



**THE NATURAL LAW AND THE CULTURAL LAW OF
BODILY ASCETICISM THE NEW ROLE FOR TEACHER OF
SCHOOL GYMNASION**

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Abstract:

The subject of this reflection within the area of pedagogy and the philosophy of physical culture is bodily asceticism: both secular and religious. The asceticism of the *gymnasion* leads to the refinement of bodily powers so as to be able to fulfil social tasks. Penitential asceticism is a means of symbolic reparation for sins committed. It is known that the first kind of asceticism brings the body alive; the second "mortifies" it. The models of the religious asceticism of monks are discussed, both of those who integrate into the social life of mainstream society (internal asceticism) and that of those monks who renounce the human condition forever (external asceticism). A particular case of anti-socialisation is the *sadhu* – a Hindu ascetic, who achieves anonymous namelessness. The patterns of asceticism of integrated (internal asceticism) monks permeate secular life, while the asceticism of the *gymnasion* is not shared by monks and priests. Although both patterns of asceticism aim at natural corporeality, their vectors of cause are contra-rotating. Monastic rule does not presuppose the *gymnasion* formation of a saint, which means that the religious ethos contradicts the law of nature. The law of asceticism of the bodily person is formulated based on the premise of natural law. This indicates the possibility of combining health education with the catechesis of penitential asceticism within the framework of the logically consistent pedagogy of an ascetic lifestyle.

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Introduction

I experienced asceticism, through adults, since my early childhood. At first I had to cope with penitential self-sacrifice – obviously not realising, that I was dealing with the asceticism of indulgence. And after those same adults took me to primary school, a PE teacher put me in a military formation as if I were off to fight (in four athletics events) – again not realising that I had anything to do with the asceticism of the *gymnasion*.

From my early childhood I was brought up within two different forms of asceticism: negation, and affirmation of corporeality. It was as if one could only carry the light of truth about the importance of bodily culture in mortal life through the negative and positive aspects of an ascetic. The child's understanding could not embrace the fact that the body should be both scorned and praised at the same time. This could not be simultaneously truly logical.

Adults have been guiding me from an early age, as they chose, not knowing themselves that the rules of ascetic behaviour I was being given belonged to two different orders of life: the religious and the secular, and that, by immersing me in them, they inflicted on me two contradictory ideals of bodily culture. Moreover, the adult educators, who were taking me through bodily culture, had no idea that the ascetic indulgence (from the Methodist forgiveness of sins) "serves", in practice, in killing the body. In extreme cases it is manifested as an attack on the repentant's life. The asceticism of the *gymnasion* was conceived long ago as a methodical revival of the body, which is subordinated to the important higher order social tasks: the necessary and the desirable, but also (although not in every society), the good and the beautiful.

What, or rather about what the teachers "played" with me, I learned only in the next school, in the last days of a strict fast, when I was obliged to do *penance exercises* which conditioned indulgent *cleansing*, I also had to undertake *gymnasion* exercises which conditioned my sports fulfilment. So, while I was starving, in order to satisfy the expiation, then, almost immediately after the bodily exhaustion caused by physical exercise set in, like it or not, I had to "*recover the lost matter*" in a restaurant or eatery. I was alternately hungry and full, as if I had remained in this dichotomy of the body for forty days and I did not see any sense in it, but rather, two mutually exclusive tasks.

The coaches, who were attached to thinking about the material order, did not even notice the danger of the *redemption calculations*, and the catechists (whose authority I departed from a long time before) did not mention (as far as I remember) the possible contradictions *in the conduct towards to body* by a sport ascetic. This was not surprising considering the fact that they were accustomed by the *teachers of penitential asceticism* to the practice of poverty, in which it was inconceivable to have anything other than a contemptuous attitude towards bodily exposure, even if it was dressed up in the

costume of sports culture. They neither recognised the spirit of sport nor considered any form of asceticism different from the practice of bodily degradation, which caused pain and resulted in impoverishment.

If my imperfect person had known that my sport-related bodily fatigue could have counted as a penance of mortification, then my sporting asceticism – undoubtedly permeated not so much by the severity of life as by the many sacrifices – would have become the asceticism of expiation at the same time. As such, it would have at least been acceptable, but unacceptable as a practice of publicised religious and secular hybrid asceticism – by various *hagiotypes*: friars, monks, and priests. So who among those who strive for holiness, regardless of the degree of freedom in bodily mortification, from rigour and rigidity to permissiveness and gentleness, would not consider external asceticism marked by athletic accomplishment as a part of it.

What is unpleasant and painful or in the worst case distressing cannot at the same time be pleasant, for example, the muscle pain that follows athletic training. The whipping of the body must at least cause searing pain, so that on the way to holiness "some" *hagiotype* could hope that others, more holy than himself would recognise this training as adequate in relation to the guilt – in the penitential scourging of his flesh.

By reverse reasoning, it would definitely not be appreciated in the domain of striving for holiness if a cleric considered athletic asceticism as a redemptive or rewarding penance. It does not matter whether he made his expiation practice in a fitness club or in a gym hidden underground. At the same time, having achieved bodily perfection, such a person might like to exhibit himself at the gate of a stadium as the embodiment of a sportsman. The embodiment of a cleric in an athletically activated *homo physicus* would in principle be impossible even if by some "miracle" he was to be accepted by the group of sport professionals and even though his sense of fair play could not be equalled.

If a cleric or a monk wanted to practise the asceticism of the *gymnasion*, in order to win *in the competition for good*, he would be in an immanent contradiction: as an athlete he would have to constantly awaken the body and, as a holy person put it to death. If he did not awaken the body to an artificially athletic life, he would not fulfil himself as an athlete, because he would lose every competition (even if he came first in sports humanity), and as a saint he would not achieve holiness, since on his way there he would have to mortify his body by long-term penitensive practice just like a pilgrim who is aware of poverty, discomfort and even death. As experts in penitent asceticism

have written, "*holiness requires long-term effort, while ascetic relaxation is a great obstacle to achieving it*"ⁱⁱ.

This gives rise to the observation that a saint cannot become an athlete, because his type of bodily asceticism does not correspond to the requirements of an enlivening asceticism. Conversely, an athlete cannot, at the same time be a saint, if the condition for achieving holiness is the asceticism of mortification. Since the athlete has to urge himself to animate the structure of his being to its more perfect somatic-corporate version, while also being unable to cope with the principle of "repudiating" the body, he cannot move to the side of the saints. His aim is not to gain supernatural powers over the body which would result in the diminution of his bodily powers through the *Methodist* killing of oneself.

