

Mirosław Pawliszyn

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Forum Teologiczne 13, 109-122

2012

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Ks. MIROSLAW PAWLISZYN
Wydział Teologii
Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie

HELPLESSNESS AS A REASON FOR RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWNS

Słowa kluczowe: bezsilność, jedność, miłość, nierozzerwalność, rozpad.
Key words: helplessness, unity, love, inseparability, breakdown.
Schlüsselworte: Machtlosigkeit, Einheit, Liebe, Unauflöslichkeit, Auflösung.

1. The problem

The problem of a marriage breakdown and, consequently, as it often happens, a divorce, seems particularly sonorous in the context of a marriage ceremony concluded in the Church. It indicates a parting of people who, in the light of law, despite voluntary commitments, decided to make a decision to break the ties between themselves. The uniqueness of this situation is a result of the fact that the decision made originally has a religious and deeply theological context. Then, there are also legal implications, both civil and, above all, canonical. It is also hard not to notice that it has a great psychological and emotional impact on both parties.

In the culture of our country, such events still evoke rather negative feelings, though there is a progressive acceptance and justification for this phenomenon. However, negative feelings prevail and it is hardly surprising. They have their roots in a deeply theological reasoning. In this light, separations, and especially the act of divorce, are not generally approved. They are seen as a denial of commitment of which the witness is God himself. There are also cultural and religious reasons. It would be difficult to find arguments justifying this type of behaviour in the Bible and the teachings of the Church.

What is also interesting and should be added, in the Canon Law there is no such thing as a divorce. A valid institution of marriage is indissoluble.

This article is not an attempt to justify marriage breakdowns, or, worse, the institution of divorce. However, it seems that, apart from negative arguments, it is worth noting that the decision about a breakdown itself is based on specific human events, and above all, on the personal stories of people's lives, often difficult to explain, or translate into understandable and fully comprehensive language. It is therefore an attempt to enter the world of reasons for such decisions. However, and we wish to place an emphasis here, such reasons should have the value of objectivity rather than merely form a sequence of selfish desires. The axis of discussions presented in this article will be the notion of „helplessness” which denotes a situation when one party loses, in its opinion, any chance to save broken ties. It seems that this is a narrow path which leads us to attempt to understand the tragedy of a separation. The intention itself may be very risky, but it is worth taking the trouble to understand the complexities of human existence.

The author uses philosophical (phenomenological) rather than theological analyses. He feels less confident in the latter; which is probably not a gross mistake, after all, theology devoid of sensitivity to man is soulless, and even dangerous.

2. Love as a foundation for relationships. Unity and indissolubility

Marriages are based on love. Without it, they become nothing more than a formal way of a coexistence of people who are able to make certain decisions that are important from the legal point of view. This is not a place to make a detailed analysis of love. Let us focus on what appears to be particularly important for our subject.

To love is to recognize that something is good, call this thing, or someone, good. It is obvious that such a definition does not exhaust the subject. It is not only about naming something. Let us elaborate more – this recognition is a manifestation of our will, and not just an approval for some kind of a state of affairs. This is a full recognition, affirmation, praise. Calling it „good” is the same thing as saying: „it is good that you are as you are with what you have”. This „you are” has a deep metaphysical sense. It focuses on the very essence, the core of a personality. Your being is good, as it is. Loving someone is, therefore, taking someone out of his anonymity and ordinary nature. „Taking out” is also called „choosing”. This situation was described by J. Tischner in

a somewhat different context, when he analysed the moment of choosing Abraham: „God calls. But He calls by name. He is calling only him alone. It is shocking! There are so many people in the world, so many grains of sand in the desert. But God is calling only him – one and only. Abraham discovers an unusual thing: he was chosen”¹. A similar situation takes place in an act of love between two people.

There is something else hidden behind the naming. It is related to revealing the deepest desires, which is in the Caller. It is not only „it is good that you are here”, but also, and above all, „I want” you to be here. This «being» is to have a permanent nature, not just a one-time occurrence. Willing has not only a „creative” character here. It is not just about giving permission to allow someone to appear in his inner existence. This is not a simple gesture of kindness towards someone. It is also an acceptance, opening up, and affirmation of someone who stands by my side.

