Paedagogia Christiana
2/46 (2020) – ISSN 1505-6872
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/PCh.2020.017

*Piotr Domeracki**
ORCID: 0000-0003-1339-9500
Toruń, Poland

Between Monolectical and Dialectical Philosophy of Loneliness and Communitiveness

Między monolektyczną a dialektyczną filozofią samotności i wspólnotowości

Abstract: It is commonly known that maybe less solitude but more loneliness deserves on clear and firm criticism while communitiveness is assessed in a univocally positive way. This, in turn, translates to an unquestionable preference to ideas, feelings, motives and acts which are of community character and use. On the other hand, loneliness is recognised as a reason of our pain, suffering, fears, sadness and horrible despair. It results that our key ambition, need and aim should be avoiding and preventing each form of solitude or loneliness in our private and social life at all costs. But, as it occurs, this causes a lot of further – not only theoretical but unfortunately also practical – problems, which some researchers and ordinary people must face. This kind of unilateral and unambiguous interpretation of both solitude/loneliness and communitiveness I used to call 'monolectical'. In my presentation I am going to show that 'monolectics' of communitiveness or solitude/loneliness is insufficient for possibly objective and complete picture of this two. In consequence I will be arguing that monoseological discourse is able to gain it and to develop itself only by

* Dr. hab. Piotr Domeracki, Associate Professor, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Institute of Philosophy, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, email: domp@umk.pl.

turning to the dialectical method of explaining. The fundamental thesis and belief as well, expressed on the ground of the dialectics of solitude/loneliness and communitiveness, is that solitude/loneliness and communitiveness are not at all isolated but strongly complementary. A practical conclusion arises from this statement according to which each of us should intertwine in his or her life some periods of communitiveness and then some episodes of solitude.

Keywords: solitude; loneliness; communitiveness; philosophy; monoseological discourse; monolectics; dialectics.

Streszczenie: Powszechnie wiadomo, że może mniej samotność, a więcej osamotnienie zasługuje na wyraźną i zdecydowaną krytykę, podczas gdy wspólnotowość jest oceniana w sposób jednoznacznie pozytywny. Przekłada się to na niekwestionowane preferowanie idei, uczuć, motywów i czynów, które mają charakter i przeznaczenie wspólnotowe. Z drugiej strony, osamotnienie uznawane jest za przyczynę naszego bólu, cierpienia, lęków, smutku i straszliwej rozpaczy. Wynika z tego, że naszą kluczową ambicją, potrzebą i celem powinno być unikanie i zapobieganie za wszelką cenę każdej formie samotności lub osamotnienia w naszym życiu prywatnym i społecznym. Jednak, jak wiadomo, powoduje to wiele dalszych – nie tylko teoretycznych, ale niestety również praktycznych – problemów, z którymi muszą się zmierzyć niektórzy badacze i zwykli ludzie. Ten rodzaj jednostronnej i jednoznacznej interpretacji zarówno samotności, jak i wspólnotowości, zwykłem nazywać „monolektyczną". W moim przedłożeniu zamierzam wykazać, że „monolektyka" wspólnotowości lub samotności/osamotnienia jest niewystarczająca dla możliwie obiektywnego i pełnego obrazu obu tych fenomenów. W konsekwencji będę argumentował, że dyskurs monoseologiczny jest w stanie go uzyskać i rozwijać się jedynie poprzez odwołanie się do dialektycznej metody wyjaśniania. Podstawową tezą, a równocześnie przekonaniem, wyrażonym na gruncie dialektyki samotności i wspólnotowości, jest to, że samotność i wspólnotowość wcale nie występują w izolacji, lecz wzajemnie się uzupełniają. Z tego stwierdzenia wynika praktyczny wniosek, zgodnie z którym każdy z nas powinien przeplatać w swoim życiu okresy wspólnotowości epizodami samotności.

Słowa kluczowe: samotność; osamotnienie; wspólnotowość; filozofia; dyskurs monoseologiczny; monolektyka; dialektyka.