Priestly or monastic holiness sets off on its path from self-exclusion from social life although it returns to it through sacramental practices, given to lay people, by renouncing the very act of participation in sport. In the same way secularity in social life, which is carried out by performance in the stadium, and equally, *gymnasion* asceticism, (making an ontological assumption) does not allow simultaneous participation on an equal basis, in the life of a saint. Even if the athlete was inspired by the spirit of sanctity, and in addition shaped spiritually by a sports chaplain, he is designated a place among laymen. Equally *gymnasion* asceticism, even though later *paid for* (never with blood, as is the case of penance asceticism), cannot be considered ideologically equivalent to the asceticism of *redemption*.

The body *revives* the athlete ascetic, whereas it *mortifies* the holy ascetic. Each asceticism serves a different purpose and is useless when it is used contrary to its cultural destiny. The importance of the saint is reduced when he alleviates bodily *mortification* or does not even undertake it; the layman decreases the strength of his social causality when he either does not take on the *reviving* asceticism of the body, or he reduces it only to conservative practices. This does not include those cases of lack of fulfilment in social life, which originate with the destruction of the body and which have nothing in common with the asceticism of killing the body.

Considering the saints as masters of the asceticism of bodily negation, one could however, still ask about the asceticism of the mortification of the body by priests joining in stadium sports; and one could discuss how to equate ascetic penance with athletic asceticism.

Since the social dimension of the participation of priests in secular life in this area is enormous (in a sociological sense) it is reasonable to suspect that, for educational and

ii Types of asceticism according to temperamental variation are described by E. Bielecki, *Temperamentologia i ascetyka*, Kraków 1992, Instytut Teologiczny Księży Misjonarzy, p. 38

purely priestly reasons, there has been a far-reaching and quantitative exchange of proportions. This leads to mortification modelled on bodily ascetics, and even while being fully aware of the change to the ascetic ideal, towards gymnasium ascetics. What may have a logical beginning in understanding how priests depend on the conditioning of teacher and trainer activity on the fitness of the muscles and the fitness of the gymnasium, leads to the inclusion of gymnasium asceticism as a practice of bodily affirmation.

Besides, although sport cannot be "made up" by the saints, had it not been for the Dominicans, sport would have failed to recognise Olympic humanism as an ideal of secular holiness. Universal sport would not have received a theological rationale for its gospel sense if Pope John Paul II had not proved his wisdom, and other scholar-priests – professors in theology, philosophy, ethics, and pedagogy – did not see themselves as part of sport. There is cultural potential in creating a civilization of loveⁱⁱⁱ.

Penitent asceticism versus asceticism of *gymnasion*

Penitent asceticism is the antithesis of the asceticism of the *gymnasion*, and the hall of bodily torture, afflicted on themselves by repenting ascetics is the permanent habitat of their lives inside the monastery, in which the self-degradation of physicality is incessant. It is not a transitional place, specially separated, like a *gymnasion* from which *the door* to the outside is always open. One goes to the *gymnasion* to get out of it (just as from hospital), towards a suspended *social action*. In a monastery one remains an ascetic forever. In the *gymnasion* one becomes an ascetic for the length of the act of bodily formation – a time so short that one's own name does not have to be changed – in order to be properly ready *to enter* the role of one's social destiny. A religious ascetic gives himself a new name as a sign of renouncing his original social identity (dying socially from temporal affairs). In extreme cases when he exists solely for the individualistic incarnation of anonymous existence, he becomes absent for the world. The *gymnasion* ascetic however, takes the role of a social *actor*, which he makes his own destiny, and in which he finds a sense of life among others. The *gymnasion* ascetic becomes present in social life, and the ritual of bodily formation – perfecting natural physicality – is recognised by him as the rational coefficient to achieving the worldly ideal (*see below*).

As monastic life is continuous asceticism, the rule of patient torture, so the asceticism of the *gymnasion* is done through strenuous exercise (tiresome but not mortifying) on the *fore-field* of *the actor's* social front. *The actor* leaves the role of the

iii Prof. Stanisław Kowalczyk, a theologian and philosopher of culture, introduced the work of extraordinary importance to humanities of sport, including *The Theology and Philosophy of Sport*; S. Kowalczyk, *Elementy filozofii i teologii sportu*, Lublin 2010, KUL.

ascetic recurrently, but the saint becomes an ascetic forever. However, when *the actor leaves the gymnasium* he does not abandon asceticism. He ceases to be a *gymnasium* ascetic, but he does not rid himself from asceticism as an attitude of vigilance towards the structure of being, to which he must constantly and creatively refer, even if he leads a life of temporal activity without any control. In this sense, the *actor* of temporal life is also a perpetual ascetic – just like a *monk* – when he leads a social life of renunciation of pleasure. At the same time, however, he considers the *gymnasium* practice of improving physical fitness to be a condition for personal fulfilment through social tasks.

A monk does not need a *gymnasium*, although all the acts of holiness in an ascetic's life are permeated by bodily sacrifice: he does not take off his cilice, he sleeps on hard ground, sits on a pole for years, he stands and never sits down, kneels on a stone, or uses only one hand. He does everything in spite of the nature of the flesh, as if he did not want to live according to the body, and even – in extreme acts of antagonism – as if he intended to physically kill himself. It is possible to recognise that a *monastery monk*, or rather, a *monk from the Christian East*, not only refuses to clean his body, but in extreme cases, deliberately makes it dirty by adopting the attitude of negativity of physicality. In this practice of bodily destruction he allows for the possibility of the complete impoverishment of the ontological structure. The asceticism of Western monks has always, according to Max Weber (especially "in the Middle Ages, and sometimes even in Antiquity) had a *rational* nature. This is based on the historical importance of monastic life in the West in contrast to the life of monks in the East"^{iv}.

The ascetic lifestyle of an actor

The *actor's* asceticism is not performed exclusively in the *gymnasium*. When an ascetic leaves the *gymnasium* to join in social life, he does not extinguish the spirit of bodily asceticism in himself. He revives it in every act of his social role, constantly complementing the "rest" of somatic empowerment in the ritual of cleansing, strengthening and safeguarding his health. The *actor* leads himself through social life in an ascetic style – recognising the *gymnasium* as the central place of physical empowerment – while the saint lives in permanent ascetic renunciation of the flesh, as if the monastery was the centre of his denial of natural vitality. The actor's lifestyle is usually ascetic and healthy, even when he does not belong to a religious community. This is explained by *the life policy* adopted by the *progressivists*, and he becomes much healthier when he is permeated by the rules of Lenten self-sacrifice, which religious conservatives remind the layman of in every liturgical cycle. In this respect, the

^{iv} Weber M., *Etyka protestancka a duch kapitalizmu*, Warszawa 2010, Wydawnictwo Aletheia, p. 85.

religious asceticism of renunciation that pervades the life of a mortal *actor*, can be regarded as conducive to his ascetic improvement through healthfulness.

