

— Dialogical Collection —

# LOGIC OF RECONCILIATION



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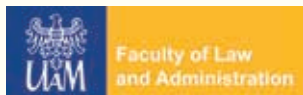
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## *Introduction*

Katarzyna GAN-KRZYWOSZYŃSKA  
Przemysław KRZYWOSZYŃSKI  
Piotr LEŚNIEWSKI

“Un minuto de reconciliación tiene más mérito que toda  
una vida de amistad.”

“One minute of reconciliation is worth more than  
a whole life of friendship.”

Gabriel García Márquez, *Cien años de soledad*

We are very happy to present next volume of *Dialogical Collection* – an international and interdisciplinary initiative that embraces various languages, different cultures, philosophy, art and sciences. We seek to create a space for dialogic encounters. Our logo, i.e. the symbol “&ℑ”, represents two participants in dialogue, the joy of meeting and mutual attention, since like Buber wrote *All true life is an encounter* and these books are

the fruits of dialogical meetings. The collection mainly consists of open access e-books, because an encounter is a grace, in other words, it is a free gift.

The title of the third volume of Dialogical Collection “Logic of Reconciliation” refers to the workshop organized by Katarzyna Gan-Krzywoszyńska and Piotr Leśniewski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland) within the 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Logic and Religion, in Sinaia (Romania) during 3-8 September 2023. This volume presents a selection of papers presented at and inspired by this event offering an interdisciplinary reflection on reconciliation involving environmental issues, history of political and legal doctrines, culture and art, sport and logic. Authors themselves represent different cultures, domains, ages and beliefs, speak and write in many languages. After the first volume in Spanish, the second – in English and French, this time we introduced one paper in Portuguese (in fact, a bilingual version).

As always the main issue of the volume is presented from dialogical perspective, not only interdisciplinary and intercultural, but also reconciliation requires an encounter of former enemies, overlooked, ignored, disregarded and disrespected. Real, historical enemies (Greece and Germany during the World War II), potential enemies (how not to become enemies, the paper by Przemysław Krzywoszyński), but also reconciliation with ourselves (for instance in the paper about sport by Dorota Brzozowska). Similarly, we continue our belief that *logic is a dialogue between people* as Józef Tischner said. That is why in papers by Katarzyna Gan-Krzywoszyńska and Piotr Leśniewski we have a special emphasis on (broadly understood) logic, on the one hand, as an art, and, on the other hand, as a tool of reconciliation. In other words, following John Dewey's phrase, we assume that *the word logical is synonymous with wide-awake, thorough, and careful reflection – thought in its best sense*. Following Reyes Mate we also believe that there is no justice and reconciliation without memory, that is why dialogical perspective cannot omit



testimonies of conflicts and non-violent revolts against tyranny and injustice. That is why in the volume various historical accounts of reconciliation are recalled.

In the invitation and at the same time workshop description it was stated:

We invite you to submit abstracts to the workshop “Logic of Reconciliation”, where we want to reflect together on the meaning and look for processes and adequate procedures of reconciliation.

We follow this Spanish expression: “God always forgives, we forgive sometimes, but nature never forgives.” (“Dios perdona siempre, los hombres a veces y la naturaleza nunca”) and therefore we believe that dialogical approach provides original, relevant and profound input towards complex and difficult processes of reconciliation.

According to Martin Buber, relationships are created in three spheres: in our life with nature, with people, and with intelligible forms. The misery of people is related with broken relations with all these three spheres, therefore we propose to reflect on reconciliation with nature, with other human beings (but also with oneself) and with God.

During the workshop we want to focus precisely on dialogical reconciliation because that kind of reconciliation does not require unification.

Topics include, but are not restricted to:

- concepts of reconciliation
- models of reconciliation
- dynamics of reconciliation
- examples of reconciliation
- reconciliation and religions
- religious experiences of reconciliation
- dialogical reconciliation vs. uniformity and unification
- reconciliation with the other
- reconciliation with oneself
- reconciliation with nature
- styles of reconciliation

- reconciliation through art
- reconciliation through dialogue
- alternatives to reconciliation

As it was mentioned, the papers presented here come from the workshop or were inspired by the talks, and they discuss many of the issues mentioned above.

The two first papers can be treated as complimentary and their origin lies in the joint talk entitled *Styles of Reconciliation* during the above-mentioned workshop. The first paper by Katarzyna Gan-Krzywoszyńska introduces some basic oppositions, such as forgiveness *vs.* reconciliation (as an event and as a process, respectively) and historical and cultural styles (following Eugenio D'Ors and Alejo Carpentier). Moreover, she describes some introductory remarks on the conceptual conditions for reflection on reconciliation, for instance on the one hand, the acceptance of potential conflicts, on the other hand, the rejection of vengeance and violent solutions. She points out that reconciliation requires horizontal structures. Gan-Krzywoszyńska also presents the Baroque as a cultural style giving many examples from architecture, paintings and literature describing its dialogical character. Finally, she briefly outlined why the dialogical style of reconciliation should be Baroque in a cultural sense.

The second paper *Reconciliation and Logic as an Art*, by Piotr Leśniewski contains two main parts. Firstly, it presents some historical examples of dialogical revolt against injustice and the path to reconciliation from the same historical moment, yet in very different places; namely Poland and China in the unique year 1989. Secondly, Leśniewski points out that logic as an art and *cariño* constitutes a fundamental element of any effective reconciliatory procedure. Therefore, it can be considered also as an essential part of an erotics of dialogue and a culture of smile.

The keynote speaker of the workshop, Antonios Kalogerakis, in the paper written with Aleksandra Walas, entitled *Face-*

*to-Face: Exploring a Path of Reconciliation with the Nature*, considers the problem of reconciliation between human beings and nature. Moreover, the Authors argued that reconciliation with nature helps us rebuild other dialogical relations. It is worth noting that this paper contains beautiful pictures made by Aleksandra Walas of the Path of Reconciliation (described in the paper) in the Orthodox Academy of Crete. The history of the Academy, which in fact was built intentionally as an act of reconciliation (!), and its activities towards reconciliation with nature are briefly discussed.

The fourth paper, by Caroline Pires Ting, Ilya A. Kanayev, and Verônica A. Filippovna, is entitled *Bridging Civilizations: A Comparative Study of Cultural and Civilizational Concepts in Western and Chinese Thought*. These authors point out the fundamental role of symbolic constructs (*wén* 文) in shaping societal norms and philosophical understandings. The goal of this text is to elucidate how cultural and civilizational identities are constructed and perceived differently across Western and Chinese paradigms and consequently seeks to bridge cultural divides, i.e. reconcile varied cultural legacies through mutual understanding and respect.

The title of the paper by Przemysław Krzywoszyński is *Overcoming Tyranny: Models of Reconciliation from Political Doctrines of 16th Century Poland*. It presents some historical examples of elaborated, layered reconciliatory procedures that were dialogical and effective in the period of brutal religious conflicts in the era of the Reformation, especially in France. His analyses of these models of reconciliation led to a new, broader definition of tyranny.

The last paper, by Dorota Brzozowska *Towards Dialogical Physical Culture. On Reconciliation in Sport* considers the problem from the perspective of harmony between body and mental health. These two elements are discussed through the example of some negative phenomena associated with competitive sports.