1. Monolectics of communitiveness or loneliness

Much more often than is generally believed, loneliness is exogenous (i.e. of social origin) rather than endogenous in nature (i.e. a consequence of a particular personality and character). However, the literature on the subject – which also translates into the state of social awareness – draws little attention to this fact, insistently emphasising the almost salutary qualities of the society, while at the same time reciting the demonic properties of loneliness, which, by living its own life, begins to function as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Inculcating and perpetuating among the general public, as the only legitimate – hence, in essence, indisputable conviction that man is a social being and to such an extent that the ability and willingness to cooperate with others determines his value as a person and at the same time gives value and meaning to his life – irrespective of or in spite of his own predispositions, preferences, views and tendencies – necessarily entails negativisation of seclusion, thus leading to the clearly disapproving perception of loneliness. This kind of presumption, embraced not only as a biocultural standard, but also as a scientific certainty, has a significant impact on the fact that by relying on it we become, to some extent, incapacitated and, in addition, defenceless against episodes (and even more so against prolonged periods) of loneliness that haunts us despite the social abatis. Loneliness, pushed to the margins of social life, usually enters uninvited and settles itself in its very centre. Individuals trained in and accustomed to continuous cohabitation are not able to mentally cope with this situation. Loneliness appears to them at first as a terrible injustice, a violation of existence, a disturbance – to speak after Leibniz – of the previously established order; an incomparable with anything else existential trauma; the breakdown of what is assimilated, known and shared with others; as a stigma that is socially burdensome and degrading, and thus dehumanising; a stigma upon the stone that is excluded from the game of dice, as Aristotle puts it (Aristotle, 1964, 1253a, 9, pp. 6–7). The method of scientific description and explanation of issues, problems, entities, phenomena, processes, states of affairs or structures, characterised by a monothematicism, one-sidedness, non-duality and non-alternality, is described by me as ‘monolectic’ (from the Greek μονολεκτικός). The term ‘monolectics’ (created from the Greek μονολεκτική) is used to distinguish and characterise a viewpoint, approach, position or concept opposed to the dialectic (from the Greek διαλεκτικός) optics and evaluative, highlighting or emphasising only one feature, property, function, aspect or side of the phenomenon or

problem under study. Thus, the monolectics of communitiveness means – both in theory and in practice (social, moral, political and cultural) – treating communitiveness as a fundamental, key and only dimension that defines human existence. Monolectics of solitude, in turn, means a diametrically opposed position, according to which solitude, and not communitiveness, is the fundamental and leading aspect of human existence. The dialectic approach makes both, communitiveness and loneliness into correlates, the two sides of the same existence.

Upbringing and educating in the spirit of the dialectic of loneliness and communitiveness could contribute significantly to avoiding or mitigating many of such dilemmas, problems and dramas, which of course does not mean that it would remedy them or remove them altogether. It could, however, enable individuals and entire societies to understand loneliness as an integral and equal part of life, which, on an equal footing with social integration and activism, creates man, influences his fate and determines the quality of his life and the way he lives. At this point it is difficult not to recall the significant and very suggestive observation of Paul Tillich, who in the second volume of the famous *Systematic Theology* of 1957, in the Christological part, unambiguously states the following:

> The state of existence is the state of estrangement. … Estrangement is not a biblical term but is implied in most of the biblical descriptions of man's predicament. It is implied in symbolic descriptions of the expulsion from the garden, hostility between humans and nature, hostility between brothers, confusion and estrangement among the nations, the prophets' complaints against the kings and people turning over to idols. Estrangement hides in Paul's statement that man has perversely distorted God's image into the image of idols, in his classic description of 'man who has misappropriated himself, in his vision of man's hostility towards man, which goes hand in hand with distorted desires. In all these interpretations of the human predicament, the fact of estrangement is implicitly confirmed. There is therefore certainly nothing unbiblical if, in describing the human existential situation, we use the term 'estrangement.' … Man's predicament is estrangement, but his estrangement is sin. It is not a state of things, like the laws of nature, but a matter of both personal freedom and universal destiny. (Tillich, 2004, pp. 48–49)

Tillich leaves no doubt that estrangement, which dooms man to loneliness, is much more than an episode, an incident, an interval, a gap, a crack, or a rupture within the human existence. Estrangement, which is a sign of lone-

liness, is described by him as a 'predicament, and thus a categorical term, a distinctive feature, an existential determinant. It does not exist, however, on the basis of the law of nature – a universally determining necessity, a kind of fate. Nonetheless, estrangement, and with it loneliness, remain inevitable and inalienable as a kind of 'universal destiny' (Tillich, 2004, p. 49). This, however, does not imply their absoluteness, which is expressed in the absence of contradiction and the associated total insurmountability. Since estrangement means lack of unity and remaining separated, detached, isolated from 'one's true being' (ibidem, p. 48), from what we essentially belong to (ibidem, p. 48), or more precisely – says Tillich – from 'God, other people and ourselves' (ibidem, pp. 49–50), the only conceivable and applicable panacea for alienation can be its opposite, something capable of reuniting what has been separated, namely love supported by religious faith[1] (ibidem, p. 50).

Determining human beliefs, attitudes and behaviours with a monolectic representation of the human condition, dictating its exclusively social character and function, then translates into the creation and functioning of negative stereotypes and values relating to loneliness in a society. If it is generally uncritically and universally accepted that socialisation, sociability or communitiveness is the only and exponential norm that defines the basic aspirations and goals of individual people, then it should not come as a surprise that loneliness – as the diametric contradiction of those – is equally uncritical and universally perceived as a pathology to be combated at all costs and with all available resources. I call this kind of approach and the cultural strategy manifested in it 'monolectic' to distinguish it from the dialectic approach and strategy. The monolectic hermeneutics of existence, associating it with the paradigm that defines the cultural norms of communitiveness, risks *in effectu* a misunderstanding (or overinterpretation) and a lack of or at least reduced tolerance for loneliness among its supporters, believers and promoters. Furthermore, it can also result in preconceived and expressly negative attitudes, always generating only pejorative judgements, as a result of which an individual with such an accomodation reacts to the very thought of loneliness with increased anxiety, irritation and frustration, referring to it as something extremely alien, under a learned or spontaneously triggered scheme to neutralise the unknown. Such an approach can also contribute to the weakening

