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The design of religious studies pedagogy in the perspective of the thought of Enlightenment

Introduction

In the period of the transformations of the Modern Era, both in terms of cultural and social aspects, the philosophical thought of the Enlightenment pondered over religion and its place in the society. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries the civilizational centre of philosophical culture of the time – France – faced multiple events that intensified secularisation processes in material and institutional terms¹. Apart from the fact that French state took over part of church goods, the institution of marriage secularised², religious pluralism was legally sanctioned (Protestants and Jews were given civil rights and liberties) and clergymen started to receive monthly remuneration from the state³. The situation of the Roman Catholic Church, uncertain under new, revolutionary order, stabilised in the period of Napoleon's rule, but the Church did not regain the autonomy

¹ According to Jan Baszkiewicz, “[t]he decline of religiousness in the 17th and 18th century Western Europe was a slow process; it emerged in Protestant countries but in the 18th century it grew stronger in Catholic Europe, especially in France. At that time it affected between ten and twenty percent of wealthy and well-educated high society; it also spread to lower spheres but at a weaker rate. In the 19th century this trend reversed: higher circles of the society began to return to religiousness, lower circles started to gradually give it up”. J. Baszkiewicz, *Francja nowożytna [The early modern France]*, Poznań 2002, p. 101.

² Taking into consideration various discussions in contemporary religious studies, the author of this paper understands secularization not as the process of religious degeneration but as the transformation of the role of religion in social life, on different levels. In his Ph.D. dissertation entitled: *Procesy sekularyzacyjne a filozofia sekularna i postsekularna. Tradycje i współczesność [The processes of secularization and the secular or post-secular philosophy. Tradition and modernity]*, defended in June 2013 (in press), the author of this paper pointed to four such levels – material, institutional, individual and cultural.

³ More on the subject of secularization transformations in revolutionary France and on the accompanying social and educational thought see: J. Iwanicki, *Koncepcja sekularyzacji życia społecznego Jeana Antoine Condorceta [Jean Antoine Condorcet's conception of the secularisation of social life]*, “Przegląd Religioznawczy”, 2012, no. 1 (243), p. 51-61.

and independence from the state that it had in the pre-revolutionary period⁴. The secularisation processes included different sectors and dimensions of European societies of the time. This was inspired by and mirrored in the thought of the Enlightenment.

A separate issue, that will be discussed in this paper, and which appeared in the deliberations of 18th century philosophy classics, was the question of educational reforms with reference to religion. In order to mould the society on the basis of new models and ideas, the educational system of the time had to be thoroughly changed. For civilizational progress cannot only occur within the high society, according to the paradigm of Enlightenment it should involve wider circles of the society. The elimination of superstitions and the promotion of tolerance required different means of instruction and different educational methods that would allow for the transformation of society's axiology and would direct it towards the desired line of development by the leading luminaries of the Age of Enlightenment. It is worth noticing that the Enlightenment education philosophy also had its ideological aims⁵. Since educational and religious reforms in post-revolutionary France would not be possible without prior ideological inspiration from English Enlightenment – which is clearly visible in Voltaire's *Letters from England*⁶, in order to capture the essence of Enlightenment's pedagogy concerning religion the author of this paper will discuss John Locke's most significant concepts.

Religious education in the Enlightenment – the English way

John Locke pointed to the original religious thought that can be drawn from the message of the Gospel⁷. According to him, the promotion of religion by means of force

⁴ Z. Drozdowicz, *O racjonalności w religii i religijności [On rationality in religion and religiousness]*, Poznań 2009, p. 11.

