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Truth and courage as the basis for the development of civilisation – an outline

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Abstract

Background. In reflections on Western Latin civilisation the concepts of supporters of conflict in the theory of civilisation should be taken into account, starting with Feliks Koneczny. On the other hand, however, there are the indications of radical humanism from Erich Fromm and the personalism of John Paul II (the civilisations of life and death). Normative ethics should protect the dignity of the individual who is treated as a personal being.

Aim. The problem of the influence of normative ethics on the development of civilisation or its maintenance and survival was addressed. The goal in particular was to emphasise the virtues of courage and fidelity to the truth, and to reflect on the state of discourse in this area.

Method. The method of analysing the content of the literature on the subject was used, as well as deductive and comparative methods. This is a broader discourse analysis, including sources (journalistic content) and studies.

Results. The article contains – an outline of historiosophical findings and the essence of humanity; criticism of several “progressive” ideologies; praise for the courage to proclaim the truth; and remarks about the relationship between science and higher values.

Conclusion. The weakening of Christian identification in the countries of Western Europe affects their spiritual progression. Therefore, today’s leaders of the Western world e.g. Donald Trump see great potential in the revival of the Western spirit in Poland and the heroism of the Poles.

Introduction

In reflections on Western Latin civilisation the concepts of supporters of the conflict in the theory of civilisation should be taken into account, starting with Feliks Koneczny. On the other hand, however, there are the indications of radical humanism from Erich Fromm and the personalism of John Paul II (civilisations of life and death) [John Paul II, 2005]. Normative ethics should protect the dignity of the individual who is treated as a personal being. But should not the adopted, internalised axiology secure state entities, nations and the wholeness of a given civilisation?

The issue of threats to today’s Western civilisation is taken up by scientists and journalists, but also it concerns single citizens of individual Western countries. This is the most current topic, due to a number of dangers. Some people claim that the war between the West and some other civilisations is already going on. However, to what extent can it be interpreted in terms of dialogue,

and in terms of a clash or of war? To what extent is the cause of the conflict in society a conflict of professed values [Cynarski 2002]?

In this paper, the problem of the influence of normative ethics on the development of civilisation or its maintenance/preservation is taken up. In particular the goal is to emphasise the virtues of courage and fidelity to the truth (including the courage to proclaim the truth), and a reflection on the state of discourse in this area. The method of analysing the content of the literature on the subject was used, as well as deductive and comparative methods. This is a broader discourse analysis [Krippendorff 2004], including sources (journalistic content) and studies. The author deliberately looked into source material, which included several right-wing weeklies, which emphasise the indicated problems to a greater extent. However this voice of reason appears, even among left-wing politicians, resulting from a fear of failing to preserve the civilisation that we know today.

The article contains an outline of historiosophical findings and the essence of humanity (spiritual development of man); criticism of several 'progressive' ideologies; praise for the courage to proclaim the truth; and remarks about the relationship between science and higher values – normative ethics.

It is not true that all religions and cultures are equally good. Every evil cult is extremely destructive. Religions that allow cannibalism are far behind the stage of humanism. Fromm's radical humanism recognises this hierarchy and its related social characters.

Let us start with the project of “historiosophical” findings.

1. Historiosophy

Despite the political correctness of the equality of cultures, ethical systems and religions, both Fromm and Koneczny respectively assess and evaluate social systems and civilisations. Koneczny considers Latin civilisation to be the most perfect, especially the one preserved in Poland and in Central and Eastern Europe [Raburski 2016: 102]. By the way, this same centre of Europe called *Intermarium* (Międzymorze) has – according to Kowalski [2017] – both related history, and cultural and genetic (biological) heritage, as well as a new role to play. “Human cultures and civilisations are stretched on the axis of the *continuum* of cultural evolution from ‘pre-moral’ to ‘moral’ (the borderline would be determined here by cannibalism and incest) and from barbaric to more developed” [Cynarski 2000: 106].

The primitive stage extends from the beginning of humanity to the introduction of the first moral norms, as follows:

- rejection of cannibalism;
- rejection of incest.