Unreliability of religious ethics in the assessment of bodily asceticism

As long as the two types of asceticism are not conceived as the assassination of corporeality as the natural principle of social life, then the problem of the logical contradiction between the two models is abolished. Supposing, however, that one of these designs, the *flagellum Dei* (penitential whipping – "the whip of God") which is justified by the sacred ideal of rationality could abolish the principle of the bodily naturalness of social existence, then **what** ethical argument would have to be advanced in order to prove its metaphysical absurdity? If metaphysical truth states that man is a bodily substance, then it is a false presumption that a man would also be who he is – the identity of incarnate being – if he disposed of his body. Simply put, man as a substantial personal being is impossible as a bodily substance.

Certainly one could refer neither to the religious ethics that it was justified by, because that would mean that ethical thought denies itself, nor to any other ethics of religious origin, and consequently, to any **cultural ethics whose legislative expression is the positive law**. This, in turn, would require demonstrating its ideological "impartiality" and this requirement may not be fulfilled by any religious ethics, because the inherent feature of an ethical thought is the fact that it expresses someone else's idea in a "biased" way.

Thus it turns out that natural law must be judged in such a way as to state the logical correctness of the pattern of the *asceticism of bodily destruction* by the penitent. Its logical coherence with natural law must also be judged by reference to the pole of the ascetic affirmation of corporeality, where the actions of the ascetic expose him to physical death.

The problem of the logical contradiction of both models has not been solved so easily. Rather, it rather seems to be growing, when one notices that the history of ascetic penance swarms with *desperadoes*, attempting to take their own lives. Today one is able to see *giants* in athletic asceticism who do not adopt moderation in making an artificial bodily nature, and who condemn themselves to physical oblivion^v.

However, one can help find its solution, if we take into account, on the one hand, the scope of **social withdrawal of the ascetic** until his **complete exile** to the hermitage, and, on the other hand, the complete **social inclusion of the ascetic** which means his total integration into the collective composed of nameless bodies (collective body based

^v A bodybuilder from a fitness club in Kraków died in his own home a few hours after returning from training. He had taken nineteen conflicting substances.

nomen omen on "incarnation" into the structure of impersonal rationale). In the case of someone leaving society this means the disappearance of all personal relationships while, at the same time becoming anonymous^{vi}. In the case of the "forced" incarnation of the ascetic in a society ruled by a tyrant, in which all impersonal relationships are abolished. A number takes the place of a name.

The more radical the social withdrawal, as the individual heads towards greater hermeneutic seclusion (*anchoritic*^{vii}), the greater the arbitrariness in "torturing" the body, and the more radical **social inclusion** (collectivist-servile), which is understood as a strict cultural rule regulated by the tyrant, the greater the loss not only of the body, but also of the whole life. The ascetic becomes a **non-person**, when, after prior "preparation" of his body in the *gymnasion*, he is placed on the "altar" of someone else's history (involving even his physical annihilation). For the tyrant to be able to "feed himself" off the cannon fodder of the subject, he must first "roast it ascetically" in the military *gymnasion*.

When, after complete social withdrawal and radical social inclusion, one is no longer a person, anything can be done with one's body – even being "put to death". For the hermit, natural corporeality is no longer the principle of personal life, and for the slave it cannot be a rule, as a life lead according to *personal ideals* has been taken away from them.

However, in support of the thought embedded in the wisdom of natural law, and therefore the thought concerned with the asceticism of bodily negation, may be those ascetics from one end of the spectrum of social withdrawal, who, despite remaining in the ascetic state, live for the sake of it by following their asceticism separately, while, at the same time, sharing the same experience of the notion of **external asceticism**, and on the other hand, the ascetics from the social inclusion pole, who live together in the spirit of internal asceticism and are careful not to harm their bodies mechanically through their ascetic practice. Those living a cenobitic life^{viii} could

vi When joining a monastic order the ascetic takes on a new name, as a sign of breaking with their old life and starting a new one. But when the penitent ascetic withdraws, even from monastic reality to lead an individual life, he does not need a name. When he abolishes all social relationships to live as a recluse, he does not have to have any name. And he does not have to call himself by a name, because his cognitive relative is his "self" towards himself. At the end of his social withdrawal a *sadhu's* (travelling monk) own name is removed until he becomes completely anonymous, and in extreme cases he undergoes objectivist social inclusion (in the collectivity). His name is replaced by a number or the one sign identifying the whole group.

vii Anchoritism, from *anachoreo* (Old Greek) – "to withdraw, to retire" i.e. I leave the Nile valley to go to the desert; anachoretic- hermit, ascetic,

viii Cenobitic – from *cenobite* – a monk living with other monks in a common building, unlike *eremite*; one who belongs to a monastery where monks live.

be said to have left worldly society for good. They do not intend to live outside the residual community or with the other group that can produce an inbred community, as a microcosm closed to themselves while still maintaining a relationship with the world of their previous lay life. The gate, which sets the boundary between the world for oneself and the world for others, is simultaneously the object symbolising the disconnection, and the connection with the outside world. In the case of intra-world ascetics, the gate has no use at all. It can certainly be conceived as an object solely opening **inward**, but instead of using this technical solution, (which is also proxemic and not merely symbolic), the internal ascetic, along with other internal ascetics, rises above the level of the hermitage, separated by a precipice, or descends into a desert where others, coming from the world of violators of worldly life, will not be able to enter due to physical inaccessibility.

The Asceticism of the *sadhu*

The culture of bodily asceticism of Western monks, who worked with great effort and went out to people, such as the Benedictines, Franciscans, Cistercians, Jesuits and Dominicans, delights us with their with prudence and vital resourcefulness.

The behaviour of a socially withdrawn and holy ascetic from Christian or Indian East is typically completely different. His life is only ritual and never a literal worldly life. He never works and is not a servant. He behaves oddly in his own company when for a few hundred days (at least, as he undertook^{ix}) he does not eat food, stops the action of his heart, feeds on the bodies of the dead, walks naked, applies ash to his body, does not cut his hair, attaches heavy objects to his penis or "winds up his penis on a pole"^x. His body suffers when he exposes himself to cold and harsh conditions e.g. sleeping on a hard surface without a cover or kneeling incessantly for years on stone, or – as in the migratory life of a *sadhu* – building nothing, staying in a cave or in a forest hermitage neglected and "dressed by the air"^{xi}.