[1] I discuss the issue of love as the contradiction and remedy for loneliness separately, pointing out and discussing the doubts associated with this kind of approach in the article: Domeracki P. (2014). Miłość i samotność – konfrontacje [Love and Loneliness – Confrontations]. *Filozofia Chrześcijańska, 11*, pp. 43–68.

of determination and the ability to cope with loneliness, making it objectively less tolerable.

The monolectic interpretation of human life and duties, focused around the narrowly understood requirement of sociability, was opposed, inter alia, by Blaise Pascal who did so in an uncompromising manner. He expressed his opposition most clearly with the following words:

> Nothing is so insufferable to man as to be completely at rest, without passions, without business, without diversion, without study. He then feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness. There will immediately arise from the depth of his heart weariness, gloom, sadness, fretfulness, vexation, despair (Pascal, 2003, pt. 131, p. 38). … Hence it comes that play and the society of women, war, and high posts, are so sought after. … Hence it comes that men so much love noise and stir; hence it comes that the prison is so horrible a punishment; hence it comes that the pleasure of solitude is a thing incomprehensible. (Pascal, 2003, pt. 139, p. 40)

In Pascalian criticism of the monolectic approach to communitiveness, with sociability as one of its expressions, a position alternative to it yet paradoxically equally monolectic emerges, where communitiveness is replaced by loneliness. However, due to the obvious, not only for Pascal, axiophormative (formation, education, upbringing to preferences for higher and lofty values [*scilicet* definitely not mundane behaviours]) advantage of loneliness over social motivations, the monolecticity of this approach is not – at least for its exponents – the kind of burden as in the opposite case, and even, one might say, compared to the latter proves to be its merit. For if we are mainly driven towards associating with others by the fear of loneliness resulting from the lack of understanding of it, which is furthermore correlated with the inability to use it first for one's own benefit and then for the common good, what positive can be said about social and community-forming tendencies and their results, if at their very root there is a negative motivation and escapist tendencies, and not an authentic (*respective* sincere and unaffected) desire for companionship or community?

2. The socio-holistic aversion

The philosophical, cultural and social preference for communitiveness, while delegitimising loneliness, reveals – not only in Pascal's opinion, but

also, for instance, according to Mandeville, Rousseau or Schopenhauer – the actual and, let's add, morally questionable impulses behind it. Indeed, what testimony is given by the adherents to the idea of communitiveness considering it to be only acceptable and desirable, and at the same time universal and undisputable model of shaping humanity and organising interpersonal relations, when Pascal discovers and hesitantly states that a predilection for companionship results neither from human nature nor from authentic desire, but from a simple need to replace too demanding and problematic a solitude with it. What generates most resistance and fear among individuals who curse and avoid loneliness, who vaccinate themselves against it – as it seems to them – by being continuously in company, is – to put it briefly – the associated ascetism. Thus, in solitude, the constant (daily and festive) bustle and rush (running errands, completing projects, constant meetings, assemblies, conferences, sessions, committees; solving problems, agreeing on ideas, adopting strategic plans, etc.) must give way – as Pascal notes – to a 'complete rest' (Pascal, 2003, pt. 131, p. 38).

Growing in a conviction derived from Aristotle (1964, 1253a, 9, pp. 6–7; 1253a, 12, p. 8) that the sense and purpose of every human being is collectivisation of his thoughts and practices; that the individual is only a part of a social whole; that only this whole gives meaning to the individual, provided that they function within and on behalf of this whole; indeed, growing in such a conviction, reinforced by a warning that everything that escapes or opposes them should be considered suspicious and hostile as a result of perpetual practices and social control transgresses into habit and becomes part of shared common-sense. This view and the action consistent with it become as if the second nature of man, an unreflective automatism, a natural reflex, an unquestionable obviousness. Anyone who defies them must necessarily be perceived by the general public as a sinister troublemaker, a harmful rebel, a dangerous madman, a diabolical eccentric or a desperado. This type of reasoning is supported and authorised by its philosophical ancestor, Aristotle, who in *Politics* unambiguously indicates that everyone who 'lives outside the state', 'being isolated', who 'cannot live in a community or does not need it at all, being self-sufficient', loses the communal legitimacy and becomes a 'scoundrel', 'beast' or 'superhuman being' (ibidem).