The acts of creation and acceptance, which, as can be seen, cannot be kept clearly separated from each other, are complementary, are the foundation of something which contributes to the lasting nature of love. It has an exceptional and exclusive nature. It is something of an eye-twinkle, a flash, a manifestation of the present time in which there is no passing². It does not happen often and it is not shown to anyone who is next to me. A simple meeting of someone in the street, a conversation on even the most serious issues...each situation is not love yet. We are not dealing here with the act of reaching into the depths of someone, but rather a desire to gain information about something or to share an opinion. Love is a form of sacrifice, which does not appear with such great power even in friendship. There are no such sensations, experiences and emotions in everyday relationships with people.

There is also another significant feature in love: „We say about someone that he `blooms` because he is in love, that is becoming himself now that he starts a `new life`”³. This emotional state is not necessarily born as a result of such gestures shown by a loving person. Its presence is also the act of only being with someone who is loved. Love is born and strengthened firstly through being with someone and only then through actions, although the latter certainly strengthen and deepen the act of being.

This strong foundation gives birth to unity and indissolubility. Unity comes from the depths of mutual devotion, mutual creation and acceptance. Indissolubility seems to contribute to the very foundation of love. After all, devotion, as noted above, excludes time and annihilates its passing. One could

¹ J. Tischner, *Miłość niemiłowana*, Kraków 1993, p. 52.

² See F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda zbawienia*, translated by T. Gadacz, Kraków 1998, p. 273–274.

³ J. Pieper, *O miłości, nadziei i wierze*, translated by J. Gano & K. Michalski, Poznań 2000, p. 46.

say that love eliminates the past. Nothing can be closed forever or completed here. The only prospect is the future as a constant acceptance and deepening of human ties.

However, some problems are associated with these notions. From the point of view of theology, everything seems clear. Unity is the deepest form of communication, dedication and devotion. Its role model is the excellent Holy Trinity, which is expected to be reflected in the institution of marriage. However, in times of crisis in understanding the broader meaning of theological arguments, which are not always convincing to modern people, we must look for other explanation methods. Therefore, how should we understand unity? What is it?

The possibilities to understand the subject may be searched for in different ways. Let us appeal to our basic intuition. Unity is not an abolition of difference. Therefore, it functions between some elements. In this sense, it will be an aesthetic category – it is a relationship between elements which form one whole⁴. In reference to love, unity will be an inner sensation, born in the very centre of „I”. True unity is not, as it may seem, a connection with a thing or phenomenon. It is possible to conclude that, as it is described here, it concerns only the interpersonal world. The sense of unity with what I am experiencing at the moment will be an initial experience. However, the moment is not only related to an observation of a phenomenon or an event that is „taking place” near me. This is all about a moment in which I participate, which I feel and experience its uniqueness and specificity. For example: not only do I hear a bird singing, but I notice the starry sky above me, I hear the tunes or perceive the harmony of light stretched in the sky. What we see or what we deal with is not so important here. What is important is the scale of being touched by it. We may recall the evangelical words when we hear: „They have eyes yet they do not see, they have ears but they hear not”. Perceiving a phenomenon, or hearing a sound does not testify to our deeper understanding of it at all.

What is more, this experience is a way to overstep time, an ecstatic way out of my own here and now. This way out is similar to the state of abandoning time dependencies which, as it seems, happens in states of intoxication or hallucination. Its components, that are the past and the future, reach their fulfilment in what is happening at a given moment. Experiencing a sense of unity, I am involved in it with all my past, with all that has been accomplished. However, the future seems to have its fulfilment and realization in the on-going „now”.

⁴ See, *Jedność*, in: *Mały słownik terminów i pojęć filozoficznych*, A. Podsiad and Z. Więckowski, Warszawa 1983, p. 174.

Another element is worthy of our attention. In the act of experiencing unity, two elements are united: I, who am involved in this act, and the thing that is included. However it does not happen that only one side is active and the other side is passive. To experience the real phenomenon which was described earlier, both parties have to be deeply involved. Of course, they have to be involved on their own ways, according to their capabilities and possibilities. This commitment should be exhaustive, not fragmentary. Referring to the aforementioned situations: one who hears the sound of a bird hears something more than sounds, and at this moment the bird seems to be „singing” only for the one who is hearing its song; one gazing at the starry sky at night is looking for harmony and the stars seem to be falling into right places, creating a harmonious line. It seems that a scientist who falls into a state of admiration while seeing the revealing depth of the world is experiencing such a state of mind. A constellation is not enchanting to him, because he sees stars arranged at a specific distance from each other; however, it catches his heart because there is a hidden proportion inside it.