The itinerant and mendicant or hermetic lifestyle of the Eastern ascetics – even the holiest characters in their ritual of hierophony – does not provide any pattern of corporeality that could enrich the culture of asceticism of the secular West. This does not exclude yoga meditation from the repertoire of the nameless *sadhu* ascetics, which is the key, and in its proxemic sense, the pattern of divesting oneself of social relations to

ix This is the case of the *sadhu* ascetic, Baba Nagnat, who is known to have starved for 483 days; Marcin Osman, Correspondence from India (typescript).

x This refers to Indian *sadhu* ascetics; see Demski D., *Postać ascety indyjskiego jako przykład alternatywnej drogi; ludzkiej egzystencji, Etnografia Polska*, 1989, vol.XXXIII, p. 1, pp.39-55; Marcin Osman, Correspondence from India, <https://www.tygodnikprzeгляд.pl/author/marcin-osman/>.

xi Ibidem, p. 48

ponder over oneself, to eventually experience the feeling of desolation or the hollowness of unreflective reason, "touched" by a mantra, which is invented purely for itself.

As the prayers of Western monks bring them closer to other people, because love is their rationale, so the meditation of the nameless *sadhu* is meant to bring him closer to his own divinity as the final being of the socially included "I". When someone in the West speaks of yoga meditation, as a "relaxation technique", they are either: a) not aware of the ontological contradiction between *gymnasion* asceticism, which is assumed to be a relational being, linked to the social structure of the *actor*, and the asceticism of the *sadhu*, by which, in consequence of the annihilation of social relations he begins to fulfil the ontic condition, that enables an individualised being, or: b) clearly believe that "under the guise" of healing yoga breathing exercises, they are spreading the spirituality of Hinduism in the West.

The asceticism of the *sadhu* implies socialisation and, ultimately, anonymous namelessness. It can easily be accepted in postmodern Western societies, where the principle of life is individualism and anonymity, and more importantly, as a condition for the internalisation of this meditative pattern, the renunciation of responsibility for the well-being of another person, declared by the asocial ascetic^{xii}.

Those who decide about life for themselves – whether on the route to exclusion from the caste of slaves or to exclusion from personal relationships in the society of their origins which both presuppose "escape" from the person towards themselves – will be seeking fulfilment in spirituality for themselves (in any case, the fulfilment in physicality) through bodily asceticism. Those ascetics imitating a yogi in the West are only confirming the right way to live just for themselves.

Internal and external ascetics

This distinction between internal and external ascetics is not a logical formal structure. On the contrary, it is cognitively useful as a hypothesis, because it can be easily confirmed by facts: in the retrogressive reasoning (plusperfect and progressive) present. Didn't the monks of the Eastern Christian church, living separately but together – as in Meteora Monasteries – confirm that their asceticism was physically uncomfortable for the body, or in any case caused suffering so was mechanically destructive to the body? And the monks of the Western church – don't they give testimony by working continuously, which in itself is asceticism? And delving even

xii Patterns of yoga culture are called "relaxation techniques" by the promoters of Hindu asceticism in Poland, who under the pretext of spreading a new pattern of health culture – introduce a new *religion of the body*. John Paul II warned about an uncritical acceptance of it.; see: Pietrek D., Joga czy naprawdę dla chrześcijanina?, *Sekty i Fakty*, 2007, no. 32, pp. 10-13.

further into uncovering their ascetic lifestyle – which is most clearly expressed by work – wasn't it the internal ascetic monks including the Benedictines and Cistercians, who taught laymen the habit of working and brought the ideal of asceticism to their lives?

And also the truth about permeating the model of monastic asceticism into secular life remains the fact that in the reformed church "every Christian was supposed to be a monk", that is – to put it bluntly – an ascetic in their whole temporal, personal and working life. The asceticism of penitent monks of the reformed church reached secular people, transforming their lifestyle into an ascetic one. And when it started to "leak" – as Max Weber quoted in his work – "a dam was built". The ascetic patterns of monastic monks found use in "secular professional life" until finally, given their complete abandonment of religious practices (leaving the church), they almost "leaked out of it"^{xiii}. Some, as relics of ascetic lifestyles in societies formerly reformed by the heretics (Calvin and Luther), have remained as peculiarities of corruption of manners by giving themselves permission for extramarital sex in brothels. Due to the "painful" feeling of sexual abandonment, they were even morally justified^{xiv}.

Although promoters of *hygienic prostitution* were accused of overeagerness by Puritan rigorists, the once-publicised statement about the usefulness of brothels in bodily asceticism (which is known to be dangerously damaging to the stability of marriage) has been accepted with "understanding" by utilitarian-minded moralists. Brothels were beneficial because they facilitated the maintenance of sexual health. Nowadays, they appear to be a supposedly very useful place to "protect" the sexual health of a spouse who soothes his bodily suffering in the arms of a prostitute during Sunday mass^{xv}.

Without a doubt, a more useful public place is a *gymnasion* of health – commonly referred to as a fitness club – where asceticism involves getting rid of dirt rather than – as in a brothel – on its acquisition.

Can *ius naturalis* be understood as the right to bodily asceticism of health?

Is there any measure of the validity of either type of asceticism, which would allow us to state the logical truth of penance asceticism and *gymnasion* asceticism? It is not about the moral assessment of ascetics, but about the thought-based rationale inherent in ascetic culture that directs the actions of ascetics. Thus, from a methodological point of

xiii As Max Weber wrote, "The Third Order of Saint Francis was e.g. a great attempt at ascetic penetration of everyday life, but not the only one"; *ibidem*, p. 86

xiv See more on that topic, M. Weber, *ibidem*, p. 264.

xv An outstanding expert in Lutheran heresy, prof. Tadeusz Guz, says that on a Sunday (the day for worshipping the Lord), more spouses go to brothels than to church.

view, a judgement needs to be made on the logical consistency/inconsistency between the first premise of the natural law of life (*ius naturalis*) and those cultural rules of asceticism, which, by the peculiar bioethics of religiousness (regardless of one's faith or church) allow the body to be mortified, and even for physical life to be put to death. We need to understand whether to "mortify" the body does not mean the same thing as to make it "dead" – to kill it?

The rule of the ascetic killing of the ontic structure – monastic and outer-monastic penance – remains in logical contradiction to the first premise of natural law, which declares life as the supreme good which only personal well-being is greater than. If this is the result of syllogism, then the cultural rule of the asceticism of bodily negation is not in disagreement with the act of the ascetic but it lies in a logical contradiction with the axiom of that law which extends its validity to the life of all mankind.