The barbaric stage already included numerous pre-Christian cultures with a fixed axio-normative order. Here higher organised cultures and civilisations are found, where, however, human dignity is not particularly valued (slavery, violence). A certain caesura was:

- accepting monogamy
- accepting the Decalogue.

The stage of humanism came about as a result of the ethical revolution, the effect of which was the acceptance of the Gospel and the concept of fair war, followed by the idea of non-violence (the teaching of the Church, later also postulated by Mahatma Gandhi). The reason for respecting every man, as created in the image of God, saw love for God and mercy for man. The above reason also resulted in the rejection of killing.

Buddhism also commands that all life must be protected. However, some religions allow or even encourage violence. This results from a different understanding of God, which was in turn, influenced by the circum-

stances of the creation of a given religion. A “biography of Mohammed is a military epic full of wars, invasions, massacres and executions” [Gorny 2015: 56; cf. Zechenter 2015]. According to many specialists, the Koran encourages armed struggle [Szyszko-Bohusz 1995: 238-242, 247; Malinowski 2001].

The ethics of Rome and the Latin West, from the “Republic” of Cicero to the Gospel, were brought to Poland under the Benedictine Rule and through the works of Christian writers. Henryk Sienkiewicz's “Trilogy” is worth reading from the perspective of classical philosophy and Christian axiology. These are ideals and model heroes according to definitions describing Polishness in what is noble [Jurek 2016; Karłowicz 2016]. However, for materialists this is probably an interpretation which is difficult to accept. Sienkiewicz – the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature associated Polishness and Polish patriotism with Christian spirituality and the Latin cultural heritage [cf. Kowalska-Lasek 2016]. Western civilisation owes much to the institution of the Catholic Church. It was thanks to the Church that humanism and personalism, science and philosophy, general education, respect for every human being and respect for human dignity were developed [Aquilina 2016].

Leading a narrative about spiritual progress towards the contemporary concept of the noble and creative human being – a warrior of the Truth – we refer to the moral justifications of the need for the elite spirit of Toynbee. According to Toynbee, the progress of civilisation is determined by outstanding individuals – superior personalities, geniuses, mystics, who were present in the history of Latin civilisation. Civilisation requires the leadership of moral and charismatic elites. It is all about authority and spiritual leadership, and the development of civilisation should focus on bringing humanity closer to God. The masses should follow and copy creative personalities and follow the direction indicated by the elite. Then civilisation is capable of life and development despite difficult challenges, while at the same time society is protected from its disintegration [Toynbee 1934].

The anthropology of the human spirit would be an attempt to show its multiformity and evolution. Tolkien tried to do it [cf. Cynarski 2015], as did others. Let us give examples of the most commonly-cited phrases. *Homo faber* and *homo ludens* are conceptual traps of the ideological descendants of Marx. Isn't the attitude to work and play an echo of the reflection of successive generations of sociologists and social philosophers? The next step is the regression indicators of the spiritual human revolution – designed by economists (not realistically existing) *homo oeconomicus*, reduced to the behaviour of earning and acquiring, and *homo sovieticus* – the effect of “the victory of ideas over reason” which was “real socialism”. A noble man who pursues the truth by practising science or living for the sake of God (a model European knight or a spiritual person) would be the manifestation of the idea of

the *homo creator nobilis* and/or *homo transcendentalis* [cf. Barber 1970; Piwowarczyk 2007; Cynarski, Szajna 2017].

On the other hand, those models reluctant to accept the forces of Christian civilisation (Freemasonry, etc.) offer easy *New Age* and pseudo-transcendental spirituality. A lost man who seeks spirituality (the immanent need for the *sacrum* that Eliade talked about) can sometimes fall into this kind of trap. The mafia, as an axiographic system and lifestyle can be another trap. There are also connections between both distortions of the path of the truth, i.e. Freemasonry and the Mob [Gadowski, Inglese 2016].