The monolectic one-sidedness and recurrent nature of uncritical action may, as a consequence, contribute to the emergence – at least in some – or pathogenic profiling of what Seweryn Dziamski calls 'the sensory-conscious structure' (Dziamski, 1996, pp. 39–40), leading to the development of a mechanism that I would call 'socioholism'. The phenomenon characterised

by it has a set of characteristics typical for various types of '-holisms'. In the case of socioholism, the symptoms which seem particularly interesting and important include – to refer to Franz Ruppert's authoritative findings (Ruppert, 2012) – uncontrolled dependence on the environment and social context (which Ruppert calls 'symbiotic dominance' [ibidem, p. 55]) and internal compulsion to integrate with it, even at the cost of one's own autonomy and security. To deprive the socioholic of social contact – regardless of its quality and true benefits – is to condemn him to the torments suffered by a workaholic unexpectedly dismissed from work. To a socioholic, loneliness is always a trauma and nothing will convince him to reconsider, and all the more to change his opinion. For such a person, loneliness is tantamount to symbolic death. Indeed, how to live and do 'without passions, without business, without diversion, without study' (Pascal, 2003, pt. 131, p. 38)? Such a man – Pascal concludes: 'feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness. There will immediately arise from the depth of his heart weariness, gloom, sadness, fretfulness, vexation, despair' (ibidem).

Who would choose to practice this kind of torture? Even Schopenhauer, while agreeing with Pascal about the qualities of loneliness – or even radicalising his approach to them – at least twice in his *Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life*, eloquently states that 'To be alone is the fate of all great minds, a fate deplored at times, but still always chosen as the less grievous of two evils (Schopenhauer, 2000, ch. 5, subch. B, pt. 9, p. 186). … Seclusion, which has so many advantages, has also its little annoyances and drawbacks, which are small, however, in comparison with those of society' (ibidem, p. 188). A similar thought, explicating Rousseau's position on the relationship between socialisation and loneliness, is formulated by Tzvetan Todorov in *Imperfect Garden*. We read in it that 'Solitude always remains deplorable, but its worst form is experienced in the midst of others: the world is a desert, the social hubbub an oppressive silence' (Todorov, 2003, p. 119).

In the monolectic interpretation of communitiveness, the factors and motives that mobilise us to join with others into larger, supra-individual wholes do not really have much meaning. Only one thing counts: the discreditation of loneliness. The same mechanism, with its astonishing regularity and consistency, also applies to what I call 'societism', namely, the organisation into social groups or the formation of friendships between people recruiting one another from higher circles, belonging to the cream of society, representing the establishment, creating an elite, functioning as celebrities, for whom the basic and overriding criterion of belonging to these environments – formerly

called somewhat ironically the 'high society'– is a real or simulated life of an elite, behind which, in general, prosaic haughtiness and artificially cultured snobbism is concealed. Schopenhauer, for instance, refers to this example of communitiveness in only one, yet very suggestive sentence: 'The so-called 'high society' recognises all virtues except the spiritual ones – these are basically a contraband' (Todorov, 2003, p. 174).

An interesting observation, in the context of the Aristotelian ethics of friendship and the ethical standards formulated on its basis, was made by Alasdair MacIntyre – which is even more surprising given his inclinations and sympathy with communitarianism – in his famous *A Short History of Ethics*, first published in 1966 (MacIntyre, 2012). The author of *After Virtue* states that Aristotle's theory of friendship does not refer to 'love for persons', but to 'love for goodness, self-control or utility of persons' (MacIntyre, 2012, Ch. 7: *Aristotle's Ethics*, pp. 120–121). An important example for our reflections on the monolectic approach to loneliness and communitiveness is provided by the Stagirite 'ideal of a great-souled man', which is the subject of MacIntyre's commentary. Because of its demonstrative and explanatory value, I shall quote it here in full:

> He admires [an Aristotelian great-souled man] all that is good, so he will admire it in others. But he needs nothing, he is self-contained in his virtue. Hence friendship for him will always be a kind of mora mutual admiration society, and this is just the friendship which Aristotle describes. And this again illuminates Aristotle's social conservatism. How could there be an ideal society for a man for whom the ideal is as ego centred as it is for Aristotle? (ibidem, p. 121)

Summarising his analyses of Aristotle's *Ethics* and its monolecticity, MacIntyre – as uncompromisingly and as if in defiance of the Stagirite himself – states that although Aristotle's man is 'a social-cum-political animal', nevertheless 'his social and political activity is not what is central', as – at least in the opinion of the British philosopher – in Aristotelianism 'the whole of human life reaches its highest point in the activity of a speculative philosopher with a reasonable income' (ibidem, p. 124). Thus, MacIntyre concludes as follows:

> Aristotle's audience, then, is explicitly a small leisured minority. We are no longer faced with an aim for human life as such, but with an aim for one kind of life which presupposes a certain kind of hierarchical social order and which presupposes also a view of the universe in which the realm of timeless truth is

> metaphysically superior to the human world of change and sense experience and ordinary rationality. All Aristotle's conceptual brilliance in the course of the argument declines at the end to an apology for this extraordinarily parochial form of human existence. (ibidem, p. 124)

Above all, MacIntyre's argument irrefutably shows that basing interpersonal ties or, to use John Bowlby's specialist terminology, creating 'attachment behaviours' and 'attachment patterns' (Bowlby, 2007) based even on such noble motives, like a selfless friendship, whose foundation, as MacIntyre says, is 'all that is good', is usually expressed in a kind of 'moral society of mutual adoration', and ends with selfish self-sufficiency, which is closer to loneliness than to community life forms.