It should also be added that this reasoning does not belong to the science of morality, but it is a logical task, relevant to normative ethics, embedded in natural law^{xvi}. For if one should adhere to Weber's sarcastic view of "speaking of higher values of culture" as the task for a "sermon to the church", then after ethnographic descriptions of the differences between ascetic cultures, an inquisitive scholar would ask about the reason behind this idea of diversity, or still further on, about the logical truth of the good contained in it ("good" as "desired being"^{xvii}).

Let us suppose that the ethnographer would describe the practice of bodily asceticism with extreme effects of negativity on the ontic structure: from self-killing, self-castration, self-whipping, self-crucifying, on the one hand, and mind-damaging of the senses or volitional restraint of (sexual) drives, on the other. Then, upon recognising the physical results of these self-inflicted actions of the ascetic, would he not ask about the cultural reasons for these acts?

And to dig deeper into his understanding – would he not have questioned the logical consistency of the rule of ascetic negation with the model of praising bodily affirmation contained in the culture of life? What could the ethnographer and the sociologist of the body, (who would follow him to get to know the logical truth about the patterns of an ascetic's self-killing), say if he came across a legitimate rule for the physical destruction of the human race put into practice – in other words, either killing

xvi As an example, I shall recall that in Aristotle's ethical thought natural law takes on an ethical formula. However, referring to the Reason of natural law, one can effectively go wrong e.g. claiming (as in this case) that slavery is in accordance with natural law.

xvii "Being in relation to lust is good; it is the object of lust". See: G. Dogiel, *Metafizyka*, Kraków 1992, Instytut Teologiczny Księży Marianów, p.88.

people (*genocide*) or the mercy killing of the weak and incapacitated (euthanasia) – killing on request? Would he then send off the problem, as a non-scientific one, to the preacher giving a sermon, or would he act in a scientific way, and adjudicate on the value of a life based on *the culture of killing one's fellow human being* by way of logical references to the rules contained in it on the premise of the law of natural life? Rather, should he not behave like the prosecutors who judged the genocidal deeds of the criminals in the Nuremberg trial, who called upon the true *rationale of the nations*, and dismissed their positive premises as false ones?

Thus, by using natural law – as if it were from the source of knowledge of the truth of life as the supreme good – to justify the falseness of the metaphysical rule of the ascetic negation of corporeality, the sociologist of the body now taking the position of a philosopher of physical culture (while changing rationality from nomothetic to normative) would have to terminate scientific cognition not as a moralist but as a learned humanist. Whatever more he might have been about to say would be a moralizing postulate, just like that of “a priest giving a sermon”. In the same way Moses taught that killing is evil, and that it is morally wrong, but he did not explain to his people the “scientific” argument behind this truth.

If the rule of religious asceticism is logically contrary to natural law, since it permits the practice of bodily negation, then every act of ascetic attenuation of the ontic structure (even if it is rationally justified) becomes an unlawful act. Even the holy ascetic has no right to do so. The ethics of religious rule, which the holy ascetic has written “in his own favour”, is invalid. The saint who follows penitent asceticism should also know that in natural law every bodily life is to be treated with prudent care, even with glorified reverence^{xviii}, due to the physicality of walking *actively* along the way, in which bodily power becomes the first *servant* of the performed ministry.

This dependence is apparent in the sacred ministry of bodily power, when the priest asks for his parishioners’ prayers to grant him a healthy body during his extensive visits to them. We do not know, however, whether the priest improves his health as a *gymnasion* ascetic before he does his priestly duties^{xix}. This reasoning which explains the relationship between the saint and the layman, finding fulfilment in performing social tasks and body-reviving asceticism (in fact, the *gymnasion* asceticism

xviii I will not develop the argument about the sacredness of the body as belonging to the sacred sphere, not to fall into the solemn tone of expression. John Paul II wrote, “Since God himself became flesh, the human body has acquired a special dignity. Therefore, it is necessary to treat the body with respect”. See: P. Kopycki, *Elementarz teologii ciała według Jana Pawła II*, Częstochowa 2013, Święty Paweł, p.127.

xix Zbigniew Dziubiński has done research into the somatic culture of clerics. However, there is lack of empirical data on the asceticism of *gymnasion* priests. Z. Dziubiński, *Kultura somatyczna kleryków. Studium socjologiczne*, Warszawa 1996, ChAT, SIWCH, SALOS RP.

concerned with health), leads to a postulate not so much to repeal the asceticism of bodily mortification by saints, as to complement the physical culture of saints with the model of *body-reviving* asceticism, and thus perfect their natural ontic structure. We should set aside the fact that this leads to a postulate ordering the saints to give up nicotine or alcohol addictions which destroy the somatic structure in the same way as does the rough asceticism of "breaking the bones" and tearing the flesh. Any acts of violence to the body, even if they are justified by the oldest rule of the law, must be considered wrong, when they are revealed in the light of natural law, from which the ban on killing *oneself* is removed^{xx}.

Natural law as the premise of the law on the culture of bodily asceticism

Returning to my ascetic lessons, I can say I experienced two different types of asceticism without realising that my personality was activated by the ascetic's identity, by two independent fields of cultural interference: secular and religious. These fields overlap, because their very corporeality is relevant to their influence and also because of the underlying regulators, and thus asceticism is manifested by counter-vectors:

a) towards the "annihilation" of the body – a vector going beyond merely killing the sensory body,

b) towards "elevating" the body beyond its natural structure – the vector going further than merely improving the health of the body, and "burnishing" it – as a follow-up to the maximisation of physical effort – against the destruction of the living structure put simply – death.

And I would have never have noticed the contradiction that I lived in two causal-ideological orders of bodily culture if I had not gone through the gates of the university *gymnasion* – to the philosophical cognition of the meaning of asceticism. Here I accidentally encountered the problem of natural law, expressed by the question of the permissibility of the self-destruction of one's own living structure; by penitential

xx When a saint, even a priest and not a monastic monk ceases to live "according to" the body, and the reason for his temporal life is the good of the other person – which obviously corresponds to the love ethics of his religious culture – nevertheless, he acts contrary to the *Logos* of natural law. The point is that natural law imposes on the priest the duty of *gymnasion* asceticism, which improves bodily health, while at the same time it forbids self-destruction of the bodily life. A priest cannot aspire to holiness and lead himself through *anti-gymnasion*, because not only does he reject natural law of health asceticism, but he also interprets freely the ethics of his own religious freedom. From the life ethics of *a person for a person*, it is clear that the priest knows that one should "praise God in their own body, for the body is the temple of the spirit" (1 Corinthians 19: 19-20). It is possible to make from this axiom the premise of an operational judgement, as a consequence of the priest's commitment to bodily purity (in the hygienic sense), the "surroundings" of one's own body, "custody" of pure liturgical vestments, but also prohibiting "burning", poisoning, or making the body fat.