Three stories are presented. The first one is about the runner Mary Cain and the second is about Lidia Yuknavitch, a swimmer and a writer. The third is about the Polish karateka Przemysław Spadło. Their examples testify to the possibility of reconciliation with body and self, and nature. They also offer prospects for how to build dialogical physical culture on the basis of contemporary philosophy of dialogue.

So, we invite you to read the proposed texts – in a dialogical manner, of course – because our fundamental assumption is that the greater the conflicts (not only between different social groups and institutions, but also between people and nature, for example), and the more hopeless the armed threats to resolve them seem, the more necessary is reflection on dialogue, and on possibilities of encounter and reconciliation. Such reflection should be not only historical or theological in nature, but also philosophical. The volume presented here contains studies of this very nature, based on the assumption mentioned above.

\* \* \*

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# *Styles of Reconciliation*

Katarzyna GAN-KRZYWOSZYŃSKA

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*Analogía es el reino de la palabra como,  
ese puente verbal que, sin suprimirlas,  
reconcilia las diferencias y las oposiciones.*

*Analogy is the kingdom of the word as verbal bridge that,  
without suppressing differences and oppositions,  
reconciliates them.*

(Paz 1985: 102).

**Abstract:** The aim of the paper is to present baroque style of reconciliation. First, I introduce some distinctions (forgiveness/reconciliation) and a basis for the dialogical and baroque style of reconciliation. Following Eugenio d'Ors and Alejo Carpentier, I briefly describe distinction between historical and cultural styles and Baroque versus Classicism/Academism. I argue that dialogical style of reconciliation should be Baroque in a cultural sense.

**Key words:** dialogue, conflict, reconciliation, Baroque, forgiveness

## 1. Acceptance of conflicts

It may seem strange to start a paper on reconciliation from accepting even violent conflicts, yet it is of fundamental importance. On a different scale: be it a couple, a family, a society or a whole culture there is a crucial distinction: does it accept conflict or in other words: is the revolt possible? Is one allowed to protest, rebel, or say no? It may seem that we can always do that, yet in many vertical social structures and cultures saying 'no' is unimaginable. It was Orwell who emphasized that the ultimate goal of totalitarianism is to change language to the point where even a thought, and therefore any verbal expression of it, of rebellion, will become impossible. We also know for example that many children growing up in extremely dysfunctional and violent families will, up to a certain moment, all believe that this is normal. Obviously, many adults as well, in violent and toxic relationships may sincerely believe, for example as a result of constant gaslighting and trauma, there is nothing wrong and will live in full denial for decades. Amongst the defectors from totalitarian regimes, cruel sects, we always find incredible yet real stories of how victims themselves did not realize the extreme abuse and oppression. Many totalitarian regimes used the propaganda machines to push the narrative that "there is no trouble in paradise". One of the extreme examples of this kind of behavior is described by Claude Lanzmann, director of the famous documentary on Holocaust "Shoah" (1985). Many people said they could not watch the movie. For example, Rabbi René-Samuel Sirat said, 'This is appalling', and left the cinema (French: *Théâtre de l'Empire*) on the avenue de Wagram in Paris in April 1985. And Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, Monsignor Jean-Marie Lustiger reportedly said in an interview: 'I cannot see it! Lanzmann talked to me about it when he was finishing work on the film. He invited me to the première... I declined. It's not possible. No, I can't do it. Although I promised him I would see it one day' (Lanzmann

2012: 385-387). Let me strongly emphasize here that they were not negationists, they simply could not bear the existence of evil. As adults – even elderly men and spiritual leaders who survived World War II. I could cite more examples, but I believe there is no need.

Let me just point out, that this phenomenon sometimes takes a less radical form. Often it presents itself as an excessive respect for unquestionable authority for elders, powerful people, people of a certain sex or skin color, religious or other believes. When one is too afraid to engage even in critical thought, this attitude falls into this category. We now know that indoctrination may have many different, more or less violent, and elaborated forms. What is very crucial here, is the fact that we can internalize our oppressor's vision of ourselves and unfortunately, like Foucault pointed out, install barbed wires in our minds all by ourselves.

## **2. Interest in reconciliation**

Another aspect of the problem concerns belief in reconciliation. Hence, there is a position among those who agree that conflict exist, yet they do not see any reason for reconciliation. According to this view, if there is an enemy, that enemy be destroyed, the mere existence of an adversary is considered negative or outright evil.

One of the most extreme examples of this logic was conceptualized by Reyes Mate. He introduced the notion of “hermeneutic death” (Mate 2011: 217). When someone loses their life, we tend to believe nothing worse can happen. Yet, as Mate points out, hermeneutical death not only destroys evidence of the crime, it is on top of that destroying any trace of one's existence. The ultimate goal here is to rewrite history and or pretend like the victim never even existed. He refers to Holocaust

as an example of almost successful project of hermeneutical death. Germans not only wanted to kill all the Jews, they also wanted to destroy every synagogue, Jewish shop, artwork, etc. and rewrite history as if Jewish people had never existed. This was made very clear in Himmler's infamous Posen speech from 1943.

Again, regrettably, we can cite many other historic and diverse examples not only belief in the necessity of exterminating an enemy including intents more or less successful of hermeneutical death. Therefore, anyone interested in reconciliation must not only accept conflict, but resist accepting it as a fatality and reject violent solutions.

### **3. Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

Two notions – forgiveness and reconciliation – are very often treated as synonymous, yet there are many fundamental differences that should be pointed out. First of all, forgiveness is an event, whereas reconciliation is a process. Forgiveness requires only one agent and is a choice. Reconciliation requires two agents (and is therefore, in my opinion, dialogical and analogical in approach). Victims may forgive even if the wrongdoers did not ask for forgiveness, even if they continue to commit injustices, even if they did not deserve it or even if they are dead. Of course, ideally they should admit the harm, accept full responsibility, repair the damage, ask for forgiveness, promise never to repeat the wrongdoing, etc. However, this is not necessary if victims wish to forgive. We should also remember that forgiveness does not always lead to reconciliation. It is possible that someone wants to forgive but not reconcile, but reconciliation without forgiveness is impossible.

Following Mate, what is also important in this context is the fact that forgiveness has nothing to do with cancelling injustice



nor does it consist in forgetting the injustice (Mate 2011: 210-212). Precisely, the victim-wrongdoer relation is asymmetrical, we can never confuse the victim with the wrongdoer. Moreover, even if the wrongdoer suffered more than the victim – which is possible – that does not matter. Wrongdoer is someone who committed the injustice and had absolutely no right to do it. Let me recall that, according to Mate, we need to distinguish between inequality and injustice. Inequality is natural and ahistorical. We cannot attribute any specific place and it does not entail guilt and responsibility. For example, the fact that in some places there are volcanos or earthquakes is a clear inequality, yet it is nobody's fault and it is hard to distinguish when and where it started. Similarly, some genetic disorders seem to be natural, or we believe today there is no cause. Sometimes from many siblings and similar pregnancies, one is affected by tragic disease from let's say a great-grandfather. On the contrary, injustice is always man-made, occurs in a specific place and time and entails guilt and responsibility (Mate 2011: 10-11). According to Mate, this responsibility is much broader than just a judicial one.