⁵ Gerald Gutek discusses the liberalism of the Enlightenment in terms of an ideology. With regards to the attitude of Enlightenment liberals' towards religion he claims that, "[a]lthough in private life liberals were sometimes religious and attended different Churches, on the whole they expressed opposition towards the imposition of one particular denomination on citizens and towards the requirement of supporting the established Church (...) As far as the relationships between Church and school are concerned, liberals presented different views – from moderate ones, manifested by the lack of interest in issues concerning faith, to openly anticlerical ones. While trying to do away with Church's patronage over education, they were striving at changing the policy which promoted religious conformism as a condition to practice the teaching profession and to be accepted by a school. They were also fighting for the removal of religious doctrines from the curriculum", [translation – J. F.]. G. L. Gutek, *Filozofia dla pedagogów [Philosophical and Ideological Perspectives on Education]*, Gdańsk 2007, p. 182-183.

⁶ See: Voltaire, *Listy o Anglikach albo listy filozoficzne [Letters On The English; Or Lettres Philosophiques]*, Warsaw 1953.

⁷ Passages of the chapter about John Locke's thought were published in author's Ph.D. dissertation, *Procesy sekularyzacyjne a filozofia sekularna i postsekularna. Tradycje i współczesność [The processes of secularization and the secular or post-secular philosophy. Tradition and modernity]*.

and violence is not in keeping with the spirit of Christianity and the Gospel. The greatest virtue of every true Christian is love and it excludes the use of coercive measures towards people of different faith. In this way the English philosopher propagates the idea of toleration. He says that "[t]he toleration of those that differ from others in matters of religion is so agreeable to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to the genuine reason of mankind, that it seems monstrous for men to be so blind as not to perceive the necessity and advantage of it in so clear a light"⁸. Therefore, Locke specifically condemns fanaticism, or extreme intolerance, that make the followers of different religions fight each other. According to him, real Christian religiousness is not at odds with the ability to accept people who do not share the same denomination.

In this way, for the first time in the history of secular and educational thought, the English thinker calls for the idea of religious pluralism. This concept implies that the influence of one, dominant religion, in the field of culture should diminish, just as in the field of public space, where a space for different religions should come into existence. The influence of one, dominant religion, also declines in the sphere of individual choices because an individual has, at least partial, choice as to what religion, available in his or her society, he or she wants to adopt. Locke's thought can also lead to inferring educational conclusions. The society has to be formed according to the idea of toleration and plurality. Educational establishments should therefore be free of the bias towards one religion in order to strengthen the plural systems of values in the state.

Locke's institutional secularisation and the separation of Church and State are justified in the following way. According to the philosopher, secular public offices cannot be involved in the question of salvation of the soul or in the concern for citizens' faith. This partially results from the above-mentioned idea that nobody can be forced to profess a particular (and true) faith and that it is at variance with the spirit of the real Gospel.

According to Locke, the secular state should care for order in the realm of worldly goods (such as the general material situation and the freedom and security of each individual) and this is the main responsibility of public offices which maintain order. The authorities take care for this law, expressed in another work, not to be violated: "every man has a property in his own person: this nobody has any right to but himself. The labour of his body and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his"⁹.

Therefore, the secular authority, except for maintaining order as regards property and worldly goods, has no obligation to, and should not define a corpus of one, public faith that is common to all citizens and believers of a given society¹⁰. As a result, each citizen should individually come to a conclusion as to what faith particularly suits him. One can carry on cultivating the conviction about the indisputability of the truths of a given religion, but one should bear in mind that this view does not have to be shared

⁸ J. Locke, *List o tolerancji [A Letter Concerning Toleration]*, Warsaw 1963, p. 6.

⁹ J. Locke, *Dwa traktaty o rządzie [Two Treatises of Government]*, Warsaw 1992, p. 181.

¹⁰ J. Locke, *List o tolerancji...*, [A Letter Concerning Toleration], op. cit., p. 7-8.

by another member of the society as everybody has the right to different opinion and different conclusions regarding religion. It is not difficult to notice the educational potential of this thought for the state – new religious education requires the support of individual freedom and the liberty of the choice of the world view in the sphere of educational systems. Religious education, in the spirit of Locke's thought should therefore be pluralistic and geared towards different religious (or secular) choices that can be made by every free man.