Methodists, who were prepared to undertake even self-crucifixion had they been able to nail their body to the cross by the sole power of the body, and by tenacious flagellants^{xxi}, who were stripping their skin and pulling the flesh from their bodily structures.

Penance asceticism was a cultural *negative*, but no one dared to undermine its absurdity. No one would state that people who withdraw themselves from natural law start to act foolishly, when they try to *assassinate* their own bodies guided by the *rule*, not just natural law which is the supreme regulator of moral order.

Undoubtedly, religious *rules* which are called *strict*, abuse natural law, which, in the language of religious ethics, is the source of their origin, would have to mean that they do not respect God's will. It does not mean that the remaining *rules*, even if they are not in logical contradiction with *ius naturalis*, were consciously referred to the *Logos*.

Natural law forbids killing, which I had already heard from my catechist as a child, and it also suggests (if one extracted from its *Logos*, with the effort of their own reason) a detailed postulate – that that ban also applies to killing yourself. And as every killing of a person must "pass" through their body, then any act, even the most innocent acts of self-destruction of the body by a penitent ascetic e.g. leaving the body unwashed or rubbing the body with a cilice (hair shirt) is morally reprehensible and logically contradict *ius naturae*. And of course, by attempting to end their own life they contradict the will of the Giver of Life.

It turns out, however, that there is a measure for the validity of both types of asceticism: penance and *gymnasion*, which allows judgement to be passed on their logical truth. And this is not a measure of religious law (religious law cannot judge the validity of religious facts which are legitimized by that law), nor the positive, secular law.

Although both kinds of asceticisms: religious and secular do not ultimately aim for the self-destruction of the ontic structure, i.e. the annihilation of life by killing the body, each in its own way however, "brushes the body against death". Both *extremes* seem to represent some metaphysical absurdity, but so long as both confine themselves moderation, nothing dangerous in terms of disrespecting bodily nature as a principle of social life, can be seen in them. On the contrary, each of them seems persuasive in its reasoning: penitential asceticism is quite desirable, and *gymnasion* asceticism proves to be useful.

So, if the two models of bodily asceticism are validated in social life, then one must ask about their logical truth, deduced from the metaphysical premise of bodily

xxi O biczownikach jako pokutnikach objetych groźbą klątwy, see: J.P. Mroczkowska, Święty Peregryn. Patron chorych, Kraków 2015, Wydawnictwo WAM, Księża Jezuitów, p.34.

nature, as the first truth which declares the substance of human physicality. If both models of asceticism: religious-penitent and secular-*gymnasion*, could be encompassed by the single concept of *ascetic lifestyle*, then, as teleologically compatible (by causal vectors), they could be justified by one ideological rationale. But what sort of rationale?

I pose the question about one ideological reason which comes from the original source of knowledge of the supreme good and is pre-culturally and pre-religiously recognised. I ask this as though I did not know that I believe in the faith of my church, and that when I find myself in secular society, I do not know the supreme good, which is the reason that explains the meaning of relationships with others, – put simply, explains the meaning of life. I do not know either world yet, although I realise that each of them "bases" itself on its ideological rationale.

I am not asking, nor do I want to know what they are like, to create the situation of a thought experiment, in which I assume an inner truth of the natural world a pre-cultural, and thus – consequently – a pre-religious one, which can lead to a single logical assumption.

In this imaginary situation, it is a matter of stimulating the *sociological imagination* as a logical exercise. I expect it to make it possible not arbitrary, but strictly justified by the highest reason of the ascetic reference of man to his body. In my experiment in *sociological imagination* I use a strong ontological assumption that accepts the existence of Reason in bodily nature, which determines sexuality and consequently reveals to the studying subject – as if Reason determines the brain/mind – that this is the only possible way of dealing with the body and the strictly – prescribed vector of dealing with bodily life.

Accepting such an assumption acknowledges that Reason “permeating” bodily nature, is the source of normative revelations. These are learned through human reasoning and are not created independently of existing cultures, where the arbitrariness of reasoning with respect to the purpose of natural corporeality, can lead even to the most stupid regulatory regulations in bodily asceticism.

If, thanks to Reason, in which the human mind participates, the truths of bodily naturalness are "poured into" him (as the only ones acceptable to bodily asceticism) then they must be considered as obligatory normative manifestations in all religious ethics, including the Christian ethic of the culture of bodily life,^{xxii}.

The thought experiment leads to the conclusion that since bodily life is the highest ontic good, the only higher good is a person. It means that the ascetic cannot

xxii M. Olczyk affirms that "Christianity is a belief in the *Logos*, which is marked in the nature of being and is readable by the human mind'. Eksperyment gender, Gniezno 2014, Prymasowskie Wydawnictwo Gaudentinum, p.54.

arbitrarily choose the justification for his actions on his ontic structure, and even more, he cannot freely refer to bodily life, for it would, by no means, violate the metaphysical truth of himself as a natural being, which is the truth of the innate, natural world. **The only rationale for physical asceticism, as stated in natural law is solely the good of a person. The justification for bodily asceticism with another rationale would be contrary to natural law.**

Everyone can justify their asceticism as they wish. But when they make changes to the natural structure of life against their own *personal dignity* – as a rejected rationale for their own actions – they logically contradict their own mind, and thereby the Reason of natural law. And that is all.

A person who wants to get to know the subject cannot question the metaphysical truth that corporeality is the truth of a human being (if it were not for corporeality, man would not be a true being), and that human bodily nature carries a message about the destiny of the body, and consequently the importance of ascetic actions, as those related by the subject to itself.

If the natural body is permeated with Reason, then it is possible to find a message in it about the fate of the body in the life of the subject, and the "instruction manual" of the body by the self-determining subject, – *through itself, towards itself*. This has the intention of introducing into the natural bodily structure the desired, and in some ways, necessary changes.

First of all, bodily sexuality is "in itself" a message of the reproductive use of the female and male body and, consequently a message about the commitment to recognise parental relationships as a natural social structure^{xxiii}.

Secondly, corporeality "enters" the subject's cognition as the natural principle of its action, and consequently it carries the message of the subject's obligation to keep the body ready for its intended purpose.

It is easy to see that the ontic condition of action is natural corporeality. Thus it can be understood that, through the *specially separated action* designed to maintain the body in its completeness, the social life of the subject can be fulfilled according to the chosen goal.

