1).²

Fig. 1. Model of education for a creative life



Source: the author's own work.

² For a detailed discussion of the model and its components, see Paśławska-Smęder and Walulik (2024).

The author of this article focuses on one component of this model: the idea of the triple teacher in education. Reflection on the role of the triple teacher introduces a new dimension to pedagogical thinking and practice. However, research in this area encounters numerous barriers, including issues of subjectivity, methodological difficulties, the need for long-term observations, and the ever-changing nature of social reality. The concept of the triple teacher includes three distinct roles: the direct teacher (oneself, referred to as the Internal Teacher in the “Model of education for a creative life” and labeled in Fig. 1 as N1); the indirect teacher (peers and other adults, referred to as the External Teacher in the model and labeled in Fig. 1 as N2); and the Transcendent Teacher (spiritual and moral values or God, named the Transcendent Teacher and labeled in Fig. 1 as N3). This concept is complex and can be interpreted in different ways by both researchers and participants

Upbringing, as a highly subjective process, presents additional challenges. Individual experiences of upbringing can differ significantly, making it difficult to establish a uniform, objective measure of its effectiveness based on this concept. Furthermore, operationalizing the variable “creative life” poses difficulties due to the multi-dimensional nature of the term. Evaluating the quality of relationships between the different types of teachers (direct, indirect, and transcendent) and their impact on education requires sophisticated and comprehensive research tools, many of which may not yet exist or be fully developed. Additionally, selecting an appropriate research sample may be difficult, as the concept of the triple teacher may be implemented differently across various cultural and social contexts. A diverse sample is necessary to capture the breadth of educational experiences.

The long-term nature of the research process is another significant factor, as the effectiveness of upbringing for creative living often requires longitudinal studies to fully observe its influence on an individual’s development. Short-term studies may fail to adequately capture the broader impacts of upbringing. Measuring these impacts also requires advanced statistical methods to provide clear and reliable results. Finally, preparing individuals for an unknown future demands flexibility and adaptability, which adds another layer of complexity to evaluating the effectiveness of educational and parenting strategies.

Consideration of these constraints can contribute to more precise planning of future research and a deeper understanding of this complex educational process. These limitations suggest that while quantitative research has provided a framework for constructing a model of education for a creative life, interpreting its individual components requires a qualitative research strategy. Accordingly, in describing the role of the triple teacher in the process of education for a creative life, hermeneutical principles—understood as the discovery of meaning—have been applied. The process of interpretation follows a spiral structure, where understanding begins with simple concepts and progressively ascends to more complex levels. It is an endless journey and a continuous search for answers to the questions raised (Szulakiewicz 2004: 74).

Creative life

Given the complexity and variety of contexts that must be considered when understanding creativity and upbringing, reflections on the role of the “triple teacher” in education for creative living suggest that creative life cannot be limited to creative behavior alone. The essence of this term is metaphorically expressed by John Paul II in his *Letter to Artists*: “All men and women are entrusted with the task of crafting their own life: in a certain sense, they are to make of it a work of art, a masterpiece” (John Paul II 1999: No. 2). The Pope draws our attention to the inherently creative nature of every person’s life. This means that the pursuit of a creative life has an egalitarian dimension.

The direction of contemporary thought on creativity, accessible to everyone, poses a challenge to the educational process. It is clear that it is impossible to prepare individuals once and for all for all the tasks that await them in the future. In the rapidly changing postmodern world, even defining or predicting those tasks is difficult. This reality necessitates finding ways to cultivate an understanding of the importance of a creative life—that is, a life considered fulfilling and happy. Abraham Maslow sought to answer the question of how to teach people to aspire to live well. According to him, a good life is one that is perceived as both fulfilled and happy (Maslow 2013). Such a desire cannot be satisfied solely by material goods, the consumerism promoted by postmodernity, the arbitrariness of truth, or virtual

spaces. Therefore, education must focus on processes and factors that encourage creative living.