One of the further consequences of this argumentation is the reflexion that nobody is born as a member of a given Church but, in the course of life, can consciously choose one of the existing denominations. The freedom to choose a given religion¹¹ is an important assumption. In Latin original, instead of describing Churches by the theological notion of *ecclesia*, Locke prefers to use the secular term *societatis religiosae*, that is, religious associations¹². Under this argumentation, it is impossible for these religious associations to run different activity than the one pertaining to the promotion and the strengthening of religious ideas in their own, voluntary circle. Therefore, religious education should have voluntary character. Dealing with the issues of worldly goods falls outside the competence of churches – it stays within the jurisdiction of the secular state.

Therefore, according to Locke's argumentation, there is no possibility for the secular authority and different churches to combine. He says that, "the power of the clergy (...) ought to be confined within the bounds of the Church, nor can it in any manner be extended to civil affairs, because the Church itself is a thing absolutely separate and distinct from the commonwealth. The boundaries on both sides are fixed and immovable"¹³. The argument regarding strict separation of Church and State is clearly stated in Locke's thought.

It is important to notice that, although Locke's propositions significantly limit the influence of religion on people and on society, these are not atheistic propositions (the inclination to profess a religion is natural in human beings), nor are they disrespectful of the internal freedom of any church. The secular state cannot, for example, what was acceptable according to Hobbes's social thought¹⁴, interfere in the ceremonies and rituals performed in a given religion. The secular authority also cannot change the content of the credo in particular churches.

Locke's pluralism also results in the acceptance of the existence of different religions, as long as they do not harm the freedom of the citizens and remain loyal to their home

¹¹ Participation in Locke's society is also voluntary. According to Locke's theory of social contract, "legitimate government can be founded only on the consent of free and equal and reasonable and rational persons, starting from the state of nature (...) all being, as it were, equally sovereign over themselves". J. Rawls, *Wykłady z historii filozofii polityki [Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy]*, Warsaw 2010, p. 170.

¹² J. Locke, *List o tolerancji...*, [A letter concerning toleration], op. cit., p. 11-12.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 21.

¹⁴ The author discussed Thomas Hobbes's attitude to religion in: J. Iwanicki, *Racjonalność i sekularyzacja religii w filozofii społecznej Thomasa Hobbesa [Rationality and secularisation of religion in Thomas Hobbes's social philosophy]*, in: *Spoleczno-kulturowe konteksty racjonalności [Socio-cultural contexts of rationality]*, Z. Drozdowicz, S. Sztajer (eds.), Poznań 2012, p. 121-132.

state¹⁵. At the same time, Locke was aware of the fact that not everybody uses the reason, granted to him or her by God, adequately. He claimed that, “the imagination is always restless, and suggests variety of thoughts, and the will, reason being laid afield, is ready for every extravagant project (...) He that will impartially survey the nations of the world, will find so much of their religions governments, and manners, brought in and continued amongst them by these means [i.e. unreasonable and mad means –*J. I.*], that he will have but little reverence for the practices which are in use and credit amongst men”¹⁶. However, despite some people’s and churches’ inclination to plunge into strange and mad ideas¹⁷, according to Locke, every citizen has the right to choose individually, by the force of his or her reason and faith¹⁸, what religion is the most suitable for him or her. At the same time, every citizen has the right to neglect his or her religion. Locke sums it up concisely by saying that, “the care of each man’s salvation belongs only to himself”¹⁹. Liberal education in enlightened society should therefore include the possibility of different religious choices of the citizens.