2. Criminal ideologies

“The ideology prevailing in the West today is a continuation of old Marxist doctrines. It accepted liberalism and abandoned its dreams of a bloody revolution, an apocalyptic-genesis upheaval that would spawn a new world. The new, soft totalitarianism is introduced through bureaucratic solutions, but just as it used, it still fights for language and reverses the meaning of concepts”, as Wildstein points out [2016: 43]. (...) “New preachers sit in editorial offices and at universities, behind judges’ desks and in film studios. They are joined by the ideology that justifies their rule” [Wildstein 2016: 43].

However, Wildstein gives a new sense to the nobility by saying: “The new aristocracy: Not only did it reject the traditional ethics of aristocracy, which involved service, discipline and renunciation, but it has built its contradiction (...) reversing the traditional ethos. Instead of service, we have a selfish, hedonistic understanding of happiness; instead of discipline – release of drives; instead of renouncing – the so-called self-fulfilment, which means chasing individual experiences” [Wildstein 2016: 44]. However, the aristocracy etymologically means exercising power by the best. The author of this article would rather call this “new aristocracy” a “pseudo-aristocracy”.

Marxism inspired the leftist ideologies of communism and national socialism. There were about 20 million Soviet victims alone [*The Soviet Story*, 2008]. Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia attacked Poland in 1939, beginning World War II, leading to the genocide of millions of Poles and Jews, to millions of victims from other nations, and cultural losses difficult to estimate. Traitors were called heroes, such as Karol Swierczewski [Cynarski 2017].

The leftist mentality has dominated many Western and international institutions, including many universities. This is connected with a departure from ethics and Christian ontology. It has been turned into a joke, but quite aptly. It is a joke based on a pun on words in Polish: “By definition, the Left is impure. What is right and correct, is on the right-hand side (Pol. *prawo*), while illegal (in Pol. *lewe interesy*) dealings and having ‘two left hands’ (being clumsy) are on the Left” [Korwin-Mikke 2012].

Today’s world in which a stall holder mentality prevails [cf. Fromm 1997], praises “successful people” found on lists of the world’s richest people. All this is contrary to the ethics of the Gospel, despite the two thousand years of Church teaching. This probably results from the domination of forces reluctant and hostile towards the Church. However, Jesus Christ opposed the ideology of gathering wealth. The path to God and the salvation of man is not about multiplying material goods, but spiritual goodness. This normative system is largely congruent with the knightly ethos of nobility [Barber 1970: 11-58; Piwowarczyk 2007; Cynarski 2016a].

Kłopotowski [2015] praises the genius of the Jews who are probably the most resourceful people in the world and able to accumulate great capital in their hands. The strategy of modern, progressive Judaism (neo-Judaism) involves precisely a fight against the Catholic Church and Christianity in public space, spreading the relativisation of values (postmodernism), propagating multiculturalism and moral freedom and combating national identification. The activities of many mass media and opinion-forming institutions serve this purpose [Kłopotowski 2015: 101-103]. The advocates of liberal-leftist ideologies in the Western world [cf. Szczerski 2017] and today’s freemasonry follow a similar path.

The threat to Europe and the West are “three fanaticisms” in particular: political correctness; greed; and Islam [Pawlicki 2017; cf. Grzybowska 2017; Murray 2017]. In Poland, despite the fact that after 1989, the services of the past era still had a great impact on the economic situation and power [Zybertowicz 1993], patriotic and conservative attitudes turned out to be stronger (more frequent) than the economic and “progressive” ones.

3. The courage to proclaim the truth against barbarians and advocates of a “different truth”

The barbaric cult of violence is a contradiction of humanism, personalism, any universal ethics and God’s natural law. Barbaric Islamism is such an anti-way, or the opposite of a noble way [cf. Cynarski 2016a]. According to Gorny [2016], this is due to the history of the Prophet and the tradition of Islam. Unfortunately, only few people have the courage to speak straight, to call a spade a spade. Pope Benedict XVI dared to point out, during a speech at the University of Regensburg that *logos* is the reverse/opposite of the violence recommended in the Koran [Benedykt 2006].