However, obviously forgiveness is a necessary step for reconciliation. I would like to point out another important difference between Mate's conception and for example Christianity (many other confessions follow this principle). It concerns the obligation of forgiveness. In Christianity one is obliged to forgive all the injustices since God always forgives and took the punishment for all the sins. Contrarily, Mate says that although in order to reconcile, forgiveness is a necessary step, we cannot force the victim to forgive. It must be voluntary. Moreover, nobody can forgive in the name of the victim. He also emphasizes, like many other thinkers, that we cannot think that the act of forgiveness cancels the injustice. Quite the opposite, the act of forgiveness affirms that the injustice was committed, thus, someone is the victim and someone is the wrongdoer. That is

also why Mate believes that memory is a fundamental element of justice. Even though the successful reconciliation is the goal (i.e. recuperation of both sides: victim and wrongdoer) we should continue peaceful cooperation without ever forgetting the injustice. For him, the oblivion is always an added insult and betrayal to victims and commemorating injustices is beneficial to all.

Mate believes that reconciliation is a long, painful and difficult problem, yet at the same time posits that it is always possible and we have to always strive for it. There are many conditions that must be fulfilled in order for it to happen and the task of philosophy is to figure out how to recuperate all the victims. Certainly, reconciliation excludes revenge and strives only for justice, for recovering both sides of the conflict back to society/social structure broken by the injustice. Mate is clear however that justice must prioritize the victim, i.e. it needs to come from the victims and be directed/focused on victims. Of course, this way whole society will benefit, since it is how just social structures are built.

Let me indicate that in some approaches reconciliation is considered a step towards full restoration of broken relationship. Therefore, we have three steps, forgiveness (as again autonomous decision of the victim), reconciliation (as a mutual effort to rebuild the relation), and restoration a deeper and long-term process where the goal is the return to full, healthy relationship as in the state before the injustice. Some argue that the difference between the two latter notions is not quite clear, however the main intuition behind it is that the wrongdoer regains the full trust of the victim after some period of trial and proof that the injustice is not only compensated but never again repeated.

It is worth mentioning that following Mate, there is a fundamental difference between for example peace and reconciliation especially from the point of view of the law and politics on the one

side, and philosophy on the other side<sup>1</sup>. From the perspective of the law, the wrongdoer is obliged for example to be incarcerated, paid the fine, apologize etc. However, afterwards the offender is entitled to continue as a free member of society. Again this may be an one-time event. Even, in the case when the victim will deal with the consequence of the injustice for the whole life. Similarly, we see the difference between any peace deal that officially ends a war and the post-war reality. At this moment some people stop being enemies, yet in reality even though the war ends restoration, in other words, return to the relations as before the conflict are very difficult to re-establish. That is why, Mate uses the notion of “metaphysical guilt” to emphasize that according to him as long as there are any negative consequences for the victims, the wrongdoers are responsible for it, regardless of amount of time spent in jail, amount of money paid in reparations etc. Thus, his concept of justice and reconciliation does not reject or oppose the law, but shows that it is not a question of calculations and estimations and jail time, but something more profound and serious.

#### 4. Styles: historical versus cultural

Style is a way we do things. It answers the question *how?* not *what?* Let me recall the distinction made by John Corcoran between education and indoctrination. He claimed that the goal of education is to teach *how to think?*, while the goal of

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<sup>1</sup> Let me give you another example, lately in Poland, a men with history of reckless driving killed a young sportswomen. He was in the car, she drove a bike (100% following all the rules). He got arrested, had a trial, is not even in jail (two year on probation) and his punishment is 15000PLN of retribution to her family. From the perspective of the law, he did all he supposed to do, ask for forgiveness, said he is sorry and paid the fine. I hope we all feel that it is not over for the victim's family and even a much stricter verdict would not restore their relationship.

indoctrination: *what to think?* (Corcoran 1999: 114). From dialogical perspective it is very important to pay attention how we approach each other. Hence, if reconciliation is a layered process we must be aware that there are many ways to do it.

My analysis of styles of reconciliation requires recalling a distinction made by Eugenio D'Ors (1993) and developed by Alejo Carpentier (1975) between historical and cultural styles. Historical styles like for instance gothic occur in one specific epoch, do not come back, are geographically limited and usually embrace one domain of culture, for instance music, literature, architecture. In this sense gothic occurred only in some parts of Europe, mainly in architecture. Of course, we speak about gothic literature, but it is not medieval, it is from 19<sup>th</sup> century and just refers to gothic scenery. We have gothic subcultures etc. yet it is again just a reference to elements of this historical style.

On the contrary, cultural style, like Baroque or classic/academic, covers many domains of culture and arts. It influences not only: music, painting, sculpture, literature, but also politics, religion or even science. Cultural styles following D'Ors and Carpentier have no geographical limits and constitute an *eon* (i.e. an analogical constant), which means they return many time throughout the history.

When describing differences between two cultural styles, that is classic/academic *versus* baroque style they point to the fact that in classicism we have one main center, geometric, symmetric, centripetal structures and imitation, in other words, ideals, models to follow. In contrast, baroque style is irregular, its structures have more than one core (*nuclei proliferantes*), are centrifugal, is highly authentic/unique and original.

The classical, the academic is based on models, it is enough to follow the rules, imitate the ideals, create an order, a very static balance. While the baroque forms are always in motion. The baroque is full of surprises and transgressions. Paraphrasing the words of Hannah Arendt's, one may say that classic refers to what should be,



while the baroque to what is (Arendt 1988). Following Carpentier Classicism produces forms that weigh, while Baroque forms that fly (Spanish: *formas que pesan* / *formas que vuelan*).

## 5. Baroque reconciliation

Firstly, Baroque as a cultural style impacted many domains of art: we have masterful contribution to music (Bach, Vivaldi), architecture (Bernini, Boromini), paintings (Velázquez, Rubens), literature (Shakespeare, Cervantes), poetry (Góngora, Milton). Baroque style in many local variation occurred all over the globe. It is hard to confuse Portuguese *Brutesco* style with Italian or German baroque creations. Following D'Ors and Carpentier, Baroque art is present in the whole Latin America, Asia, Africa but in different historical periods, like in ancient Persia (especially in literature) or India (architecture).

Moreover, Baroque influenced politics and science or even religion. During the Baroque era many European countries celebrated their Golden or Silver age (Poland, Spain). In science we observed changes of paradigm, in medicine for instance – the introduction of whole systems (digestive, reproductive, nervous etc.) instead of separates parts or organs. Discoveries of Kepler (ellipsis became a basic form of Baroque art), Galileo, works of Descartes and Spinoza according to many thinkers (like Foucault) started modernity.

In this paper, I want to focus on some dialogical aspects of Baroque art and thus Baroque cultural style and show how it may help us reflect on reconciliation.