The naive preference for social and communitarian tendencies, regardless of the rationale behind them, disregarding, on the one hand, the risks associated with them and the benefits of solitude on the other, is generally counterproductive. Without mincing his words, Schopenhauer makes the following diagnosis:

> A man's sociability stands very nearly in inverse ratio to his intellectual value: to say that 'so and so' is very unsociable, is almost tantamount to saying that he is a man of great capacity. … It is really a very risky, nay, a fatal thing, to be sociable; because it means contact with natures, the great majority of which are bad morally, and dull or perverse, intellectually. To be unsociable is not to care about such people; and to have enough in oneself to dispense with the necessity of their company is a great piece of good fortune; because almost all our sufferings spring from having to do with other people; and that destroys the peace of mind, which, as I have said, comes next after health in the elements of happiness. Peace of mind is impossible without a considerable amount of solitude. (Schopenhauer, 2000, p. 180)

The last chord of the quoted statement seems particularly interesting and important in the context of the question regarding the conditions, criteria and limits of the monolectic approach to both communitiveness and loneliness. By excluding or disregarding the dialectical perspective in the monoseological discourse, we are in fact condemning ourselves to a far-reaching discretion, bias, narrowness and rigidity of made arrangements and advocated solutions. Bringing them all down to the common denominator and significantly simplifying them in order to present them synthetically, one can say that they proclaim the following: in the case of the monolectics of commu-

nitiveness, within which there are at least two alternative approaches (optative – notional and wishful, and imperative – prescriptive; using the rhetorical nomenclature they can be otherwise described as deliberative – advisory and demonstrative – evaluative). Under the first of them (i.e. optative *vel* deliberative) it is assumed that the more socialised man is, the more sociable he is or becomes, and the more often, sustainably and for a longer period of time he is able to establish and maintain significant social interactions, the risk of him being exposed to loneliness and the related complications appears to be potentially and proportionately lower. In the imperative (prescriptive) *respective* demonstrative approach, normative optics dominates, defining communitiveness as a unique social norm and a categorical moral obligation incumbent upon a member of each community. In this order of interpretation, loneliness functions as a psycho-socio-moral pathology, which must be fought against and from which individuals and entire societies must be protected. In this approach, loneliness is treated as a result of weakness, contrariness or maladjustment. Experiencing it is perceived here as a kind of life's failure and the most serious trauma that can affect a human being.

In the case of the monolectics of loneliness, it is argued, in contrast to the explanations of the monolectics of communitiveness – by formulating in an analogy to it two alternative approaches (optative – notional and wishful, and imperative – prescriptive) – that (from optative *vel* deliberative point of view) the more man recognises, understands and values the meaning, importance and role that solitude has to play in human life; the more independent, self-sufficient and autonomous he is or becomes; the more often, sustainably and for a longer time he is able to stay in seclusion, in hiding, in the privacy of isolation, remaining alone, without complexes, delusions and social tensions, far from public engagements that destroy the tranquillity, harmony and balance of mind achieved in solitude with such difficulty, the more the risk of being exposed to constant uncertainty, variability, mediocrity and related degeneration of social life seems potentially and proportionally lower.

In an imperative (prescriptive) *respective* demonstrative approach, there is a normative optics that defines loneliness as a key development norm and an important moral obligation that every ambitious person who refuses to accept mediocrity, deficiency and falsehood of social life should strive to meet. In this order of interpretation, uncontrolled, persistent and, in particular, obsessive inclinations and aspirations to be part of the community or social life are perceived as a kind of psycho-socio-moral pathology which must be combated and from which individuals and society as a whole must be protected. In this perspective, as we have seen before, communitiveness

or sociability is treated as a result of acratic inclinations, lack of ambition, shallow personality, trivial interests or an approach of life favouring entertainment and spontaneity. Continuous search and frequent presence in company, or more precisely the inability to live without it, is treated here as a serious intellectual and moral deficit, which renders doubtful not only the individual, but also – if not primarily – the social competences of everyone who does not want or cannot eliminate it.

3. The stigma of solitary otherness

Regardless of its variety, in the philosophy of communitiveness understood monolectically, the unilateral, exaggerated and overestimated, or put simply, idealised claim of communitiveness is brought to the foreground, which, additionally, is elevated to the rank of an anthropological-ethical criterion, which makes a judgement as to the affiliation with human society, as well as its character and quality. The model of communitiveness, which is used here, clearly bears practical features and ambition, although there exists an implicit metaphysical element which is related to attributing soteriological[2] dimension and function to the participation in social life.