Creative living is the ultimate goal that the suggested educational model aims to achieve. A *sine qua non* of a creative life is self-observation and self-reflection, with self-observation preceding self-reflection. Creative life is fulfilled in everyday experiences, which are shaped by time understood in three dimensions: *Chronos*, *Kairos*, and *Aion*. *Chronos* stands for physical time; it encompasses sequential events and represents what is objective and external. *Kairos* unveils the meaning of these events, while *Aion* addresses the ultimate purpose of life, connected to the need and ability to transcend the material—the eschatological perspective (Marek, Walulik 2019: 79–142).

Feedback and corrections play a crucial role in education for creative living. Corrections contribute to upbringing by leading to self-education in three areas: correcting shortcomings or mistakes, optimizing existing strategies of upbringing, and charting new courses of action. Moreover, the relationships between the various participants in the educational process are vital. Of particular importance is the relationship between the three teachers, which is embedded in a broad temporal, ontological, and pedeutological framework. These relationships are multifaceted, taking on mediating, moderating, and synergistic roles.

The idea of the Triple Teacher in the Model of education for a creative life

The first teacher is the Internal Teacher—one's own self, who becomes a teacher to oneself. The next is the External Teacher, who, whether institutionally or (perhaps even more significantly) occasionally, participates in direct activities for education and upbringing, either in a planned or unplanned manner. The third teacher is the Transcendent Teacher, who transcends the sensory cognition of the Internal and External Teachers. The Internal Teacher embodies a distinct set of personal, cultural, and anthropological qualities that enable individuals to learn, engage in inductive and deductive reasoning, accumulate experience, and discern truth from falsehood. This aspect holds axiological value because of its connection to conscience

and the ability to interpret personal intuitions (Marek 2005: 89–116). It is characterized by both private self-consciousness—awareness of one’s own identity and experiences—and public self-consciousness, which involves understanding how others perceive oneself (Crisp, Turner 2009: 30).

The Internal Teacher also includes a system of normative beliefs, often linked to fragmentary or complex social systems. It is deeply rooted in conscience and ethical intuitions which are guided by the principles of goodness, truth, and beauty. The actions of the Internal Teacher, who is simultaneously a student and a teacher, are shaped by deeply ingrained beliefs from earlier stages of education. The experiences of the Internal Teacher occur through introspection, in which beliefs about the validity of one’s judgments are often held with unwavering conviction. The Internal Teacher is a lifelong learner, who draws knowledge both from personal experiences and from other teachers. However, it can appear multidimensional, often marked by inconsistencies and internal conflicts resulting from the integration of external influences.

The qualities mentioned are also relevant to the second type of teacher in this model: the External Teacher. The interpretation of the External Teacher extends beyond the traditional view of a teacher as a qualified professional with teaching and learning skills, who imparts knowledge and is considered a role model. This role can be performed by a parent, school teacher, tutor, mentor, friend, or even a chance encounter with someone whose influence opens new perspectives on self-discovery. Teachers within institutions employ a variety of pedagogical methods, tailoring them to their own abilities and the developmental needs of their students. Educators in the school system adopt diverse pedagogical approaches, and those with extensive professional experience and strong skills often emerge as leaders for young people. Conversely, teachers who focus solely on the formal aspects of teaching without adequate competencies tend to have a more limited impact on the development of youth.

Like the Internal Teacher, the External Teacher can vary from highly competent and creative to less effective and rigid. Importantly, their role is not confined to the framework of the institution. The External Teacher also continuously evolves and strives for personal and professional growth. The relationship between the

External Teacher and the student is characterized by openness and care, emphasizing the development of the desired qualities in the student. The External Teacher plays a dual role: on one hand, they are involved in the process of upbringing, supporting the development of a creative life; on the other hand, they defy stereotypes, and identify factors that either facilitate or hinder upbringing—factors that may not be immediately visible. The relationship with the External Teacher involves two parties: the student and the teacher/master. This interaction is self-regulating and not limited to actions that are externally imposed by the teacher. The student is able to adapt their own path toward living creatively. Facilitators and mediators within this relationship greatly expand the potential for educating toward a creative life.