An interesting exception regarding Locke’s pluralism and toleration can be seen in his approach to atheists – that is the people who do not commit to any religion and who do not believe in any religious ideas, even from outside Christianity. Locke does not see a place for such people in the society²⁰ clearly stating that, “[l]astly, those are not at

¹⁵ This also concerns the so called speculative dogmas which do not refer directly to practical life. As noted by Locke, “the magistrate ought not to forbid the preaching or professing of any speculative opinions in any Church because they have no manner of relation to the civil rights of the subjects. If a Roman Catholic believe that to be really the body of Christ which another man calls bread, he does no injury thereby to his neighbour. If a Jew do not believe the New Testament to be the Word of God, he does not thereby alter anything in men’s civil rights. If a heathen doubt of both Testaments, he is not therefore to be punished as a pernicious citizen. The power of the magistrate and the estates of the people may be equally secure whether any man believe these things or no”. J. Locke, *List o tolerancji...*, [A Letter Concerning Toleration], op. cit., p. 46. In another part, Locke supports this thought by saying, “[n]ay, if we may openly speak the truth, and as becomes one man to another, neither Pagan nor Mahometan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth because of his religion”. Ibidem, p. 62.

¹⁶ J. Locke, *Dwa traktaty...*, [Two Treatises...], op. cit., p. 58.

¹⁷ Moreover, this is also dealt with in Locke’s epistemology. He distinguished between real ideas that have their basis in nature and are in line with the essence and existence of things, and fantastic (or chimeric) ideas, which in his opinion, are not based on the nature of things and are not in conformity with the reality of existence. J. Locke, *Rozważania dotyczące rozumu ludzkiego* [An Essay Concerning Human Understanding], vol. 1, Warsaw 1955, p. 528.

¹⁸ In terms of the relationship between reason and faith Locke acknowledged some rationality of people who migrate in matters of faith (he was not, therefore, a fideist), but gave a lower rational rank to statements based on Revelation. While seeking the truth in Revelation is not without rational basis, it does not guarantee complete certainty. Thus, what is consistent with the reason and is revealed, according to him, becomes the object of faith. J. Locke, *Rozważania dotyczące rozumu ludzkiego* [An Essay Concerning Human Understanding], vol. 2, Warsaw 1955, p. 444-453.

¹⁹ J. Locke, *List o tolerancji...*, [A Letter Concerning Toleration], op. cit., p. 48.

²⁰ Locke’s toleration was also limited with respect to Catholics, to which he voiced a reservation about them primarily remaining loyal to Rome in: J. Waldron, *Locke*, in: *Myśliciele polityczni...*, [Political Thinkers: From

all to be tolerated who deny the being of a God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all"²¹. Hence, it is here that Locke's liberal social and educational thought reaches its limit; atheism is an unacceptable world view because it is too risky for enlightened social order²².

Another interesting aspect concerning Locke's educational philosophy is the recommendation to instil in children the idea of God as an Independent Being, Originator and Creator of all things. Children were to entertain a conviction that it is from God that we receive all good and all belongings as well as his love that we should reciprocate. At the same time, although Locke believed that the idea of God is educationally significant as it develops child's morality, according to him one should not inspire the youth to speculations and deeper deliberations about the nature of God. He argued, "I think it would be better, if men generally rested in such an idea of God, without being too curious in their notions about a being, which all must acknowledge incomprehensible; whereby many, who have not strength and clearness of thought to distinguish between what they can, and what they cannot know, run themselves into superstition or atheism, making God like themselves, or (because they cannot comprehend anything else) none at all"²³. Thus, it is curious that in his educational philosophy Locke protected the idea of freedom and, following on from that, certain area of self-responsibility in man, and at the same time he did not have full confidence in all human choices. He believed that both atheism and all superstitious variants of religiousness arise when man misuses his reason.

At the same time Locke admitted that on a deeper level the idea of God is difficult to grasp, concluding that although God is necessary, as a controller of human morality, he is however a distant and unfathomable being. This is the germ of deistic thinking, the religious and philosophical concept, in which God no longer serves a providential function for the earthly world, simultaneously secularises relative to previous theist concept. The conception of God, although metaphysically intangible, still serves a significant moral, social and educational function in the thought of the English Enlightenment.