### 5.1. Multiple cores/centrifugal structure

Baroque art lacks central axis. The sculptures (think about most famous “Ectasis of Saint Theresa” or “David” by

Bernini), the buildings, “Las Meninas” de Velázquez. To this day researches discuss, is there any central axis, who is in the center, or what is the “right” place/position to look at the sculptures. Baroque art is intentionally making us think, it is not moralizing (although it had a message very often dictated by the Counterreformation), it really is in dialogue, in the sense that the active input of the observer is necessary. One also is a little confused since there is always something going on in front of you. By capturing the moment (of ectasis, death, suffering, delight) it tells a story. One has to capture many things at the same time and from the beginning realize that there is always more. In the sense many of the artworks are like “caged suns” (Spanish: *soles enjauladas*). They escape the frames (like *Las Meninas*), the story can go on in different directions. You don’t know who is the main character. For instance, the fugue as an epitome Baroque musical form is an embodiment of a “fugitive” (i.e. “flying” creation), even from the name. It is to this day considered the most difficult and refined genre. This lack of one center/core makes baroque style dialogical and prevent monologue, one “correct” version, introduces horizontal structures and humility since there are always some illusions and limitations in every perspective. Moreover, it introduces change and dynamics.

## 5.2. Horizontal structures

Velázquez for instance for the first time introduced portraits of servants, people of color, slaves, person with dwarfism always presenting them with an unprecedented dignity. They are not always pretty, he never embellished the reality, yet they are never humiliated, mocked, they are not only included, they are all treated with understanding. Same way as he painted the King Philip IV of Spain, he painted his servants. In his masterpiece “Las Meninas” he transformed super hierarchical structu-

re into horizontal one. If through reconciliation we want to recover both the victim and the wrongdoer to the society, we are looking for horizontal structures, since we reject revenge and humiliation.

### 5.3. Abundance/Maximalism

Baroque also strives for maximalism, to include everything and everybody, to transgress every possible limitation, yet it constantly suggest that there is always more. We are encouraged to see from multiple perspectives and an abundance of forms. As a dialogue, this style rejects univocity, the only perspective like in the case of imitation of academism. There is no “correct” vision, it is assumed that each perspective has some truth and some illusion. Each one contributes to the description of the multidimensional and complex reality. Baroque “flying forms” symbolize the openness and spontaneity of the dialogue and its immanent lively and innovative character. Precisely for this reason Carpentier said that Latin America, with its abundance and complexity, adopted and refined the Baroque style because it was not only the only one of all European styles that accepted the enormous richness and abundance of the New Continent, or at least allowed the creation of an adequate language. For this reason, in Carpentier's famous talk, he speaks at the same time of the Baroque to explain the marvelous reality (Spanish *lo real maravilloso*). Against critics of Baroque, he believes that not only it is not a symptom of decadence, but precisely an epitome of a culture or civilization.

It is a kind of creative impulse, which returns cyclically throughout history in the manifestations of art, both literary, plastic, architectural, or musical: and it gives us a very accurate image when it says that there is a baroque spirit, as there is an imperial spirit (Carpentier 1975).

Additionally, dialogue and reconciliation as a difficult and long term dialogical process encourage us to remember that there are always “untested possibilities” in the sense of Freire.

In the Baroque art there is everything: the good, the bad and the ugly, the best and the worst, a delight, the sublime beauty and the horror, as it is in reality and it can always be more: more charm and more terror. The living world and the world of the dead, of light and of darkness. As I mentioned above, serious, dialogical reflection on reconciliation requires the belief both in extremely violent conflicts, but at the same time a hope that we can overcome it, without naivete that it will be quick and easy.

#### 5.4. Irregularity

The word Baroque comes from Portuguese *Barrocco* which means irregular pearl. Hence, something beautiful, precious, but irregular, unpredictable, not perfect. In dialogue we need to stay openminded and keep fresh outlook, fresh regard, stay out of preconceived notions and prejudices. This irregularity and adaptability to local context is also very important. Here Baroque style of reconciliation would be compatible with moral particularism. Although there are certain requirements for reconciliation to happen, we should proceed case by case. Every history of reconciliation is precious, but not as a model to copy, just as an inspiration.

Irregularity, on the other hand, is connected with uniqueness and nuanced reflection. As Baroque art is full of variations of forms, explorations of alterations and interpretations, it is worth considering a reconciliation theory that stay open for updates and nuanced modifications. As John Corcoran introduced a term *Licencia pedagogica* for true education analogous to *Licencia poetica*. We could talk about *Licencia reconciliatoria* understood as a creative liberty to participants of dialogue who honestly look for ways of rebuilding their relationship.

Moreover, the Baroque forms are never perfect, like the classical ones. They are imperfect, irregular but in this way they remain much more flexible and adaptable to changes. As process of reconciliation is very hard, complex and requires a lot of patience, we need to be able to modify according to the specific context and do not blindly follow any examples.

## 6. Logic of Reconciliation

After Valéry and Trafford logic is essential part of dialogue and there is no reconciliation without dialogical relations. Therefore, we will briefly reflect on the role of logic in a process of reconciliation (more in detail in the following paper by Piotr Leśniewski “Reconciliation and Logic as an Art”). Józef Tischner said that dialogue is a logic between two people. Logic teaches us how to think? A style is about how we do something.

Susan Sontag in *Against Interpretation* called for rejection of hermeneutics of art and posited instead erotics of art. She wanted us to stop asking what a work of art is saying and reflect on how is it saying or even the fact that it is saying something. In this sense Baroque cultural style can be considered as an example of erotics of art. The focus is on the way of presenting things rather than the message. Following Sontag we may say that by the Baroque art we are encouraged to be seduced by this art, in the sense of experiencing a personal relation with the art piece. A new style of doing things is opening us to the possibility of more new ways, be it in art, fashion, cuisine or thought.

Furthermore, by showing us often highly refined, elaborated, irregular structures Baroque art gives incentives towards learning structures, new unexpected ways of organizing space, colors, overcoming limitation and explore “untested feasibilities”. Due to Baroque and this style era we have such new synthetic forms as opera, i.e. fusion of music, dance, theater, at the same time.

In general, high dramatism is characteristic for Baroque art. Our relationships for sure are often full of drama, can go in many directions from dialogue, through isolation into full conflict, but also – thankfully – the other way.

Baroque art by rejecting models to follow by simple encounter opens our minds to unexpected events. There is requirement of humility, necessary for any dialogue, openness and flexibility. Knowing and understanding more is always beneficial, since hatred keeps us usually ignorant, following José Ortega y Gasset's (1963) definition of philosophy as a "general science of love" (Spanish: *ciencia general del amor*). In dialogue our only possible attitude is to know, but many dialogical thinkers highlight the fact that to know means in fact to love. When we are in love, we want to know more about the object of our affection, we learn quickly (by heart) much information and it is never enough. Whereas we are full of hatred, we stay ignorant, blinded, since any information about our enemy is upsetting, especially the positive one.

At the end let me point out, that apart from the acceptance of conflict and rejection of pure vengeance, logic of reconciliation calls for a bizarre, irregular, baroque belief. The one that although difficult and painful, process of reconciliation may in fact also not only help to restore a broken relationship, but make it much stronger and more beautiful. For this yet, we need to study stories of reconciliation, not as models to follow (since the failed ones are equally important), but inspirations and possibilities to consider and a certain specific style of logic: logic as *cariño*.