Indissolubility seems to be an obvious consequence of unity. What is united seems thoroughly stable, connected, and inseparable. No doubt, however, that if unity is not a blur of differences between the elements that create it, then indissolubility is to be a kind of protection or support facing a possible breakdown. Spouses who have become one are convinced that their mutual relationship is and will be permanent and inseparable.

There are, however, situations in which this ideal state of affairs is undermined. This includes situations in which one party loses the strength to save a disintegrating relationship. This strength, or rather the lack of it, can be caused by various circumstances. This is not a place to describe them in detail. We are talking about an attempt to analyse the phenomenon, which can be described as „helplessness”. This attitude seems to be a last-ditch experience, which took over both sides. Behind it, there is only the decision about a separation and loss of unity. For this reason, I think, it is worth analysing the phenomenon of helplessness.

3. Helplessness – between hope and despair

We should explain what helplessness means. In the first place, it is worth mentioning how we will not treat it here. It is not something that can be described as a relationship that is „dying away”, a weakening of ties. We have to deal with a situation, when the desire to act fades away and the commitment

comes to a standstill. It has its source in a person who experiences this state of mind. It is not caused by external factors; at least they do not play the leading role. It is a type of an anonymous nature of existence, a suspension of relations, where the other party is still present and distant at the same time. E. Levinas describes this state of mind perfectly, analysing the phenomenon of tiredness which seems to be much related to „dying away”. This will be an „inability to keep up, a constant and growing gap between being and the thing to which it is attached to, just as in the case of a hand that slowly releases an object which is still being gently held”⁵. This described situation balances somewhere between phenomenology and psychology, and it often occurs frequently in human relations. It may be the cause of a relationship breakdown, but at this point, it is not the object of our interest.

Helplessness is also not considered a typical psychological phenomenon. It becomes a kind of a state of depression or melancholy. In this sense, we should speak more of various symptoms of paranoid or catatonic schizophrenia or, to a greater extent, an emotional state which is the opposite of joy, happiness and serenity⁶.

The notion of *acedia* is a bit closer to our understanding of helplessness. In classical Greek it is referred to fatigue, sadness and lack of interest in anything⁷. Its essence, according to Evagrius of Pontus (345–399), is „hatred and rage against what is, and desire for what is not and what is unattainable at the moment. Man hates what is: the place where he lives, work, age, health, family, wife, and husband”⁸. However, on the other hand, he wants to live in a different place, have a different job, age, or wife, at the same time acknowledging that it is not possible for him at the moment⁹. *Acedia* is therefore a desire, which is aware that it cannot be met, a protest against a specific state of mind and desire for new things that is doomed to a failure in realization. We should note, however, the significant fact that *acedia* is a kind of discouragement, tiredness, and also an internal protest. It is therefore a specific form of activity, of course, doomed to a failure. Helplessness, which we want to describe below, is a resignation, a total cessation of doing anything. It is difficult to find any kind of will to search for any perspective.

In order to describe the phenomenon of helplessness which would have a proper meaning for us, we should start with choosing a context. The context is time. Man is a creature that lives in time. We have already mentioned this

⁵ E. Levinas, *Istniejący i istnienie*, translated by J. Margański, Kraków 2006, p. 41.

⁶ See A. Kepiński, *Melancholia*, Kraków 2001, p. 270.

⁷ *Acedia – duchowa depresja. Wybór tekstów*, chosen by W. Zatorski, Kraków 2008, p. 7.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁹ *Por. ibidem*, p. 15–17.

earlier. Perhaps there is not a more obvious statement than this. The course of time and the stigma of the present moments flying into the past denote the most fundamental dimension of existence. Man is aware that there is what was, closed off with an impassable barrier of the past, behind which there are deeds and spoken words as if they were „museum objects”. There is also what is happening now, in this-very-moment, which directly affects awareness, here and now, with its presence. However, if we think about the phenomenon of the present time for a moment and try to capture and analyse it, it becomes elusive, present, and yet absent. There is no way to capture it in its lasting. We can have a paradoxical impression that the present time simply does not exist. It is, perhaps, a figment of our desire for ignoring the past which is constantly being lost. In other words, it is a manifestation of a desire to stop time and to capture what goes away.