Most researchers lean towards the presentation of Locke's attitude towards religion as some sort of concealed, enlightened scepticism. However, this opinion is not shared

Socrates to the Present], D. Boucher, P. Kelly (eds.), op. cit., p. 243. This issue is also extensively discussed by John Marshall in: J. Marshall, *John Locke. Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, Cambridge 2006, p. 687 ff.

²¹ J. Locke, *List o tolerancji...*, [A letter concerning toleration], op. cit., p. 55.

²² Locke did not only substantiate that atheist, as potential perjurers, can break the rules of social coexistence with the argument from social philosophy. He also claimed in his rationality approach that the conception of God is one of the brightest ideas of our mind. He claimed that, "[t]he idea of a supreme Being, infinite in power, goodness, and wisdom, whose workmanship we are, and on whom we depend; and the idea of ourselves, as understanding, rational creatures, being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations of our duty and rules of action as might place morality amongst the sciences capable of demonstration". J. Locke, *Rozważania dotyczące rozumu ludzkiego [An Essay Concerning Human Understanding]*, vol. 2, p. 230-231, Warsaw 1955.

²³ J. Locke, *Myśli o wychowaniu [Some thoughts concerning education]*, Warsaw 2002, p. 138.

by Charles Taylor, who noticed that, “the temptation is great to see Locke’s Christianity as largely a residual attachment to the past or perhaps even as a protective colouration in an age when open unbelief invited reprisal. Though Locke was not without his accusers in his own time, this reading is wrong, and in an important sense anachronistic. Locke was certainly not fully orthodox theologically, but his faith was not peripheral to this position. It was seriously meant. And moreover, not to see this is to misunderstand badly the nature of the moral position he espoused”²⁴. Hence, the author of this paper believes that Locke’s moral and educational stand can be taken as a point of departure for the outline of religious studies pedagogy that will be presented in the second part of this paper.

The influence of John Locke might have inspired Jean Nicolas de Condorcet, one of the writers of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which states in article ten that, “[n]o one may be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious ones, as long as the manifestation of such opinions does not interfere with the established Law and Order”. Article eleven of the Declaration states that, “[t]he free communication of ideas and of opinions is one of the most precious rights of man”²⁵.

An outline of religious studies pedagogy

The influence of the thought of the Enlightenment, including Locke’s educational ideas such as religious plurality and the freedom of religious choice, is visible in British educational system²⁶. The problematic question is whether the influence of these ideas is visible in religious education in Poland. In the period of political transformation, which started in 1989, Poland introduced religious instruction into public schools, which took place in 1993. Therefore, certain model of religious education is present in Poland and it has an established, legal character²⁷.

²⁴ Ch. Taylor, *Źródła podmiotowości. Narodziny tożsamości nowoczesnej [Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity]*, Warsaw 2001, p. 434-435.

²⁵ Deklaracja Praw Człowieka i Obywatela z 26 VIII 1789 r. [Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 26 August 1789], in: B. Lesiński, J. Walachowicz, *Historia ustroju państwa w tekstach źródłowych [The history of the political system in source texts]*, Warsaw – Poznań 1992, p. 124.

²⁶ In modern Britain religious instruction is given under the name of a school subject, “Religious Education”. Teachers are required to teach about different religions and about topics related to religiousness while taking into account the role of Christianity. The curriculum at any given establishment is often created in communication with the local authorities which communicate with different believers and the followers of different world views. See: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/primary/a0064886/religious-education-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010> [access: 31 X 2013].

²⁷ Religious instruction in Polish schools is governed by Article 12 of the concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of Poland of 1993. Some aspects of this concordat seem to support the proposals of Locke’s philosophy of education and the formation of the Enlightenment. For example, the teachers get salaries from the state (the French clergy also used to get their salary from the state), and the state does not interfere with the internal curriculum of religious education in the Church, which was also proposed by Locke thus

Religious instruction in Poland has been accompanied by the development of academic thought – the pedagogy of religion. The 3rd International Congress of Religious Studies in Toruń involved a section on the pedagogy of religion chaired by the Rev. Prof. Jerzy Bagarowicz.