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# *Reconciliation and Logic as an Art*

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Fania Fénelon ne enfatizza il tono epico levato verso un cielo rosso:

“Ribellatevi! Siete centinaia! Attaccateli.”

Francesca Paci *Un amore ad Auschwitz. Edek e Mala: una storia vera*

The past not only changed, but changed continuously.

George Orwell *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

**Abstract:** In the first part of the paper, some examples of reconciliation stories are presented briefly; namely two examples of dialogical revolt against injustice in Poland and China in 1989. Such non-violent revolts enable, yet not guarantee reconciliation process. Therefore in the second part, an approach to logic and teaching of logic as a trend of a global cultural change leading out of prehistory in the sense of Julio Cortázar is proposed. This approach is briefly considered because logic can be treated as care and delicacy with something is treated. The Spanish word *cariño* best describes this

meaning. The fundamental revolution in logic was the mathematical turn. Therefore some aspects of the relationship between logic and mathematics and didactic difficulties associated with the application and teaching of mathematics are discussed. A positive view of mathematics as an art is presented. Finally, Nietzsche's postulate that thinking should be taught in the same way as dancing is briefly examined. Logic as an art and *cariño* constitutes a fundamental element of any effective reconciliatory procedure, hence it can be considered also as an essential part of erotics of dialogue and culture of smile and charm.

**Key words:** dialogue, reconciliation, logic, revolt, art

## PART I: Two stories of reconciliation

### 1.1. Introduction

June 4, 1989 is a very special day on which – figuratively speaking – two different culminations of great acts of resistance took place: one in the People's Republic of China, and the other in the Polish People's Republic. My paper refers to two stories; i.e. the figure and achievements of Liu Xiaobo (1955-2017), one of the “Four Gentlemen” who started a hunger strike during the Tiananmen Square protests in spring 1989 and the path leading to the 1989 Polish parliamentary election. It should be strongly emphasized here that the course of these elections, which were held in two rounds, and the electoral law was changed between the first and second round, which aroused controversy, is not analyzed in details. What is important, is that the election result surprised the authorities and it can be interpreted as a situation in which officially citizens entitled to vote expressed strongly their opposition to them. Of course, I am inclined to assume that recalling the records of acts of social resistance is a return to the sources of revolts. By studying such records, one can better

understand successes and failures and work to ensure that social movements effectively maintain a momentum of revolt and do not turn into ossified revolutions. But I also associate acts of resistance with magnanimity, because it is often defenseless people who decide to confront armed police and/or army units – the most famous example in this case is the “Tank Man” in a pacified Tiananmen Square standing in front of four tanks on June 5, 1989. Therefore, precisely because of this magnanimity, I am inclined to say that it is worth remembering them, that it is worth doing exercises in memory.

Józef Tischner, a Polish phenomenologist wrote: »The true history of man is the history of maturing into magnanimity (Tischner 2007: 107).« Therefore, if we assume that consistent acts of resistance against enormous (or, figuratively speaking, rather: “bloated to the point of obscenity”) government institutions are testimonies of magnanimity, and if one adopts the Tischnerian point of view on human history, then my paper should be treated as a study of progress of mankind. I would like to emphasize the educational value of my article, just because, according to an old tradition, it is assumed here that reason is the best antidote to violence. Hence I am convinced that there is a close and, at the same time, fundamental connection between humanistic education and freedom. In this context I remind that Simone Weil wrote: *Il y avait un temps où tous les murs, en France, étaient couverts d'affiches qui portaient: “Nous vaincrons parce que nous sommes les plus forts.” Ce fut la parole la plus niaise de cette guerre* (Weil 1957: 106).<sup>2</sup>

Here is an example of this approach. Izabella Cywińska (1935-2023) was a Polish theater and film director, and from September 12, 1989 to January 12, 1991, Minister of Culture and

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<sup>2</sup> The English translation of this passage is as follows: *At one time all the walls in France were covered with posters announcing: ‘We shall win because we are the stronger.’ It was the silliest word spoken in this war* (Weil 2015: 217).

Art in the cabinet of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the first government formed after the 1989 Polish parliamentary election.<sup>3</sup> She said once in an interview:

In a free country, in order to preserve freedom in all its beauty (yes! beauty!), citizens must be enlightened people. Otherwise they cannot take responsibility for the country. (...) The only way for a nation to deserve freedom is education, learning and culture (“Zachować wolność...”: 34).

At this point, I would like to add a short comment to the first motto of my paper and recall the unique Polish director, Wanda Jakubowska (1907-1998). *Don't let Auschwitz happen again!* These are the words said by Marta (played by Barbara Drapińska) in one of the last scenes of the film “Ostatni etap” (The last stage) realized by Jakubowska in 1948. She also co-wrote the script with Gerda Schneider. This is a film about the resistance in the concentration camp Auschwitz. Amid all the wickedness of the camp, the timid love between Marta and Tadek is delicately outlined in this film. Jakubowska was a prisoner of Nazi concentration camps in Auschwitz and in Ravensbrück (Talarczyk-Gubała 2015: 158-173). Together with her two later films, “Koniec naszego świata” (The end of our world) from 1964 and “Zaproszenie” (An invitation) from 1985, the film “Ostatni etap” constitutes Jakubowska’s Auschwitz trilogy.<sup>4</sup> It is also worth recalling the unique and extremely important role Jakubowska played when Polish director Witold Leszczyński (1933-2007) planned to make his diploma film. He was delighted with the book “Fuglane” (The birds) by a Norwegian writer Tarjei Vesaas.<sup>5</sup> When Leszczyński’s project received negative responses from most film teams, his colleague said that in such a hopeless

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<sup>3</sup> She was the director of The New Theater in Poznań in the years 1973-1989.

<sup>4</sup> See for example (Loewy 2004) or (Loewy 2015), and (Haltof 2018).

<sup>5</sup> This book was translated into Polish by Beata Hłasko in 1964. A new translation of this book into Polish made by Maria Gołębowska-Bijak was published in 2024.



situation, he could only turn to the “Mother of God”, i.e. “Mother of God”-Jakubowska, with a request. Leszczyński recalled years later that she read the script very quickly and called him: “Wituś! It is beautiful! We’re doing it!” (“Wituś” is a diminutive of the name Witold). During the production of this film, which was titled “Żywot Mateusza” [literally in Polish “Matthew’s Life”],<sup>6</sup> Jakubowska was an artistic advisor. The film was made in 1967 and premiered on February 16, 1968. Leszczyński had literally one copy of the film, and it was Wanda Jakubowska who made sure that more copies were made.

In this part, I propose a rather unconventional story about Polish resistance to the communist government, from the strikes in the summer of 1980 to the elections of June 4, 1989. I choose two people representing strongly opposing positions and situations, which are not widely known outside Poland, I think. In my opinion, these situations paint a certain picture of resistance to communism. As a side note, it is worth adding that the negotiations, which lasted from August 31, 1988 to April 5, 1989, ultimately led to the elections on June 4, 1989, as a result of which the United People’s Party (Polish “Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe”) and the Alliance of Democrats (Polish “Stronnictwo Demokratyczne”) switched to the opposition side. In consequence the communist Polish United Workers’ Party (Polish “Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza”) was dissolved finally on January 29, 1990.