However, that which is expected opens up the closed perspective of hope and comes to our rescue. Waiting is the future, which is able to overstep the darkness of the fleeing existence. Man is a being who looks straight ahead waiting for what is to come, what is to happen. In fact, he is able to see the truth about himself in the very future, not in whom he is, but who we can be. So he looks at himself, understands himself „today”, in the very moment looking in the future at the same time. This is where he looks at himself; this is where he gains new strength and new power „now”. The presence is no longer doomed to go away and it becomes the germ of hope.

Let us see if the bond between people vowed in a marriage, here and now, in the minds of both parties is to be realized more deeply and more fully in the future, in what is to come? It seems that hope is even a condition for a marriage.

Let us go back to analyse the experience of helplessness. The real tragedy of man is to deprive him of his own future. As a consequence, he is trapped in the past, which irritates with things that finally happened. In this context, there is a problem of helplessness as a force which inhibits and enslaves man. Helplessness is a state of mind, which makes him separated from his own future, makes him somehow „stuck” in the place where he is now. It is a kind of force which freezes his spirit in such a painful way that it still allows seeing the prospect ahead of him, but it is depicted as a situation which is not-for-him, which cannot be accessed in any way¹⁰. Therefore, we must think about helplessness and its paralyzing effect able to break the unity between people. Does it close the way to hope stuck deep in our hearts forever?

¹⁰ At this point, the analysis is consistent with the notion of *acedia*, as described by Evagrius. It should be emphasized, however, that the element of an internal opposition in the face of inability to fulfil the emerging prospects is absent here.

Helplessness is powerlessness and, therefore, it is a negation of power and strength stuck deep in man. It deprives someone of power and overpowers his creativity. The word „paralysis” has been used here before and now it becomes more important. In helplessness, we are unable to do anything in terms of our spirit, not body. This weakness is caused by apathy and an internal desertion. It is a state of falling into an inner deception, betrayal of our own person. This is because enthusiasm and creative initiative are stuck deep in the human spirit and we have a need to feel these emotions. He is involved in the existence of the world. He is not indifferent to its fate. A mutual tension spreads between man and reality and it stimulates and engages; the world and people belong to me – I am the co-founder of what is next to me. This is how creative engagement is born. The world calls man to co-exist. It requires his presence. A man, who is thrown into the world, makes an environment for himself in which he lives. In this way, an act is born in deep layers of humanity. In the act we have a moment of transition from a subject, which is a man, to another person or an object, which can be found in the world. The act is nothing else but a process of entering reality, a penetration of its internal structure, modelling adopted goals. An act deprived of wrong desires creates a world in favour of man. Thanks to the power of acting, the future becomes more predictable and expected.

Referring to the subject discussed in the entire article, we can say that a specific kind of an act is something, what might be called a „search” for love. It is also an attempt to make the world a friendlier place. It is an entrance into the world of the second „me” in order to find its meaning and value. A specifically understood „act” of love gives hope. This is done upon mutual acceptance of both sides; love becomes a fact when it is the result of the actions of both parties.

In analysing the problem of helplessness, we notice another element. Inside the act which is committed, such as that described above, there is yet another disposition. The future is not given directly. It is always something vague and not entirely obvious. If so, then it is not given directly, it is something hidden, not exactly „mine” yet. In order to make the future „mine”, to make it present, I have to overcome some difficulties. In short, the future stimulates activity. The act which I have undertaken, the unclear future, may become somehow closer and brighter. What was once covered does not worry us with its presence anymore. An act not only illuminates the darkness of the future, but it leads to becoming convinced of our strength and power¹¹. This is

¹¹ We should note that creative power realized in such a context is very dangerous. The sense of power can lead to the sense of almightiness. It goes without saying that this path is a path of destruction and self-destruction. Therefore, the future designed in such a manner can never really happen because it will be destroyed before it actually appears.

why we often say that there are no obstacles for love; it is able to overcome everything that appears on its way as a limitation.

In this context, helplessness can be described in two dimensions. The first one seems to have an objective value. It appears as a barrier that cannot be overcome. For someone who is experiencing it, the barrier becomes something which forces you to give up and withhold further actions. The barrier usually appears suddenly; it is something that takes by a total surprise. The feeling of such a surprise is extremely painful and complex. On the one hand, I am aware that the surrounding reality is independent and objective as it is. However, this belief is strengthened by subjective experience. The reality is no longer only „objective”, it is experienced as strange, distant, and almost indifferent to my desires. The ontological dimension is illuminated by a deep inner experience of a person.