Following the analysis of general programme guidelines for this section, one can find out that the pedagogy of religion is an academic discipline that combines pedagogy and theology and deals with the analysis of educational potential of religion²⁸. The message conveyed by this section was also visible in the statement that the pedagogy of religion is a theory of religious process, instruction and education orientated towards the practice of Christian life. The programme also states that, in the shaping of personality, religious education serves the function of strengthening the system of values adopted by the individual and religious instruction, apart from the transfer of knowledge, should also serve the function of religious initiation and evangelization. All of the above ideas were stated in the above-mentioned programme points of the 9th section on the pedagogy of religion at the 2011 Congress of Religious Studies.

The overview of main academic literature in Poland that deals with the pedagogy of religion supports the above-mentioned concepts. In the dominant Polish scientific discourse, the pedagogy of religion functions as a subdiscipline of theology and apart from the cognitive and theoretical problems it should, according to its authors, deal with the widely understood religious education in the frame of, e.g. family, religious instruction at different school levels, the formation of the youth and of adults as well as the media²⁹.

After a preliminary analysis of present pedagogy of religion it appears that the current Polish pedagogy of religion has highly confessional character. It is particularly developed in the direction of Catholic pedagogy and the main representatives of the pedagogy of religion stress that this subdiscipline should be treated in close relationship to theology (which, in Poland, in principle has confessional character). Admittedly, there are ecumenical institutes, such as the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, which has been developing Christian pedagogy in the spirit of ecumenism and in the tradition of protestant hermeneutics³⁰. It does not change, however, the above observation that religious education in Poland does not have particularly pluralistic character, and most of all, has no strong academic ties with contrastive religious studies. From the perspective of religious studies this creates a research gap. Therefore, is it possible to create the pedagogy of religion that would maintain closer ties with religious studies than with theology?

maintaining the autonomy of churches. On the other hand, it is problematic to decide whether the secular school simultaneously ensures the plurality of religious ideas.

²⁸ See <http://www.kongresreligii.umk.pl/sekcje/9> [access: 31 X 2013]. The conclusions from the discussions have also been published in a collective work, see: J. Bagarowicz, J. Horowski, *Edukacyjny potencjał religii [The educational potential of religion]*, Toruń 2012.

²⁹ C. Rogowski, *Pedagogika religii [The pedagogy of religion]*, Toruń 2011, p. 55, B. Milerski, *Pedagogika religii [The pedagogy of religion]*, in: *Pedagogika [The pedagogy]*, Z. Kwieciński, B. Śliwerski (eds.), Warsaw 2009, p. 264-265.

³⁰ See: B. Milerski, *Hermeneutyka pedagogiczna [The hermeneutics of pedagogy]*, Warsaw 2011.

The author of this paper believes that it is possible and in the conclusion he proposes a project of religious studies pedagogy. The author suggested the above term in order to differentiate the suggested research area from the already developed, and dominant in Poland, confessional pedagogy of religion.

The pedagogy of religious studies would therefore make use of the achievements of the philosophical and educational thought of the Enlightenment. The above-presented views of John Locke on the relationship between religion and state as well as on religious education could be partially used after some revision.

One could also refer to certain propositions made in the existing pedagogy of religion. In his research, Cyprian Rogowski points to the existence of the model of religious studies and information in the pedagogy of religion. Its aim being in teaching and education based on religious studies instead of theology. Under such model, one should not only teach about the development, the doctrine and the representatives of one religion but present many different religions, paying attention to the cultural diversity of contemporary world. At the same time, the relationship between religious problems and social problems should be pointed to, showing that religions are part of a greater reality. This would also mean that religious instruction should be based on the process of informative rather than evaluative instruction³¹. Although the above model of religious studies and information is worth noticing, it should be observed that it is practically not used in Polish pedagogy. The dominant model is the confessional one and pedagogy remains closely related to theology (Catholic or Protestant).