### 1.2. Strikes in August 1980 in Poland, or Edward Gierek

Anna Walentynowicz (1929-2010) was dismissed from work on disciplinary grounds a few months before her retirement. This was a punishment for her activities in the WZZ (Free Trade Unions of the Coast). The workers defended Walentynowicz and a strike

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<sup>6</sup> The English title is “Matthew’s Days”, and the French title “Les Jours de Mathieu”.

began, first at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk. Other enterprises from the Tricity and then from all over Poland joined this strike. The Inter-Enterprise Strike Committee was established.<sup>7</sup> I will recall one episode concerning the government side. Edward Gierek, then First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, was on vacation in Crimea. According to the agreement, he was to return to Poland as soon as strikes broke out and political demands appeared. And that's exactly what happened. First, Gierek flew to Warsaw and he wanted to immediately fly to Gdańsk on the same plane. We read:

I was greeted with serious faces. When I told the members of the Politburo gathered at the airport that I would immediately go to Gdańsk on the same plane to talk to the Strike Committee, they told me that the Politburo had determined that I absolutely should not go to Gdańsk. I shouldn't jeopardize my authority. The party will still need you, someone said (Rolicki 1990: 202).

What is most interesting in this story, in my opinion, is that Gierek wanted to meet directly with the Inter-Enterprise Strike Committee. Moreover, historians obviously do not like alternative versions of the past, but imagine that he, who worked in mines in France and Belgium in his youth (Rolicki 1990: 12-28), came to terms with striking workers. Instead, he ceased to be the head of the party, and on December 13, 1981, he was interned! (Rolicki 1990: 231-243). Years later, he said about the suspension of investments started in the 1970s, that »it's a great tragedy and a gigantic waste (Rolicki 1990a: 177).« He told Janusz Rolicki directly:

(...), Jaruzelski is primarily responsible for the ruin of the Polish economy, the greatest in our history. Billions invested in the economy were wasted. His incompetence resulted in the waste of hundreds of workplaces that were stopped mid-construction and never completed again (Rolicki 1990: 239).

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<sup>7</sup> See for example (Leśniewski 2021: 47-68).

- 1.3. When Solidarity bangs its fist on a table, the Kremlin's chimes will play "Dąbrowski Mazurka", or Andrzej Rozpłochowski

Andrzej Rozpłochowski (1950-2021)<sup>8</sup> worked at the huge "Huta Katowice" (Katowice Steelworks) as a machinist. This large-scale construction planned by Polish communists was linked to supplies of raw materials from the Soviet Union. It was "a business card" for the communist authorities. Leonid Brezhnev received an employee ID card of Huta Katowice (!).

Rozpłochowski led the strike in Katowice Steelworks and "Solidarity" in Silesia-Dąbrowa. The communist authorities signed four agreements at the turn of August and September 1980 and assumed that four headquarters of the new workers' union would be established. But it must be remembered that Rozpłochowski was a supporter of a creation of one nationwide union "Solidarność" from the very beginning. He wrote about this matter to Marian Jurczyk (head of "Solidarity" in Szczecin) and Lech Wałęsa (head of "Solidarity" in Gdańsk). Jurczyk sent Rozpłochowski a reply supporting this approach, while Wałęsa did not respond to Rozpłochowski's proposal at all. Only on September 17, 1980, the position recognizing the need to form one nationwide union was positively voted on at the headquarters of "Solidarity" in Gdańsk.

In the history of the first "Solidarity" (i.e. conventionally, the union in the period from August 31, 1980 to December 13, 1981), March 30, 1981 is a special date. On March 19 of that year, Solidarity activists were removed by the Citizens' Militia from the building of the Provincial National Council in Bydgoszcz and beaten by militiamen.<sup>9</sup> In response to this situation, "Solidarity" announced

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<sup>8</sup> For the life and achievements of Rozpłochowski see: (Rozpłochowski 2011, 2012, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> On the so-called "Bydgoszcz Crisis", see for example (Rulewski 2021: 101-141). It should be noted here that Jan Rulewski was the head of "Solidarity" in Bydgoszcz in 1980-1981. On March 19, 1981, he was beaten by policemen.

a so-called warning strike on Friday, March 27, and a general strike on Tuesday, March 31. As an aside, I would like to add that I was a high school student in Poznań at that time and I remember perfectly well two of our teachers (the president and vice-president of “Solidarity” at our school, respectively) who wore red-white armbands on that day. Some trade unionists were in favor of a general strike, but Lech Wałęsa was against the strike and preferred starting talks with the communist authorities. Rozpłochowski, who was in favor of a general strike, called Wałęsa in Gdańsk. Rozpłochowski recalls this conversation years later:

What are you going to tell me about Silesia?! – Wałęsa suddenly shouted into the receiver. – Don't make yourself a leader, because I will come and call a meeting at the stadium in Chorzów and we will see who people will listen to. **They'll give you a gallows and a throne for me!** They will hang you, but they will worship me. [emphasis added]

To this, Rozpłochowski replied sharply: *Please, come and see who will hang whom* (Rozpłochowski 2011: 164).

Until Tuesday, Wałęsa was conducting negotiations with government representatives. They led to the so-called “Warsaw Agreement”. On the evening of Monday, March 30, Andrzej Gwiazda announced in front of Polish television cameras that the general strike was being postponed for a further period of time. Many authors believe that the cancellation of this strike was, in practice, the greatest failure and weakening of the first “Solidarity”: with full mobilization and strike readiness, it is suddenly canceled. For example, Mieczysław Rakowski, who headed the communist side during these Warsaw negotiations, did not agree with this opinion. He believed that from March 30, “Solidarity” was increasingly prepared for a confrontation with the communist authorities. It is worth mentioning an anecdote related to Lech Wałęsa. Janusz Onyszkiewicz recalls:

I remember some discussion, Wałęsa says: “It was supposed to be democracy, and then someone gets up and says that he doesn’t agree!” For him then, democracy meant unanimity in the fight against the system. (“Bywały szczęśliwe powroty...” 2022: 147).

On the night of December 12 to December 13, 1981, Rozpłochowski and his colleagues from “Solidarity” in Silesia-Dąbrowa were returning from the meeting in Gdańsk to Katowice, and they were all arrested at the station and interned. During his internment, he was arrested and eventually sent to the Mokotów Prison in Warsaw. He was one of eleven steadfast prisoners who were considered extreme by the communist authorities.

The prosecutor, Colonel Ryszard Szczęsny, from the Supreme Military Prosecutor’s Office (but not from the Supreme **Civil** Prosecutor’s Office), brought harsh charges against these 11 prisoners (to each one individually) related to Article 143 of the Penal Code of 1969.<sup>10</sup> This article reads:

Whoever, with the aim of depriving independence, detaching part of the territory, overthrowing the political system by force or weakening the defensive power of the Polish People’s Republic, undertakes, in concert with other persons, activities aimed at achieving this aim, shall be subject to the penalty of imprisonment for a period of not less than 5 years or the death penalty.