The awareness of our power and strength, hiding inside an act, was only a delusion. From now on, I am convinced that the world deals with the experience of helplessness very well without me, and it does not need me. One might even say that reality seems to despise my presence, which makes it coincidental, but non-essential to the world¹². However, the existence of an encountered obstacle is not surprising itself, but the fact that it cannot be overcome. Helplessness is unexpected and surprising. Compared to its strength, a man becomes (in his own opinion) helpless and he is forced to take a defensive attitude. Everything he has achieved and experienced, everything he has understood and carried with him from the inside of his own past, is inadequate to what has suddenly appeared.

The surprise, in question, has its consequences. This is the second dimension of the analysed phenomenon. The first reaction, a very natural one that occurs in the face of an obstacle is the desire to defeat it. However, undertaken attempts are doomed to a failure. A belief is born in our consciousness – „I-cannot”; what I have, my experience, knowledge, is not yet sufficient to face my difficulties. The experience I have acquired in my life no longer provides possibilities to deal with an obstacle. The awareness of „I-cannot” triumphs over life’s optimism. Helplessness is injected into resignation.

Two dimensions of helplessness are interwoven so closely that it is hard to separate one from another. The thin line between „I-cannot” and „I-do-not-want-to” probably blurs for someone who has felt helpless. What may happen is that the obstacle that suddenly appeared on the road is possible to overcome this time as well. However, its size or frequency of occurrence, the

¹² See L. Kołakowski, *Obecność mitu*, Warszawa 2009, p. 107–111.

futility of attempts to overcome it gives birth to a total resignation supported by a painful and fully conscious „I-do-not-want-to”. Saying the word symbolizes a rejection of the present time and also a desertion from the future events. „I-do-not-want-to” is a critical point; it is the end of aspirations and desires, omission of action, denial of the future ahead of us.

The resignation is overstepping what is commonly referred to as the „threshold of mental strength”. There is a moment in your life in which the threshold is overcome, because the scale of an obstacle is disproportionate to human resilience. A consistent „I-do-not-want-to” paralyzes and makes the act no longer present. You could say that a person loses his future in hopelessness and condemns himself to his own past. Unfortunately, the past brings nothing new.

Other features of helplessness appear within the depths of this dramatic situation. Beyond the limits designated by the obstacle, there is a world that is not-for-me anymore. This means that, on the one hand, a person knows that it is possible to overcome the obstacle, but on the other hand there is no longer sufficient strength to take action once again. The awareness of this fact creates a state of existential defence. Let us repeat: I do not lose the view of my future, I can imagine how the world would look like if I overcame the obstacle, but the thought remains only a thought - nothing more, nothing less¹³. A natural reaction to the existence of such a natural state of affairs is to become withdrawn, hide in the world of what is here and now. A prolonged state of defence introduces resignation, which brings a lack of initiative, having no desire to pursue the future. It is a destructive moment to our personality. Since, as we have mentioned, a man realizes himself in his own future, then the resignation negates the fact of *becoming* and the associated self-development. No wonder that such helplessness drives us into states of apathy, in which all areas of human functioning are affected. Apathy is indifference, a state of indifference caused by the futility of our actions and the size of obstacles standing in the way. Our consciousness is slowly overcome by the feeling that if I have encountered something which is beyond my ability to create, then maybe it is not worth making any effort. The desire for action is replaced by indifference and numbness, characteristic elements of helplessness. The culminating point of experiencing helplessness is feeling the senselessness in our lives. The powerless separation in the world of my past achievements, being pushed into the past in the face of the future closed in front of me, takes away the will to live. Powerlessness gives a feeling of being cut off from our roots, like a river

¹³ At that point, the described phenomenon is essentially different from *acedia*. There is no sign of a rebellion, there is only resignation.

separated from its spring. Thus, this is how we reach the essence of the drama of helplessness. Helplessness affects and enhances the dimensions of human weakness becoming the „love of the way of life of demons”¹⁴.

4. Helplessness and the absence of „the second one”

How is helplessness experienced as part of the subject? How does it work in situations when it becomes the cause of a relationship breakdown? There is an element here that shows the tragedy of the situation and captures the essence of the considered problem. Given all that has already been mentioned, it seems that we can reach the following conclusion.