There is also a trend of intercultural education in contemporary Polish pedagogy which deals with cultural differences that are present in Poland³². Intercultural education could have an auxiliary function to the pedagogy of religious studies, but not a complete one, as the main research category for such pedagogical subdiscipline is "culture" in its different manifestations, not "religion" or "religions".

The postulated pedagogy of religious studies could therefore relate to the already mentioned religious studies and information model and creatively develop this so far underdeveloped trend in Polish religious instruction. The author believes that this would be beneficial for both, religious studies and pastoral theology.

The development of pedagogical research closely connected to religious studies would be of benefit to the field as it would develop a new subdiscipline of religious studies. While particular areas of religious studies, such as the sociology of religion, psychology of religion or philosophy of religion are highly developed in Polish religious studies, this cannot be said about contemporary pedagogy of religion as its main representatives advance the discipline within its relationship to confessional theologies.

³¹ C. Rogowski, *Pedagogika religii...*, [The pedagogy of religion...], op. cit., p. 144-149.

³² See: U. Klajmon-Lech, T. Lewowicki, A. Różańska, *Religia i edukacja międzykulturowa [Religion and intercultural education]*, Toruń 2012.

The development of the pedagogy of religious studies would not only stimulate further development of religious studies but also inspire a discussion with confessional pedagogy of religion. It seems that traditional pedagogy of religion does not discuss the secularisation processes taking place in Polish society that are particularly visible among young people³³. The secularised part of the youth that currently has no particular alternative in contemporary school (the question of ethics lessons remains highly problematic in Polish school) does not have to lose interest in religion as long as it is presented in an approachable way that does not involve value judgments. Such an educational direction could be supported by the religious studies pedagogy, which would require academic development from scratch. Religion is a far too significant part of modern culture to omit it in the process of education. It can however be taught in a comparative and objectivising way that takes into account the reality of modern secularisation processes.

The proposed religious studies pedagogy would therefore refer to the tradition of European Enlightenment. Expertise in religious studies would be the educational value of this paradigm that is the empirical and theoretical knowledge about different religions and different manifestations of religiousness in contemporary world. Within the scope of this research area lesser emphasis could be placed on the strengthening of one particular system of values while greater one on the drawing of a perspective of parallelism and potential parallelism of different religious systems of values.

This does not need to, according to the author, necessarily lead to a conflict with the traditional pedagogy of religion. On a practical level, the pedagogy of religious studies would discuss the question of how to teach about religions in social groups with high degree of secularization. Traditional pedagogy of religion can still be effective with respect to, e.g. groups of young people exhibiting high degree of Christian formation and interested in this kind of religious education. One could also consider different types of cooperation, such as the development of existing courses of religious instruction in primary and secondary schools on the knowledge of religious studies (which can strengthen and broaden religious consciousness of Christian youth, after all deep faith is not afraid of questions and comparisons and the youth have particular penchant for analysing various world views). At the same time religious studies, as a possible separate school subject, could mainly focus on Christian religion as the dominant (but not the only)

³³ This issue is noted by Rogowski who wrote that, "While ever faster processes of secularization and pluralisation can be observed, the diversity of the world views is also increasing among students and responsible educational entities face challenges that are comparable to those in Western Europe. In this situation, religious instruction lessons should take a more open character that is based on dialogue. Also, because of the educational and political reasons these can no longer be thought of as 'Church at school', and thus, as a kind of religious instruction lesson in the strict sense". [translation – J. F.]. C. Rogowski, *Pedagogika religii...*, [The pedagogy of religion...], op. cit., p. 58. The author of this paper thinks that the development of religious studies pedagogy is an alternative solution to the problem. On the subject of secularization among youth see also: *Religijna i moralna kondycja młodzieży polskiej: mity i rzeczywistość* [Religious and moral condition of the Polish youth: Myths and Reality], J. Baniak (ed.), Poznań 2005.

model of religion in our society. A similar model of religious studies education is currently adopted in the UK.