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<sup>10</sup> See (Friszke 2017: 317). Among these 11 prisoners, seven were activists of “Solidarity” (Andrzej Gwiazda, Seweryn Jaworski, Marian Jurczyk, Grzegorz Palka, Andrzej Rozpłochowski, Jan Rulewski), and four were members of KSS KOR (Jacek Kuroń, Adam Michnik, Zbigniew Romaszewski, Henryk Wujec). “KSS KOR” is an abbreviation of the Polish name “Komitet Samoobrony Społecznej KOR” (The Committee for Social Self-Defense), where “KOR” is an abbreviation of the name “Komitet Obrony Robotników” (The Workers’ Defense Committee). It was an opposition group of citizens that created the Committee in September 1976 to help people repressed by the communist authorities after the June 1976 protests in Radom.

They were released from prison under an amnesty in 1984. In 1988, Rozpłochowski left via the Federal Republic of Germany for the United States. In 2010 he returned to Poland.

As a side note, I will add that this famous saying by Rozpłochowski. *When Solidarity bangs its fist on a table, the Kremlin's chimes will play "Dąbrowski Mazurka"* can be related to a certain letter of the Polish Franciscan friar Maksymilian Kolbe from Japan (written in the Mugenzai no Sono monastery in Nagasaki on June 6, 1931) to his superior in Poland, i.e. Father Kornel Czupryk. Kolbe wrote, among other things:

As for the aims and mission of Niepokalanów for the future, I cannot see very clearly either, but it seems to me that it ought to fulfill the purpose of the MI, namely to win the whole world and *each* soul that exists now and will exist in the future *over to the Immaculata*. It seems to me that, as the "Mediatrice of all graces," she not only can and wants to bestow the grace of conversion and sanctification at given times in given places, but she also wants to regenerate *all* souls, as well as our Order. At times I also think that zealous members of all the Franciscan branches will eventually line up under her banner, so that we will become the first ones not only historically, but also in spirit. I believe that her banner will be hoisted up even **over the Kremlin**, and so on (Kolbe 2017: 784-785). [emphasis added]<sup>11</sup>

It is worth noting here that even in 1990 this letter was censored, which meant that it did not contain a phrase about the Kremlin. Rozpłochowski's saying and the sentence from Kolbe's letter accurately illustrate attitude of most Poles towards the Kremlin as a symbol of the Russian (and not only Soviet) authorities. By the way, one can always treat communism as a religion. It is always worth remembering that Gustav Herling wrote: *One has only to see old communists in Soviet prisons to become convinced that communism is a religion* (Herling 2005: 165).

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<sup>11</sup> This is letter number 303.



#### 1.4. A short summary note on the 1989 revolts

The protest in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 was brutally suppressed by the army, and the actions of the “Solidarity” opposition led to elections in June 1989. Both of these acts of resistance against the communist authorities remain only in memory. One should not forget the Four Gentlemen from the Square and many people remember the sadness of the Martial Law and the trust that citizens placed in the second “Solidarity”.<sup>12</sup> For me, June 4, 1989 is a symbol of resistance as resistance against authorities that oppresses and exploits the vast majority of people. One may even say that these both acts of resistance are defeated ones.<sup>13</sup> Although revolutions are considered to be the peak of social changes, it can be said that this Polish resistance took on this form over time, according to the regularities known and systematized by sociologists (Sztompka 1993: 301-320) and one can even metaphorically say that it “diluted”; that is, groups of beneficiaries and disappointed people were formed, Solidarity elites “on the backs of workers entered the halls of power” and formed opposition parties. These processes were described, among others, by David Ost, who was in Poland during these difficult times. In his paper from 2020 we read, for example:

To say that Solidarity was a democratic left alternative to state socialism thus does not mean that all of its leadership

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<sup>12</sup> In the case of both social movements, the authorities chose a barbarous solution. Leszek Nowak, a Polish philosopher and creator of non-Marxist historical materialism, interned on December 13, 1981, stated then that from the point of view of “Solidarity”, such a course of events was optimal. Firstly, those in power have shown that they do not want to hold talks with the union. Secondly, the introduction of the martial law protected “Solidarity” from becoming involved in the communist government’s policy, and thus from taking over (at least part of) the responsibility for this policy. This approach also seems appropriate in relation to the Tiananmen Square protest in the spring of 1989.

<sup>13</sup> A Polish sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis (1942-2024) asked for example a fundamental question: »Is a weak post-communist state also a post-democratic state?« See the chapter 4 of the part I in (Staniszkis 1999: 145-210).

and members saw it that way. Nevertheless, from August 1980 to December 1981, Solidarity invented in Poland the kind of grassroots, democratic, noncapitalist, participatory social experiment that the Left has always tried to bring about. This is what should be remembered, commemorated, and highlighted today (Ost 2020: 11).

Therefore I would like to end the first part of my paper with a short note. A Polish composer, writer and columnist, Stefan Kisielewski (1911-1991), literary nickname “Kisiel” [kissel], who officially criticized socialism and communist rule in Poland,<sup>14</sup> in an essay about Kafka wrote as follows: *True despair is a form of rebellion, even defeated rebellion is always a source of hope.*<sup>15</sup> (Kisielewski 2014: 260) [emphasis added]

I finished writing this part on May 30, 2024. Thirty-five years ago, on May 30, 1989, protesters placed a 10-meters-tall statue of the Goddess of Democracy in Tiananmen Square. The statue was made of papier-mâché. It was completely destroyed by soldiers on June 4, 1989.

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<sup>14</sup> It was he who invented and uses the famous term to this day “dyktatura ciemniaków” [dictatorship of blockheads]. Because Kisielewski used this term in reference to censorship (at a meeting of the Polish Writers' Union) he was beaten on March 11, 1968 by so-called “unknown perpetrators”.

<sup>15</sup> It is worth adding that the title of the collection of Kisielewski's texts is a reference to a sentence from Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel: *Still, there is a wonderful mixture of matters in this book* (Sienkiewicz 1894: 32).

## PART II Logic as *cariño*

Doña primavera  
de manos gloriosas,  
haz que por la vida  
derramemos rosas:  
rosas de alegría,  
rosas de perdón,  
rosas de cariño,  
y de exultación.

Gabriela Mistral *Doña Primavera*

### 2.1. Introductory remarks

In 1762 Kant's short treatise entitled *Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren* was published. It contains the following momentous remark: "But it is not the purpose of Logic to entangle, but to disentangle; to set forth something not in a covert but in an open fashion" (Kant 1885: 89).<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that the creator of the term *formal logic* was Kant. Kotarbiński wrote about it in a footnote, which is a briefly and concisely history of the word *logic* (Kotarbiński 1985: 8).<sup>17</sup> If Kant's

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<sup>16</sup> Here's the German text for the record: "Es ist aber der Zweck der Logik, nicht zu verwickeln, sondern aufzulösen, nicht verdeckt, sondern augenscheinlich etwas vorzutragen" (Kant 1905: 56).