The experience of helplessness recalls a trivial truth that life is not only about successes. The inside of this experience conceals the truth about human existence, its ups and downs. Helplessness may induce to assume an attitude of humility; it allows an understanding that our possibilities are limited. It often realizes that the only salvation from falling into extreme pessimism is the presence of another human being. The second man who appears next to the hopeless „me”, who from then on is no longer an anonymous „someone”, can assess the scale of difficulty from a distance and make the expressed „I-do-not-want-to” make yet another attempt to overcome the obstacle. This „second one”, who has become „you” for „me” since having appeared in his horizon, could have defeated this obstacle in his life, the obstacle that has created a sense of helplessness in me. He knows the way to beat it. So, „you” coming to the powerless „I” becomes a way to find rescue from the paralysis of the experienced helplessness.

It is obvious that the experienced helplessness may carry the possibility of purifying, getting rid of a lie about our life. Just as it is falsely believed that we are almighty, so is the thought of an irretrievable loss of the future. The belief of being imprisoned in our own past is not true, nor is the thought that „I-do-not-want-to” is the last meaningful spoken word. We must, therefore, experience the powerless pain of losing the future so that we could retrieve it back. The future becomes the subject of the deepest act of hope. Understanding this truth prepares a man for a new life perspective in which the future is once again open. This future is capable of overstepping time, where what is „now” goes away, but it does not overpower with its passing. It is the other way round now, and helplessness becomes powerless against such strength.

But the main problem, to which we are heading, appears now. It turns out that the above described situation, in the context we have given as an example,

¹⁴ *Acedia – duchowa depresja*, p. 52.

is not a final overcoming of helplessness. Let us recall. Our goal is to show how the mechanism of helplessness works when it becomes the reason for a marriage breakdown¹⁵.

We can propose a thesis that we are dealing with helplessness raised to a higher power. The problem is that someone who is experiencing powerlessness which is leading him to the radical: „I-do-not-want-to”, does not meet the mentioned „you” that he should have by his side. This „you” cannot be replaced by any other one in any aspect, nor in its entirety. Due to mutual love, one and inseparable, „you” has become special and unique. Therefore, nothing else can replace it. Experience of others, even if similar to the experience that has pushed me towards powerlessness, cannot be any kind of a lesson for me, any type of a hint. In this specific case of totally overwhelming helplessness, the presence of „you”, with whom I have been bound in the act of love, is the only solution.

The lack of this person makes a person dealing with hopelessness totally isolated, deprived of any hope. His imprisonment in the past seems to be irrevocably closed. If the only „you” is no longer present, and the very essence of existence has been united with it, then the feeling of meaninglessness becomes more severe and impossible to overcome. The absence of „you” makes the other party lonely. No one will bring gifts, no one will help. Helplessness reaches its limit here. There may be a situation that for an outside observer, someone who is a stranger for the „I” and „you” relationship, the situation may still be overcome. However, the scale of helplessness will always be known only to someone who is experiencing the problem. The whole complicated experience lived through from beginning till now, results in a fundamental change in life orientation.

5. Helplessness and silence

The described possibility happens many times. It occurs when in a relationship between people (marriage, family), one of the parties does not realize the essence of the unity. Despite repeated attempts to renew the ties, someone has finally broken the sworn unity in a permanent way, on his own initiative not caused by any objective reasons. A moment comes when someone, who is in despair due to the futility of efforts for renewal, leaves, loses his strength and resigns.

¹⁵ It seems that the description applies to all forms of relationships. Therefore, it applies to a friendship, when it falls apart in a moment of a lie or a deception; love, when it comes to adultery etc.

The problem appears to be extremely complex. On the one hand, we deal here with the issue of a human resistance threshold. I think that no one will deny that such a threshold exists, and therefore, a moment comes when we say „enough”. But can we predict this moment somehow? What is more, if someone has entered into a marriage based on a vow, can he be seized with powerlessness, or is he forced into an endless struggle for the permanence of his bond? We are dealing here with a moral issue. If we stick to rules, the decisions are clear, however, there will always be a concrete man in the background, whose inner world will always remain a mystery. Another issue – are there situations in which even objectively wrong attitudes can be understood and explained? The author does not try to show any concrete solutions at this point.