Lisicki [2016] remarks that “recent, more frequent acts of terror are the result of the cultural war that the West has declared on Islam. It is true that not all Muslims participate in them, but many, many people tolerate them and quite a lot are involved in them. If there was no social consent, if there were not any strong communities that considered these murderers of innocent people as heroes,

if the suicide-bombers did not feel the support and did not believe that they were Allah's punishing hand, then the crime would take not place. The difference between Islam (the religion), and Islamism, or the ideology of fighting the West, is more and more apparent, because in the Muslim tradition and in the foundations of the faith it is easy to find justification for aggression. And a few more words about the supporters of political correctness who prefer “a different truth”: “Those who talk about Islam as a religion of peace and are unable to see the basic ethical differences that divide the Prophet's religion from Christianity, falsify the reality and contribute to the weakening of the spirit of resistance” [Lisicki 2016].

Olivier Bault [2016] describes the new situation in France: “The centre-right party, like the National Front, is now demanding a change in the law to expel all criminals of foreign nationality from France. They also demand the expulsion of jihadists and the withdrawal of citizenship from those who dual citizenship. They also demand the imprisonment of French citizens returning from Syria, the closure of all mosques and prayer rooms managed by the Salafists, the expulsion of all foreign imams proclaiming radical Islam”. Those who choose the current state, to abandon action or silence become accomplices to the enemies of France and the West. “In a similar tone, Nicolas Sarkozy [former president of France and candidate for the new presidency in 2016 – ed. by author] commented on TF1 TV: – We are at war, a total war. Our enemies have no taboos, no borders, no rules. So I will use strong words: it is us or them” [Bault 2016].

Predictions for Europe by the *Pew Research Center* were commented on by Karłowicz [2017] as follows: “The failure of the ideals of multiculturalism as a new binder of the political community shows that newcomers who are reluctant to accept the values of a new homeland are permanently alien and often hostile to the new environment. The popularity of Islamic radicalism among the grandchildren of old immigrants proves that the problem is apparent”.

Pope Francis during his stay in Poland to mark World Youth Day (July 2016) said that there was a war going on. However, he did not explicitly indicate who was fighting with whom. To defend oneself, you must first define the enemy. The people of the truth have this kind of courage. The statements of John Paul II [2005], Benedict XVI [2006], Szyszko-Bohusz [1995], Wojciechowski [2001: 235-237], Grzybowska [2017], etc. have a similar, rather decisive tone. Faithfulness to the truth requires courage [cf. Oko 1997].

Martial arts with the ethos of a noble way originated from the cultures of warriors, and the knightly ethos. Truth, courage and wisdom – these are the virtues present in the ethos of knighthood and nobility according to *Bushido* principles, and also found in the codes of honour of different warrior cultures. This includes for example, the courage to be faithful to the truth [Barber

1970, 2003; John Paul II 2005; Cynarski 2014, 2016b]. A similar courage must be demonstrated in scientific, social and political activities.

A group of European intellectuals of a conservative sensitivity, have signed the *Paris Declaration* [2017], which highlights important facts. Namely, to escape from the truth, the so-called “False Europe” is a serious threat to Western civilisation. The true Europe has Christian and classical roots. Meanwhile, a misunderstood freedom dominates: “The revolutionaries of the 1960s consider themselves great liberators whose noble moral achievements deserve the gratitude of the whole world” (point 14). In turn, multiculturalism is both an erroneous, dangerous and suicidal idea.

4. Science and ethics and religion

Is the calling of Europe not just about cultivating wisdom? According to Grzegorzczuk, European epistemology originated from the methodology of Socrates and Aristotle, and is based on clearly formulated logic and in connection with cognitive needs unique to Europeans. As the three methodological foundations of European science, he includes: deductive logic; principles of empiricism, and the search for the essence of phenomena. Rationalism consists of creating tools of cognition (concepts, theories and paradigms). The methodology of science was created in the European “cultural stream”. Knowledge and Truth have gained religious ennoblement in Christianity. Christianity was, and still is, open to rational cognition [Grzegorzczuk 1999].

In the year 7 BC, the three wise men, probably from Persia, came to Jerusalem to pay their respects to the incarnated Word. The meaning of science is to discover the truth, and the path of the scholar is the pursuit of truth. On the other hand, the way of a human being can be understood as a search for the Truth – in time and in physical space, and in the space of values [Cynarski 2016a, b].