The teacher/master witnesses various direct, mediating, and moderating interactions. By analyzing these observations and drawing conclusions, they can implement selected educational interventions. Their involvement in education for creative living is so vital for both parties that the dynamic and evolving relationship between the teacher and the student meets the criteria for creative activity, regardless of external conditions. The student relies on the experience and knowledge of the teacher/master, whose example is a key element in education for creative living. Through their life and work, the teacher/master demonstrates and embodies the principles of a creative life (Marek, Walulik 2019). The role of the teacher/master in the model under discussion can be described as an arena in which direct, mediating, and moderating interactions occur. This article's approach to the term "mediation" broadens its conventional understanding as a conflict resolution technique. It adopts a deeper, etymological interpretation of mediation, derived from the Latin verb *mediare* which means the act of mediating itself. Thus, mediation is understood as an activity that fulfills an intermediary role. It is important to emphasize that effective mediation requires at least two groups, with a mediator possessing the necessary skills to bridge them. In a social context, especially in education, mediation is a key element that enriches direct pedagogical interactions by integrating contextual factors.

Moderation also plays a significant role. The original meaning of "moderation" pertains to balance and restraint, while the terms

“moderator” and “moderant” refer to those who perform a moderating, unifying, or mediating function. Over time, the term has come to include roles such as intervener, retarder, arbitrator, referee, and peacemaker, though none fully capture the pedagogical essence of moderation. Similar to mediation, the need for moderation arises from the existence of two groups in a particular relationship, where the moderator influences one party to either strengthen or weaken the relationship. Human relationships abound in instances of moderations in which the moderators may include people, objects, values, or symbols. In the process of upbringing—especially in fostering a creative life—numerous important moderations and moderator roles are present.

In the model presented, mediation and moderation are treated as contextual factors. The key contexts are cultural and religious. Cultural contexts shape how knowledge and experiences are perceived and interpreted, while religious contexts deal with the domain of assumed values and transcendental elements. In contrast to the cultural context, which relies on stable relationships between its components, the situational context is characterized by variability and pertains to individual cases. The situational context is indirectly linked to similar contexts experienced by others.³ Contextuality is a co-occurrence that is essential for fully understanding main influences. Social reality is multifaceted, and due to its constant exposure and accessibility, it can function either as a primary influence or as a context. Moreover, a contextual factor can be transformed into a primary factor, and vice versa.

The third type of teacher, the Transcendent Teacher, is an absolute being that transcends the consciousness of both the Internal Teacher and the External Teacher (Walulik 2023: 69). The External Teacher represents any individual who, consciously or unconsciously, participates in the educational process. The Internal Teacher is a function that an individual performs independently in their own development. The Transcendent Teacher, in the model under discussion, embodies the highest point of reference and is identified with the personal God as understood in Catholic theology.

3 For further details, refer to Paślawska-Smęder and Walulik (2024: 290–297).

The presence and influence of the Transcendent Teacher in fostering a creative life are based on several assumptions. Creative life is embedded in a framework of values referred to as transcendentals. Life is considered creative when it is both beautiful and good. The Transcendent Teacher reflects humanity's deeply ingrained aspiration for goodness, truth, and beauty. From a research perspective, it is posited that "God represents the highest and ultimate value for man. He ... offers Himself to people, inviting them to share in His life, love, and happiness. The discovery of Transcendence—God as the highest value—not only provides people with a sense of security but also motivates them to strive for this value" (Marek, Walulik 2020a: 28).