A unilateral praise of communitiveness, the consequence of which is the unequivocal (unnuanced) pathologisation of loneliness, in extreme cases, although not only, may unfortunately provoke attitudes and reactions of a negativist, disapproving, intolerant, discriminatory or stigmatising nature, addressed to people who live alone, without engaging themselves in public affairs (which does not immediately mean that they are not interested in them), avoiding companionship, eschewing fun and entertainment, introverted, not collecting friends on fashionable social networking sites, not aspiring to be in the mainstream, not susceptible to media-stimulated fashions, styles and trends, resistant/impervious to ideologies that capture mass imagination, always having their own opinion and being ready to defend it in all circumstances, not limiting themselves to the intellectual and moral *status quo* achieved so far, setting themselves increasingly higher requirements and standards, not entering into or creating any coteries around them,

[2] I use this term here in the Elzenbergian sense (see: Elzenberg, 2005, pp. 211–231; 2017, pp. 25–43; see also: Skowroński, 1998, pp. 21–30; Środa, 2017, pp. 203–215; Glinkowski, 2017, pp. 217–226; Legodzińska, 2006).

avoiding public speeches and declarations, not participating in politics, being averse to the slightest manifestations of stupidity and mediocrity, living in their own world and not allowing anyone inside it, giving the impression of being alienated, old-fashioned, listless, difficult, complicated, curt, boring, melancholic, gloomy, grumpy, inaccessible, haughty, acrimonious, proud, arrogant, cynical, malicious, in many ways peculiar, not only in the pejorative but also in the positive sense of the word, in other words extraordinary, uncommon, unparalleled, causing complexes, awe inspiring, which cause resentment-based reactions.

From the perspective of communitiveness understood monolectically, brought to the brink of derivable consequences, loners appear no different than Mayer's outsiders, with shades of black and grey of various deficits, otherness, abnormality, maladjustment, deviation, monstrosity, and dissent (Mayer, 2005, pp. 6–16). Erving Goffman, in a classic study on stigmatisation from 1963 (Goffman, 2005), shows in a very efficient and suggestive way what fate, and it was not a bed of roses speaking euphemistically, awaits outsiders and loners in a closed, static society, governed by rigid regulations, built on the foundation of a monolectic concept of communitiveness. It ultimately aims at establishing total institutions in the society. In the *Preface* to the Polish edition of Goffman's *Stigma,* Joanna Tokarska-Bakir makes a poignant remark that 'the totality of institutions lies in the fact that a person is equally enslaved both when they rebel and when they obey the rules' (Tokarska-Bakir, 2005, p. 15). Hans Mayer, whom I mentioned previously, depicts from yet another perspective the social and moral climate used to surround the outsiders doomed to loneliness, like a security perimeter: 'They are not guided by the brilliance of the categorical imperative, because their actions cannot serve as a general rule' (Mayer, 2005, p. 8). Mayer, by referring to the views expressed by Ernst Bloch in his book *Naturrecht und menschliche Würde* (*Natural Law and Human Dignity*) (1972), recognised by him as a paradigmatic example of a monolectic approach to communitiveness, makes the following observation, which clearly characterises the essence of monolectic intention, order and narrative that formulates the standards of communitiveness: 'Such is the essence of Bloch's conception: disregarding the individual outsider, an impatient embarrassment towards loneliness, which he does not share with the collectivity, and the lack of convergence with Montaigne's thought' (Mayer, 2005, p. 7). Frequently, in order not to put themselves in jeopardy of social ostracism, which is uncompromising, relentless and merciless, and the exclusion that goes with it which, by the way, perpetuates and reinforces the loneliness of unadapted and socially unacceptable outsiders,

they make use of different strategies, often manipulative and imitational, that provide them with relative peace of mind and sometimes even ensure their survival. This mechanism is not strictly limited to the behaviour of loners. It can also occur in individuals that desperately seek companionship and the social hustle and bustle, and in relation to them it occurs with even greater regularity, intensity and frequency. As Jean Jacques Rousseau demonstrated in his writings, such people

> Can be made happy and satisfied with themselves rather on the testimony of other people than on their own … while social man lives constantly outside himself, and only knows how to live in the opinion of others, so that he seems to receive the consciousness of his own existence merely from the judgment of others concerning him … always asking others what we are, and never daring to ask ourselves. (Rousseau, 1956, p. 229; see also: idem, 1955, p. 11)

Excessive and unilateral veneration of the communitiveness runs the risk of sinking into hypocrisy, imitation and loyalism. This is accompanied by a one-directional and unreflective focus on the basic satisfaction of the requirement defined by Fromm as the principle of adaptation (Fromm, 1999, p. 7), which is a basis for the monolectic organisation of social relations. As Fromm demonstrates, this focus is upheld by an instrument which is seemingly distant and neutral towards the practices of social regulation of preferences and behaviours of individuals, namely science, especially psychology. By demonstrating a far-reaching awareness of the problematic nature of this situation, in conjunction with outlining its moral context, the author of *Escape from Freedom* manifests his disapproval of, as he calls it, the dominant tendency 'in modern psychology, in which the emphasis is laid on the "adaptation" rather than "well-being", and leans towards ethical relativism' (Fromm, 1999, p. 7). A few lines later he adds a thought-provoking comment: '… "adaptation" is by no means a symptom of moral success' (ibidem, p. 7).