These analyses are not attempts to justify the dissolution of human relationships (marriage, family). Their aim was to show a different aspect of the problem which is probably rarely described. Perhaps, before the questions can be answered by experts, psychologists and theologians, it will be better to keep appropriate silence inside of which there is an attempt to understand the history of a specific human being.

BEZSILNOŚĆ JAKO PRZYCZYNA ROZPADU MAŁŻEŃSTWA (STRESZCZENIE)

Małżeństwo pomiędzy kobietą i mężczyzną, zawarte w Kościele, ma charakter nierozzerwalny. Małżonkowie ślubują sobie jedność, która jest bezpośrednim efektem ich wzajemnej miłości. Zdarza się jednak, że na skutek różnych okoliczności w małżeństwie dochodzi do kryzysu, a nawet rozpadu i rozejścia się stron. Zazwyczaj skłonni jesteśmy za zaistniały stan obwiniać jedną ze stron. Warto jednak spojrzeć na ten problem z innej perspektywy. Jedną z przyczyn rozpadu związku może być coś, co nazwać można bezsilnością. Oto jedna ze stron traci siły, by ratować upadające małżeństwo. Nie ma już w sobie tyle mocy, by podjąć jeszcze jedną próbę odbudowania jedności. W artykule podjęto próbę zanalizowania zjawiska bezsilności. Analiza ta ma charakter filozoficzny. Bezsilność ukazuje się jako niemożność podjęcia czynu, jako sparaliżowanie samej istoty człowieka. W przypadku, kiedy dotyka ona jedną ze stron małżeństwa, jawi się jako szczególnie bolesna. Oto ten, który z natury ma być pomocą i wsparciem staje się dotkliwie nieobecny, niewrażliwy na los drugiego. Bezsilność osiąga tutaj swój szczyt i staje się ostatecznym argumentem na rzecz odejścia. W artykule nie ma usprawiedliwienia negatywnego zjawiska rozpadu rodziny. Jest to raczej próba spojrzenia od innej strony na ten bolesny fakt, wypływa z chęci zrozumienia tajników ludzkiej egzystencji, która nie zawsze zdolna jest do stawiania czoła wszystkim trudnościom.

MACHTLOSIGKEIT ALS URSACHE DER ZERRÜTTUNG EINER EHE (ZUSAMMENFASSUNG)

Die zwischen Mann und Frau in der Kirche geschlossene Ehe ist unauflöslich. Die Ehegatten versprechen einander die Einheit, die eine unmittelbare Frucht ihrer gegenseitigen Liebe ist. Es geschieht aber, dass es in einer Ehe aus verschiedenen Gründen zu einer Krise kommt, die sogar mit der Zerrüttung und dem Auseinandergehen der Gatten endet. Oft neigen wir dazu, für diese Situation eine der beiden Seiten zu beschuldigen. Es lohnt sich aber, die Probleme aus einer anderen Perspektive zu betrachten. Eine der Ursachen der Ehezerüttung kann die Machtlosigkeit sein. Eine der beiden Seiten verliert ihre Kraft bei den Versuchen, die sich in der Krise befindende Ehe zu retten und sieht sich schließlich nicht imstande, den nächsten Rettungsversuch zu unternehmen. Der Artikel stellt einen Versuch dar, das Phänomen der Machtlosigkeit zu untersuchen. Die Analyse hat einen philosophischen Charakter. Die Machtlosigkeit zeigt sich als die Unmöglichkeit einer Handlung, als eine tiefe Lähmung des menschlichen Wesens. Im Fall, wenn sie nur einen Ehepartner betrifft, wird sie als besonders schmerzhaft empfunden. Jene Person, die natürlicherweise Hilfe und Stütze sein sollte, wird schmerzhaft abwesend, unsensibel für das Schicksal des anderen. Die Machtlosigkeit erreicht dort ihren Höhepunkt und wird zum zusätzlichen Argument für das Weggehen. Der Artikel will keine Entschuldigung für das negative Phänomen der Zerrüttung einer Familie liefern. Er ist vielmehr ein Versuch, diese leidvolle Tatsache von einer anderen Seite zu betrachten. Er kommt aus dem Bedürfnis, die verborgenen Tiefen der menschlichen Person, die nicht immer imstande ist, die Beschwerden zu meistern, besser verstehen zu wollen.