Creative life manifests as an inner experience that draws a person closer to God. Acceptance of the Transcendent Teacher and the practice of introspection influence the self-development process led by the Internal Teacher and enhance the pedagogical wisdom of the External Teacher. Often, however, the Internal Teacher and the External Teacher struggle to assess the value and significance of the contexts in which they conduct educational activities. There is even a risk of mutual negation or elimination of the Internal and External Teacher through denial, omission, or failure to recognize their roles. Additionally, there is a danger of relegating the Transcendent Teacher to the realm of marginalized contexts, a trend that is evident in contemporary social and educational spaces. Overlooking transcendence in education risks trivializing and impoverishing the process, as it entails ignoring the religious dimension of human nature (Nowak 2002: 169).

The presence of the Transcendent Teacher offers an opportunity for the other two teachers to transcend their prior knowledge and life experiences toward a deeper understanding of their own lives and the lives of others. In Christianity, the mission of the Transcendent Teacher—God—is reflected in encouraging non-conformist and heuristic behavior. Communicating truths about humanity and the world, He invites individuals to cooperate (Marek, Walulik 2019: 63–87) in the creation of goodness and beauty, as He Himself embodies Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. By aiding individuals in discovering knowledge about themselves and reality, God supports personal development, inspires creators and artists, and serves as the ultimate source of beauty, including paradoxical beauty.

Pedagogical implications of the idea of the Triple Teacher

There are inter-teaching relationships between the Internal Teacher and the External Teacher, the Internal Teacher and the Transcendent Teacher, and the External Teacher and the Transcendent Teacher. Coordination, interdependence, and cooperation characterize the interactions among these three teachers. Each of these relationships is key for a complete understanding of education for a creative life (Walulik 2011: 33–34). The interaction between the Internal Teacher (student) and the External Teacher is the most visible and easiest to evaluate. The External Teacher typically possesses a higher level of knowledge, experience, and specialized skills compared to the Internal Teacher. The External Teacher may or may not be a professional educator with expertise directly tied to their profession. An important aspect of this role is that it is often one of public trust, which requires the highest levels of skill, qualifications, and ethical standards (Szymańska 2019: 276–277). This relationship is multidimensional and can often be complex, ranging from authority and friendship to indifference, formality, conflict, and even rivalry (Smoter, Sury 2017).

The interactions between the External Teacher and the Transcendent Teacher are crucial, not only for the External Teacher's personal growth but also for their influence on the dynamics of their relationship with the Internal Teacher, both as a student and in personal reflection. In the process of upbringing, attention is paid to stimulating the student's development while respecting their dignity and independence. The External Teacher guides the student in learning about the world and inspires them to transcend the boundaries of everyday life. This relationship achieves a depth beyond the mere pursuit of uncovering truth (*aletheia*). In the actions and intentions of the Internal and External Teachers, the presence of the Transcendent Teacher is reflected through the values of goodness, truth, and beauty. The totality of these relationships gains profound significance in the context of a connection with a personal God, which, in Christianity, introduces the sacred into what is typically seen as profane.

The bond between the Internal Teacher and the Transcendent Teacher is based on mutual presence and does not imply any absolute domination. This interaction is marked by support, value

affirmation, and love. The connection between the Internal Teacher and the Transcendent Teacher enables a deeper understanding of oneself and others, which motivates an expanded perception of the world that transcends the limitations of material time (*Chronos*) by incorporating additional dimensions that create meaning—*Kairos* and *Aion* (Marek, Walulik 2019: 79–142). Harmonious development requires embracing all three dimensions of existence, as neglecting any of them can disrupt the process of education for creative living. Education is a purposeful action involving both the student and the teacher. It manifests in the present, but always anticipates its effects in the future.⁴

Education for a creative life is not about acquiring additional knowledge or skills. It stands in opposition to a non-creative life, which can be described as mere persistence or “vegetation,” that is, a state dominated by biological or purely existential functions. A non-creative life is one in which a person fears meaningful change, lacks a sense of self-development and an internalized value system, and struggles to cope with unfamiliar situations. Such a life disregards *Kairos* because developmental decisions are invalidated, and all areas crucial to a meaningful life are marginalized. In a non-creative life, *Kairos* becomes a state of limbo, overshadowed by the dominance of *Chronos*. In this context, *Chronos* is parameterized by specific actions aimed at maximizing resources, often understood in financial terms. The dominance of *Chronos* over *Kairos* and *Aion* reduces everyday life to the status of *homo oeconomicus*. This finite perspective of *Chronos* creates illusions that are carried into *Aion*, presenting *homo oeconomicus* as a lifelong or even infinite perspective (Walulik 2011: 33–34).