We can consider the historical manifestations of the forces of Good and Evil in opposition with each other, Saint Maksymilian Maria Kolbe and captain Witold Pilecki for example, on the one hand, [Cynarski, Szajna 2017], and the victims of totalitarian systems of Marxist provenance, and their systems (fascism/Nazism and communism/real socialism) on the other. Both heroes were in the German Nazi of KL Auschwitz death camp. Father Kolbe died there as a martyr in the name of Christian principles. Pilecki, was killed after the war by the communist perpetrators. This exceptionally brave soldier fought directly with the Soviets and the German invaders. After all, these were at that time two aggressive empires of evil, built on a contradiction of Christian values [cf. The Soviet Story 2008]. Dr Kolbe had first fought against Freemasonry as the main enemy of God and the Church. And in KL Auschwitz he demonstrated how to show mercy towards the aggression of evil.

Post-communist liberals and progressives tried to forget or to make fun of Sienkiewicz's Trilogy of patriotism, sense of honour and the Christian message of faith [Reszczyński 2017]. Meanwhile, there is a role played, as a factor in sensitising people to the choice between good and evil, even in fairy tales and legends from the area of mass culture. The knight, Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe in the television series (starring the recently deceased Roger Moore) or the warrior in the novel by Walter Scott is an archetypal character who always fights on the side of good.

And in addition, politics, defined as a concern for the common good, should be based on fundamental values. For Western civilisation, these are particularly Christian values, patriotism and responsible freedom [John Paul II 2005]. These are the values that the US president Donald Trump strongly emphasised in his speech in Warsaw on 6 July 2017 (the *Warsaw Speech*). He also pointed to Poland, its heroic history and steadfast spirit, as a model for the entire Western world. This civilisation will survive only when people are willing to fight for it. And the noblest sons of the Polish nation have for centuries been faithful to God, the Homeland and the rules of honour.

Conclusions

The ethics of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church have for some time, made European civilisation a driving force for the development of humanity on a global scale. The weakening of Christian identity in the countries of Western Europe influences its spiritual regression. Therefore, today's leaders of the Western world, such as Donald Trump, see the great potential from the revival of the Western spirit in Poland and the heroism of the Poles. May the Western world not lack the determination to fight back against today's threats.

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Prawda i odwaga jako podstawy rozwoju cywilizacji – szkic zagadnienia

Słowa kluczowe: etyka, cywilizacja, ewolucja kulturowa, Zachód, zagrożenia

Abstrakt

Perspektywa. W rozważaniach nad zachodnią, łacińską cywilizacją należy uwzględnić koncepcje zwolenników konfliktu w teorii cywilizacji, od F. Konecznego zaczynając; z drugiej jednak strony – wskazania radykalnego humanizmu E. Fromma i personalizmu Jana Pawła II (cywilizacje życia i śmierci). Etyka normatywna powinna chronić godność pojedynczego człowieka, traktowanego właśnie osobowego.

Cel. Podjęto problem wpływu etyki normatywnej na rozwój cywilizacji lub jej utrzymanie i przetrwanie. Celem jest zwłaszcza zaakcentowanie cnót odwagi i wierności prawdzie, oraz refleksję o stanie dyskursu na tym obszarze.

Metoda. Zastosowano metodę analizy treści literatury przedmiotu, oraz metodę dedukcyjną i porównawczą. Jest to poszerzona analiza dyskursu, z uwzględnieniem źródeł (treści publicystyczne) i opracowań.

Wyniki. Artykuł zawiera szkic ustaleń historycznych i dotyczących istoty człowieczeństwa; krytykę kilku „postępowych” ideologii; pochwałę odwagi głoszenia prawdy; oraz uwagi o relacji nauki do wartości wyższych.

Wnioski. Osłabienie chrześcijańskiej identyfikacji w krajach Europy zachodniej wpłynęło na jej duchowy regres. Toteż dzisiejszy lider zachodniego świata – Donald Trump – dostrzegł wielki potencjał odrodzenia zachodniego ducha właśnie w Polsce i bohaterstwie Polaków.