At the level of *purely* academic education the pedagogy of religious studies could deal with the development of pedagogical reflection. It seems that the question of how religion should be taught is insufficiently analysed. It is difficult to postulate the introduction of religious studies or of elements of religious studies to schools without analysing beforehand what educational content would exactly be included in this subject. In addition, academic pedagogy of religious studies should also discuss the teaching of religious studies at the tertiary level. It seems that a deeper pedagogical reflection should include the tertiary level as well – what methods, techniques, ways of teaching religious studies among students of humanities and social sciences should be used? In Poland there are institutes and departments that conduct studies in or courses of religious studies, therefore, they should also be accompanied by supporting pedagogical and religious studies reflection.

The pedagogy of religious studies can use the conclusions of the history of religious studies, the history of philosophy and the history of educational thought. As demonstrated above, there is, particularly in the cultural formation of the Enlightenment, a potential to develop the pedagogy of religious studies. Certain elements of pedagogical reflection and religious studies reflection had already appeared in the classics of European thought, such as John Locke, Jean Condorcet or Jean Rousseau.

Other possible objectives and tasks of the religious studies pedagogy would involve the use of comparative methods in relation to different churches and religious organizations in Poland. It seems that the issue of teaching religion in Christian churches has already been highly developed in view of the development of traditional pedagogy of religion. However, many minority Christian churches conduct their own educational courses (e.g. correspondence Bible courses), there are also small Christian communities that get clergy educated in Western universities, inspired by other educational methods, come to Poland³⁴. Small Jewish communities³⁵, Muslim institutions³⁶ as well as oriental religions of the East³⁷ run their own religious instruction. It is a large research area that

³⁴ One example could be the educational and confessional activity of the Polish Episcopal Community, which draws inspiration from the Anglican tradition. The community offers retreats in Poznań, Kraków and Puławy. See <http://episkopalianie.pl/> [access: 31 X 2013].

³⁵ In Poznań, the President of the Poznań branch of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities conducts dynamic social and educational activity regarding the significance of Judaism and Jewish culture. In May 2013, Poznań Religious Studies Seminar at the Department of Religious Studies and Comparative Studies organized an educational meeting with a representative of the Jewish community.

³⁶ In Poland Muslims run their own educational institutions. In Poznań, the Muslim Educational and Cultural Centre is such an entity. Its representatives actively participate in educational meetings with students, among others, at Adam Mickiewicz University.

³⁷ For example, the Satha Sai Baba organization, a Neo-Hindu religious movement that is also active in Poland, has its doctrinal beliefs in the field of religious education. It states that: “[t]here is a higher purpose of education: to lead an inner life based on five human values namely, on truth, righteousness, peace, love and

could open up a space for exploration for the pedagogy of religious studies applying comparative methods.

In addition to the above outlined objectives of the pedagogy of religious studies one can also find other interesting areas of research. In relation to the development of a child, John Locke put the question of how a child perceives God, is a child able to understand the idea of a personal God or of the Absolute? It is a question that can be taken by contemporary cognitive religious studies in the study of cognitive processes. Appropriate proposals could in turn be analysed by the pedagogy of religious studies.

Religious education does not have to, and should not, be limited to one model of education. It is not only in contradiction with the said Locke's tradition of the Enlightenment, but also, it is not in the interest of confessional education. Modern and post-secular world requires reflection on a number of contemporary religious (and nonreligious) views. The author of this paper believes that the Christians who know not only their own religious tradition but also other religious traditions and the culture of the Enlightenment can become not only better citizens and members of the society but also persons of higher religious consciousness, resulting, *inter alia*, from greater knowledge of religious studies.