Therefore, doesn't the body contain a message about the obligation of the subject to physical asceticism? Doesn't it seem that reasoning – used in the quest for the truth

xxiii Out of necessity, I omit the deduction of many other conclusions and opinions. I only point to the fact that the sexual health of spouses, which describes their parental status, makes them responsible for the potentiality of this condition, and thus for ascetic activities, which improve procreative fitness. Education through health-procreation fitness belongs to the field of physical education and is called *geneomics education* (F. Znaniecki, *Socjologia wychowania*, Warszawa 1974, vol. II, pp.222-223). So natural law is the source of knowledge of the law of education based on bodily culture.

about the meaning of bodily nature in cultural actions – results in the knowledge that corporeality "obliges" the subject to deal with its somatic and corporate resources in terms of vitality and health?

So cannot it also be concluded that, by this *specifically separated action*, the asceticism of bodily health and vitality, which is carried out methodically as a series of repeated exercises is developed? And the place allocated to this action is the *gymnasium*, from which the patterns of bodily asceticism permeate "outside" into social life and give full meaning to the stylistics of asceticism by the fact that their supreme reason is the good of the person.

The cultural law of bodily asceticism

The Reasoning of natural law leads to such a conclusion, once it appears at the very beginning of the syllogism, as the axiom stating that the **person is the supreme good, whose being is determined by his or her natural corporeality**.

This axiom, as the premise of the greatest reasoning, allows for deduction to be made which result in lesser judgements with the logical status of successors: conclusions and operational judgements.

1. If, therefore, as the axiomatic premise states, a person's physical life is their highest ontic good, it is necessary to specify that the organic existence of the individual is determined by three ontological bodily substances that condition the cultural existence of the person. These include vitality, health and bodily purity that condition the person's existence in every act and activity, in their social life^{xxiv}.

2. A person does not live for life itself; he or she only exists for other people. However, from the attitude of active affirmation of the ontological bodily substance, the person makes the state of vitality, health and bodily purity dependant on himself or herself^{xxv}. The state of these bodily disorders can be affected by the individual's actions towards themselves. These activities are models of physical and health culture^{xxvi}.

xxiv Vitality is the absolute condition of bodily substance, which, determines the unconditional existence of the body. When vitality of the body ceases to exist, bodily life becomes non-organic ("it turns into dust"). Health is determined by vitality, which means that it only indirectly represents the permanence of the living structure. As vitality "abolishes" the lost bodily structure, so reduced health does not annihilate the essence of bodily life; it does not result in bodily death.

xxv A human being is the reason for physical life, and therefore any actions that improve bodily vitality gain moral sense, when the good of the person becomes their reason. According to John Paul II "the source and justification of the obligation to unconditional respect for human life is the dignity of the person, and not merely the natural inclination to preserve one's physical life. Therefore, even human life, although it is the fundamental good of man, gains moral sense only by reference to the good of the person ... ", *Veritatis Splendor*, Kraków 2009, pp. 761-762.

3. Moreover, from the active attitude of the affirmation of *life as a life*, one makes social existence dependent on the moral ideal of existence. A person ceases to exist when they annihilate the corporeal life, and diminish the possibility of self-fulfilment in their ideal, when they actively neglect bodily life by behaviours which destroy vitality, health and purity.

4. The more the person "gains" in his or her personal life (when they head with love towards holiness), the more they are inclined to improve themselves physically in terms of conditioning by performing activities of a higher value. So when a person decides to follow active bodily asceticism to improve their vitality, health and purity, then he or she increases the space for self-improvement at the *gymnasion*, and adds the value of asceticism to their existential activities, which bring it into the culture of bodily asceticism.

5. Regardless of the purpose of a person's actions in social life – secular or religious – by adopting an ascetic lifestyle this will result in the improvement of their bodily afflictions. Obviously, cultural patterns of bodily asceticism accepted by a person do not contradict the ideals of religious holiness, if the normative norm is to rely on the active giving of love, compassion, friendship and kindness^{xxvii}.

xxvi I discuss the patterns of physical culture in detail in the monograph – A. Pawłucki, *Nauki o kulturze fizycznej*, Kraków 2015, Impuls.

xxvii The postulate of the asceticism of bodily nature in the *gymnasion* does not result from Christian ethics. Despite the "sincerity" of natural reasoning, it could not possibly be considered a casuistic rule belonging to the same, only slightly renewed, and in any case, unorthodox church-monastic ethics. The natural law of every secular and religious person, without exception, is *gymnasion* asceticism; which is the affirmation of the improved *bios*. Under this, the catechistic dissemination of the pattern of bodily asceticism not being ideologically contradictory to the pattern of school asceticism of the *gymnasion*, would have to find its new justification in natural law. In Christian ethics, casuistry which would decide on the logically-consistent rule of the catechesis of penitent asceticism with an upbringing according to *gymnasion* asceticism (health education), would not be possible. Contrary to common sense, the bodily asceticism of John Paul II, whose content made many cardinals concerned ("it is not right for the Pope to swim"), cannot be "subsumed under the casuistic rule" of Christian ethics. The only legitimate reason for the Pope's *gymnasion* asceticism can be natural law. And only natural moral law could have been a source of justification for the Pope before the cardinals when he practised athletic asceticism. Under the ethics of his Church, John Paul II could have not introduced the rule of moral responsibility for the proper physical formation of boldly-affirming athletic athleticism. In religious ethics there was no premise which would justify the rule of bodily and *gymnasion* affirmation. John Paul II explicitly wrote about "the true meaning of natural law" that it is "a rational order in which man is called by the Creator to direct and regulate his life and his actions, and in particular to use and dispose of his body" (*Veritatis Splendor*, Kraków 2009, p. 761). All the more so, Paul of Tarsus could not have taken out any claim of a person's responsibility for their corporeality, from Christian ethics for it did not yet exist. The Apostle's records of moral responsibility for the body sound as if they were taken from "natural moral law". Not "as if", they certainly were, justified by this law.

Conclusions

Thus, natural law in a person's social life is the right to an ascetic life-style in order to improve vitality, health and bodily purity. This is due to their real physical readiness to actively pursue their ideals (moral value of existence), which are the only rationale for the meaning of *gymnasion* bodily affirmation.

Bodily asceticism is a natural law, but it is also the responsibility of an individual for their own or somebody else's life. It is duty towards society and its common good. Helping another person, which is the goal of a person's social life, requires the intensification of actions to improve the natural body. A personal action, i.e. the existence in their real deed, comes from perfected bodily powers. And self-improvement of the body is indeed part of *gymnasion* asceticism.