Although parallel to physical time, *Chronos* is not equivalent to it, as it covers longer life intervals. For young people, these intervals can feel as distant as the prospect of eternity in *Aion*. A characteristic of youth is the inability to imagine one’s own old age, which makes referencing distant intervals in middle or late adulthood ineffective. Physical time represents the “here and now” and corresponds to *Chronos* through concepts of measurement. These range from simple notions like “earlier” or “later” to more precise comparisons such as “shorter” or “longer.” Related to physical time is the concept of

4 For further details, refer to Paślawska-Smeđder and Walulik (2024: 290–297).

discounting, that is, seeing value in the future and enduring frustrations or setbacks in the present to achieve long-term rewards. Education for creative living is marked by high discounting, as it generates further values that, through cyclical discounting, ultimately become some of the most important gratifications in human life. This approach aims to sensitize individuals to creative, age-appropriate solutions for everyday problems. In a postmodern era marked by rapid change, ambiguity, and numerous risks, it is impossible to equip individuals once and for all to live successfully within a specific community (Paśławska-Smeđer, Walulik 2024).

Conclusion

Education for a creative life is influenced by a multitude of contextual factors. These factors are a hallmark of contemporary social reality and possess a global scope. This characteristic is particularly evident in postmodernity, which presents contexts indiscriminately, without assessing their meaning or legitimacy. In this way, the contemporary contexts of education for creative living can structurally resemble the Internet, where truths, partial truths, untruths, and lies coexist. These contexts form an amorphous set of factors, making the role of the External Teacher, supported by the Transcendent Teacher, essential as guides through this ambiguous space. Together, they serve as safe companions in bolstering self-awareness and accurate self-evaluation.

The lifelong importance of upbringing and self-education for creative living situates this issue within the andragogical-pedagogical framework, in line with the current of Christian personalism. By drawing attention to the dignity of the person and their spiritual dimension, this approach provides new rationales for human existence and reinforces the uniqueness of humanity, expressed through creative presence in the world. As this study shows, this presence is inherently relational, realized through connections: to oneself, to others, and to God. Each participant in these relationships acts as a teacher—Internal Teacher, External Teacher, and Transcendent Teacher. Through their interaction, a synergy emerges that offers a fresh perspective on the educational situation from a personalistic standpoint.

This means that each participant in an educational situation acts as a teacher to themselves and to others. At the same time, this is not the role of a teacher-expert but rather that of a teacher-friend, someone who opens new paths for understanding oneself and the world. The activity of the Internal Teacher, manifested in reflection, action, evaluation of those actions, and efforts to make positive changes, broadens self-awareness, aids in self-understanding, and encourages openness to behaviors that, while familiar, may be insufficient for a fulfilling and happy life. The presence of the External Teacher provides the Internal Teacher with a sense of security in the process of self-improvement by offering support, opportunities for constructive confrontation, and gentle corrections. Meanwhile, the Transcendent Teacher offers a broader perspective that transcends the immediate here and now. This relationship helps the student develop the competence to delay gratification, which fosters the ability to endure frustration and relate both joys and sufferings to a perspective that transcends the temporality and human understanding.

Being engaged in a triple-teacher relationship supports psychological development and equips the individual to handle various fears and difficult situations. It provides a threefold source of support, creating a safe social environment in which the student can develop themselves, find reassurance, and receive understanding. The student's awareness that they have someone to rely on during challenging times strengthens their ability to face difficulties, bolstered by the hope inspired by the testimony of the External Teacher and the guiding presence of the Transcendent Teacher.

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