With the unquestionable directive of social adaptation being left on a harness, on the one hand, there is hope for harmonisation of social relations which ensures their sustainability, cohesiveness and stability, but, on the other hand, it inevitably leads to various deviations and distortions (such as thoughtless imitation and the associated lack of courage, independence, creativity and entrepreneurship), as well as to universal uniformity (mentally flattening the social structure, regardless of its institutional complexity), bringing all individuals to the common social denominator. In this context, Kierkegaard speaks of the rule of 'robbing' an individual 'of personality by

"other people" ' (Kierkegaard, 1982, p. 171), supplying this observation with a hasty and insightful remark:

> Watching crowds of people around, busy with various matters of the world, learning what the world is like, man forgets about oneself, considers it very troublesome to be oneself and thinks that it is much easier and more secure to be the same as others, to ape others, to become a mere number in the crowd. (Kierkegaard, 1982, pp. 170–171)

For Kierkegaard, such imitative and mechanical blending into the crowd, as a brutal consequence of enforcing the rigours of adaptation in the society, entails cruel depersonalisation and moral depletion, bringing the man subjected to these processes to the very bottom of despair (Kierkegaard, 1982, p. 170).

The same applies, although from a completely different angle, to the philosophy of loneliness understood monolectically, in which, regardless of its variety, the role of loneliness is emphasised in a unidirectional, exaggerated and exalted manner, both in personal and social dimension, giving it the status of anthropological and ethical criterion that determines the conditions for identifying individuals as full-fledged citizens of an authentic, morally and intellectually elevated human society. The model of loneliness that is used here, clearly bears cosmic and metaphysical ambitions and character. Although the emphasis here is on loneliness, it is assumed, as e.g. Pierre Charron[3] does, that it is only loneliness that constitutes the true backbone, the guarantee and the pass to establishing and feeling a cosmo-vital bond, not only with other people, but with all creation in general. A tendency to advocate loneliness in an extensively unilateral, excessively rigorous and overly gullible manner, as a foundation of all virtues, and also as the harbour and refuge of perfectionist aspirations, inevitably, if it has no dialectical counterbalance, condemns one to ghastly consequences, which include, to name but the most desperate: bitterness, misanthropy, misogyny, misandry, xenophobia, aggressiveness, intransigence, tenacity, self-fixation, narcissism, conceitedness, obsession and abomination.

[3] For more see: Suchodolski, 1967, p. 281.

4. From the dialectic of loneliness to the dialecticity of life

The dispute between security and freedom, i.e. the dispute between community and individuality, is likely to continue for a long time to come, and will probably never be fully resolved (Bauman, 2008, pp. 10–11). Or maybe the entire dispute is only a pretence, a game of interests, beliefs, factions, parties and practices. What if the dichotomy of 'loneliness – communitiveness' is ontic rather than deontic in character, as is generally believed. If this is the case, it would necessarily mean that we needlessly sharpen and radicalise the opposition between loneliness, respective individuality and communitiveness, imposing on it an algorithm of predetermined deontic preferences. By acting in this way, we inevitably provoke disputes, as we move in the space of normatives, not facts, which inevitably leads to greater or lesser arbitrariness of judgments. If it is true that the dichotomy of 'loneliness-communitiveness' is ontic in nature, then the result is that they are elements of the same continuum – human existence, and thus constitute inalienable and non-neglectable moments of human existence. This approach brings us closer to the thesis of the dialecticity of existence itself, whose loneliness and communitiveness, they are not the only ones though, are the links that clash with one another.

If, however, we remain in the Aristotelian convention, opting for monolectic (i.e. opposing dialectical) optics, then the answer to Bauman's doubt with regard to the prospect of the final settlement of the dispute between loneliness and communitiveness appears with all its might as dialectical: this dispute will remain unresolved if loneliness and communitiveness are treated as mutually combating opposites. Yes, there is a chance to resolve it if we follow the route of the dialectic of loneliness and communitiveness, which this text was meant to encourage. As Seneca says: 'It is best to take the middle of the road' (Seneca, 1963, XIV 2, p. 541).

References

Aristotle (1964). *Polityka z dodaniem Pseudo-Arystotelesowej ekonomiki* [*Politics, and the Pseudo-Aristotelian Economics*]. Transl. L. Piotrowicz. Warsaw: PWN.

Bauman, Z. (2008). *Wspólnota. W poszukiwaniu bezpieczeństwa w niepewnym świecie* [*Community. Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*]. Transl. J. Margański. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.

Bloch, E. (1972). *Naturrecht und menschliche Würde* [*Natural Law and Human Dignity*]. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag KG.