Life is indeed worth living by undertaking bodily asceticism. When a person exists for another person in their social life then the moral value of the relationship they have built gives life its full meaning. The rationale of physical life is the dignity of the person. Thereafter the person gains the *natural law* to enter the role of a *gymnasion* ascetic, and – after gaining access to the understanding of this dependence, which they do not owe to themselves, but rather only to the *teachers of physical asceticism* – they can commit themselves to increased bodily formation in the *gymnasion* of healthiness.

And when the time of fasting begins, the health-oriented asceticism of the *gymnasion* will "turn into" penance asceticism, as if the *mortification* rule of the body was to be fulfilled – paradoxically by its *revival*.

Does not the ascetic lifestyle assume the training overexertion of muscular fitness (*sore body*), a restricted diet (*starving body*) and deep dirt removal (a cleansed body)? This is exactly the same as in the penitential asceticism of internal ascetic monks, in which everything is accomplished in relation to the body, with the exception of *gymnasion* asceticism, which priests and nuns stay away from, for fear of bringing their bodily senses too much to life. The question of how to prevent this is related rather to practical asceticism^{xxviii}, and the answer given does not contradict the conclusion about the natural law of a monk to participate in the culture of body and health asceticism, including the *gymnasion* culture of fitness. A monk lives for others, so it is not surprising that the reason for his social inclusion is the good of the individual. Therefore his natural law is *gymnasion* asceticism, aimed at the improvement of bodily nature. However, the monk does not know that the law of *gymnasion* asceticism is given to him by the *Logos* of natural law. The religious rule does not presuppose the *gymnasion*

xxviii See e.g. E. Bielecki, *Temperamentologia i ascetyka*, Kraków 1992, Instytut Teologiczny Księży Misjonarzy.

formation of the saint, which means that religious *ethos* contradicts the *Logos* of natural law.

Pedagogy of an ascetic lifestyle on "planted" *ius naturalis*

Is it possible to educate through the *culture of bodily asceticism*, in which, to put it simply, **physical education** could be a logically consistent pedagogical unit **along with the catechesis of penitent asceticism**?

I ask myself this question not as a former pupil who after many years, and while reminiscing on the "course" his of education, suddenly realises contradictions in them. No pupil asks such questions. He does not ask them, unless he himself becomes a teacher of physical education "along the way", who provides other teachers with the meaning of the models of bodily asceticism, i.e. their meaning is justified by reason of some good.

It depends directly on the physical education teacher as to how pupils will understand the importance of the patterns of bodily asceticism which they are given. How the pupils' teacher presents their meaning, depends on how the idea of good justifying the meaning of the patterns of bodily formation by that teacher's teacher.

As the teacher to a pupil, so the teacher provides objective knowledge about the importance of bodily asceticism, related to its rationale, to another teacher. Thanks to the teacher, the pupil indirectly, and the teacher directly, access the truth about the importance of a cultural pattern.

And from whom does the teacher learn about the rationale for the importance of the pattern of bodily asceticism, and who convinces him of its logical truth?

If this is an objectivised meaning – in the sense that it is placed within the culture of normative society to which the teacher has access, (and let us remind ourselves that the teacher as defined by their status, is a philosopher of culture, which means that they must get to know cultural reality scientifically^{xxix}) – then he ought to credit the knowledge of the ideological justification of patterns of bodily culture to intellectual leaders, who, in their creative endeavors, work out a supra-individual, *axionormative* property.

The teacher does not have to agree with existing **objectivisations**, especially if he has demonstrated their ideological inclination, – pointing to false self-knowledge – but he should start his reasoning with a critical review of the justifications in order to

xxix A nominal teacher is a philosopher of culture. However, in the tradition of teaching, the alternative name for *the philosophy of upbringing* can be met. It is simply explained by the fact that from an ontological point of view upbringing is a cultural reality; See e.g., A. Pawłucki, *Wychowanie jako kulturowa rzeczywistość. Na przykładzie wychowania do wartości ciała*, Gdańsk 1992, AWF.

submit his justification for the ideals of bodily asceticism to the world, and to explain the meaning of particular patterns in light of it.

Thus the teacher credits his knowledge of the purpose of patterns of bodily asceticism to his intellectual leaders (usually generational predecessors), but also to himself in epistemic consequence, when he shows his independence and proclaims that due to this independence in reflective thinking he can participate in the rational nature of man.

This means that the teacher himself, as a deductionist, can objectify the social order when he *breaks down* the first rules of natural order contained in the potentiality of the *Logos* towards the present. He deduces from them, as the premise of his reasoning, the consequents with the status of conclusions and operational judgements; and through the results, he can submit his judgements in the postulative, mandatory and prohibitive form to the world, guaranteed by the "greatness" of reason and expressed in such a way as if he were revealing the *Decalogue* to the educated society.

The teacher of physical culture could also join the deductionists of natural law as if he wanted to prove the following:

1. If the social life of a person is in relation to their natural corporeality, and their natural corporeality is in relation to bodily asceticism, then the condition for the person's entry onto the path of bodily asceticism is his or her personal empowerment by the teacher.

2. If the pupil's entrance onto the path of bodily asceticism depends on the teacher, it is also up to the educator whether the meaning of the bodily culture given to the pupil will be justified by the dignity of the person.

Thus, the natural law of the pupil is the right to **education based on the culture of *gymnasion*** asceticism – which in the chain of intergenerational causality leads the pupil to participate in the social culture of the person.

It can be concluded from this *natural reasoning* that as soon as **education based on the culture of bodily asceticism** is conceived by the teacher in a personalistic way, then the catechist can follow the same *path* as the physical education teacher. Each of them – by presenting the form of bodily asceticism in their own way – justifies it by the dignity of the person^{xxx}.

xxx The postulate of combining patterns of *gymnasion* and penance asceticism concerns the pedagogy of physical culture and catechetical pedagogy, not the catechism itself. As it is well known in catechetical pedagogy, some "trends" are considered, three of which would particularly favour such integration. These trends include "therapeutic", "correlational" and, *nomen omen*, "integrative". See more on this topic: T. Panuś, *Główne kierunki katechetyczne XX wieku*, Kraków 2001, Wydawnictwo "M", pp.145-161.

And nothing extraordinary would happen if the teaching of *gymnasion* asceticism led to a single educational activity with the catechist of penitential asceticism – by submitting patterns of *ascetic lifestyles* focussing on vitality, health and bodily purity to the same pupils; patterns that retain a logically consistent validity in both the secular and the religious life of a person.

As far as I, as a teacher of physical culture am concerned, the reflections on *gymnasion* and penitent asceticism, as logically consistent patterns, would not have led me into the notion of *the ascetic lifestyle of a person for another person* if I had not myself experienced "in the flesh" the dualistic reasons for their justification which are incomprehensible to pupils.

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