Bowlby, J. (2007). *Przywiązanie* [*Attachment*]. Transl. M. Polaszewska-Nicke. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Domeracki, P. (2014). Miłość i samotność – konfrontacje [Love and Loneliness – Confrontations]. *Filozofia Chrześcijańska, 11*, 43–68.

Dziamski, S. (1996). *Wykłady z nauki o moralności* [*Lectures on Morality*]. Poznań: Institute of History, Adam Mickiewicz University.

Elzenberg, H. (2005). Ideał zbawienia na gruncie etyki czystej [The Ideal of Salvation on the Basis of Pure Ethics]. In: idem, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* [*Value and Man. Discourses on Humanities and Philosophy*] (pp. 211–231). Toruń: The Nicolaus Copernicus University Press.

Elzenberg, H. (2017). Zbawienie i ideał w moim ujęciu [Salvation and Perfection in my View]. *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria, 26*(4), 25–43.

Fromm, E. (1999). *Niech się stanie człowiek. Z psychologii etyki* [*Man for Himself. An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*]. Transl. R. Saciuk. Warsaw–Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Goffman, E. (2005). *Piętno. Rozważania o zranionej tożsamości* [*Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*]. Transl. A. Dzierżyńska, J. Tokarska-Bakir. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.

Glinkowski, W. (2017). Spór meliorysty z soterykiem, czyli homo ethicus według H. Elzenberga [Dispute Between a Meliorist and a Soteric, or Homo Ethicus according to H. Elzenberg]. *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa* Seria, 26(4), 217–226.

Kierkegaard, S. (1982). Choroba na śmierć [Sickness unto death]. In: idem, *Bojaźń i drżenie. Choroba na śmierć* [*Fear and Frembling. Sickness unto Death*]. Transl. J. Iwaszkiewicz. Warsaw: PWN.

Legodzińska, M. (2006). *Soteryzm Henryka Elzenberga. Zbawienie jako wyzwolenie?* [*Soterism by Henrik Elzenberg. Salvation as Liberation?*]. Doctoral thesis written under the direction of prof. Józef Kosian. 25.10.2006.

MacIntyre A. (2012). *Krótka historia etyki. Filozofia moralności od czasów Homera do XX wieku* [*A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century*]. Transl. A. Chmielewski. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Mayer, H. (2005). *Odmieńcy* [*Outsiders*]. Transl. A. Kryczyńska. Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie MUZA SA.

Pascal, B. (2003). *Myśli* [*Thoughts*], as arranged by L. Brunschvicg. Transl. T. Boy-Żeleński. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Zielona Sowa.

Rousseau, J.-J. (1955). *Emil czyli o wychowaniu* [*Emile, or on Education*]. Vol. 2. Transl. E. Zieliński. Wrocław: Zakład im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo PAN.

Rousseau, J.-J. (1956). Rozprawa o nierówności [Discourse on Inequality]. In: idem, *Trzy rozprawy z filozofii społecznej* [*Three Discourses on Social Philosophy*]. Transl. H. Elzenberg. Warsaw: PWN.

Ruppert, F. (2012). *Symbioza i autonomia. Trauma symbiotyczna i miłość bez uwikłań* [*Symbiosis and Autonomy: Symbiotic Trauma and Love Beyond Entanglements*]. Transl. Z. Mazurczak. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.

Schopenhauer, A. (2000). *Aforyzmy o mądrości* życia [*Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life*]. Transl. J. Garewicz. Warsaw: „Czytelnik".

Seneca, L. A. (1963). O pokoju ducha [Of peace of mind], XIV 2. In: idem, *Dialogi* [*Dialogues*] (pp. 497–545). Transl. L. Joachimowicz. Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax.

Skowroński, K. (1998). Soteryzm Henryka Elzenberga [Soterism by Henrik Elzenberg]. In M. Żarowski (Ed.), *Filozofia* XXXII. *Studia z filozofii* (pp. 21–30). Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Suchodolski, B. (1967). *Rozwój nowożytnej filozofii człowieka* [*The Development of Modern Philosophy of Man*]. Warsaw: PWN.

Środa, M. (2017). Meliorysta i soteryk. O autocentryzmie etycznym Henryka Elzenberga [Meliorist and Soteric. On Henry Elzenberg's Ethical Self-centredness]. *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria, 26*(4), 203–215.

Tillich, P. (2004). *Teologia systematyczna* [*Systematic Theology*]. Vol. 2. Transl. J. Marzęcki. Kęty: Wydawnictwo ANTYK.

Tokarska-Bakir, J. (2005). Et(n)ologia piętna. Wstęp do wydania polskiego [Eth(n) ology of Stigma]. In: E. Goffman, *Piętno. Rozważania o zranionej tożsamości* [*Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*] (pp. 7–26). Transl. A. Dzierżyńska, J. Tokarska-Bakir. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.

Todorov, T. (2003). *Ogród niedoskonały. Myśl humanistyczna we Francji* [*Imperfect Garden. Humanist Thought in France*]. Transl. H. Abramowicz, J. M. Kłoczowski. Warsaw: „Czytelnik".