<sup>17</sup> As an interesting, I suppose, historical supplement, I give here two examples of the assessment of traditional formal logic by Polish philosophers from before the period of the mathematical turn. Jan Śniadecki was a strong critic of Kant. He wrote about formal logic as follows: "The science of the forms of thinking is a true distortion of reason: it was formulated by Aristotle to defeat the Greek sophists; it was revived and reworked by Kant to fill the educated world with sophists. The result showed that he had not failed in doing so, and at the same time showed that Kant mistook vertigo for thinking. Thorough thinking does not depend on form, nor need it; but in knowing the root causes and proofs; in seeing one truth within another truth, and in judging the distance of a thought or testimony to an undoubted truth." (Śniadecki 1818: 550). In turn, Wincenty Lutosławski wrote about Kant and formal logic as follows:

view is accepted, then, since logic's purpose is to resolve/dissolve (German *aufösen*) and to present/to report (German *vortragen*) something apparently/evidently (German *augenscheinlich*), it can be seen as a kind of *cariño*. This Spanish word is understood here simply as care and delicacy with which a job is done or something is treated.<sup>18</sup> In fact, the word *cariño* has a Latin origin (lat. *carēre*, in Spanish *carecer*), and *The Dictionary of Real Academia Española* gives five basic meanings of the word, namely: (1) *inclinación de amor o buen afecto que se siente hacia alguien o algo*, (i.e. inclination of love or good affection that is felt towards someone or something); (2) *manifestación de cariño*, (i.e. demonstration of affection); (3) *añoranza, nostalgia*, (i.e. longing, nostalgia); (4) *esmero o afición con que se hace una labor o se trata una cosa*, (i.e. care and fondness with which a job is done or something is treated); (5) *regalo, obsequio* (i.e. gift, present.).<sup>19</sup> It is worth pointing out two of these meanings: (4) *esmero* which means *care, trouble*, or as an adverb translate into English as *painstakingly*, and (5) *regalo, obsequio* which means *present, gift*. Therefore logic as *cariño* carries at the same time certain thoughtfulness as a (thoughtful and considerate) gift that is a fruit of care and passion.

The structure of this part is as follows. I propose here to treat logic, and the teaching of logic, as a fragment of a global cultural change leading out of prehistory in the sense of Julio Cortázar. Logic is thus understood a form of love: as *cariño*. The fundamental revolution in logic was at the turn of the 19th

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“An outstanding defender of formal logic was the famous philosopher Kant (...). Formal logic is a very useful exercise of the mind, but it does not satisfy the strongest desire that is proper to thought – because human thought develops all its energy only when it strives for real, absolute truth, for conformity with the reality of being” (Lutosławski 1906: 8).

<sup>18</sup> Following Badiou, it is worth repeating: “No theme requires more pure logic than that of love.” See (Badiou 2008:183). For hexagonal, purely logical, approach to love-hate relationship, see, for example: (Gan-Krzywoszyńska, Leśniewski 2015: 172-176).

<sup>19</sup> <https://dle.rae.es/cari%C3%B1o?m=form>

and 20th centuries. This profound change in the history of logic is called *the mathematical turn*. I therefore first discuss some aspects of the relationship between logic and mathematics and didactic difficulties associated with the application and teaching of mathematics. However, I also present a positive view of mathematics as an art. Finally, Nietzsche's postulate, which says that thinking should be taught in the same way as dancing is taught is shortly examined. A statement by José Ortega y Gasset, who recalled how dance was treated in ancient Greece is reminded at the end.

## 2.2. Logic as a current of cultural change

Traditionally, logic has been said to be the study of correct reasoning; and, for example, Jerzy Perzanowski proposed that logic should be treated as a theory of principles of transforming information.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, in the Polish tradition, Kotarbiński for instance mentioned about an ontological interpretation of the subject matter of formal logic and wrote explicitly that when formal logic deals with the conditions of the correctness of inferences, it looks for the most general, non-temporal and non-causal relationships between things (Kotarbiński 1985: 184). In 1987, Józef Bocheński published a dictionary of philosophical superstitions (of prejudices indeed) and under the entry "logic" he also gave an ontological interpretation of formal logic. He spoke explicitly that formal logic is a theory of objects in general, and therefore it is a kind of ontology. He also wrote:

But (formal) logic is nothing else than a description of the most general features of objects in general – so whoever

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<sup>20</sup> (Perzanowski 1989: 244). We assume here as a standard that logic consists of three parts: (1) formal logic, (2) logical theory of language (in other words, logical semiotics), and (3) logical theory of science (or methodology of science). In addition to formal logic, there is, of course, informal logic.

frees oneself from it [i.e. from logic – P. L.] is babbling.  
Beyond logic there is only nonsense (Bocheński 1992: 76).

In my opinion, it is worth emphasizing that Bocheński stated that fundamental importance of formal logic lies in the fact that it is a tool for analyzing rather *concepts* than reasoning. In particular, such an approach is naturally used in the investigation of the application of the logical square.

I have indicated these approaches to logic to distinguish them from the approach I discussed in this paper.

I propose a slightly different approach to logic and to formal logic in particular: *logic, and teaching of logic, matter when it is one of the currents of cultural change that leads to the end of our morose prehistory*. Of course, someone might say that even the dumbest of logic classes are, in this sense, a contribution to this trend – unfortunately, a participation that is educationally inept and the least effective. And yet no: actions taken in this current of change should be done with care and delicacy, in other words with *cariño*. The term *our morose prehistory* is related to some remark by Julio Cortázar. I will refer here to the text by a Colombian writer, Dasso Saldivar. He is, among others, the author of the book *García Márquez. El viaje a la semilla* [García Márquez. The journey to the seed] of which Márquez himself was to say that: “Si hubiera leído antes *El viaje a la semilla*, no habría escrito mis memorias” [If I had read *The Journey to the Seed* before, I would not have written my memoirs]. Saldivar attended Madrid meeting in 1977 where a group of writers met Cortázar. Saldivar published a short memoir years later. It contains a number of important statements by Cortázar. The author of *Rayuela* [Hopscotch] stated among others:

Man is still living in a kind of cave age despite its great technology and trips to the moon, because, first of all, it doesn't really know who it is, it hasn't yet found the end of that long exploration of space, philosophy and literature



as a whole, and, furthermore, it is very far from having rid oneself of everything that conditions it, of everything that takes away its joy.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, every culture can be treated and reconstructed as a set of rules. A given culture is considered as a system of norms and appropriate directives. The norms indicate, more or less unambiguously, which values should be implemented in a given system, while the directives determine the method of implementing and/or achieving the values indicated by the norms. This approach is used by representatives of the Poznań School of Methodology. In research on systems understood in this way, it is worth introducing a distinction between civilization and culture. Civilization is a system that is supposed to ensure that a given social group (that is, a group considered to be representatives of a given civilization) has dominion over environment. Culture, on the other hand, is a system that establishes a loving relationship, i.e. *cariño*, between a person and/or a given group and its environment. According to this approach, the rules of formal logic can be treated as parts of a given civilization or culture.<sup>22</sup> If logic is a form of love (i.e. *cariño*), then we think not only about the methods or means of seeking knowledge, but also about practices of teaching; of course, not only logic. It should be remembered that, as C. S. Lewis put it,

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<sup>21</sup> “El hombre está todavía viviendo una especie de edad de las cavernas a pesar de su gran tecnología y los viajes a la luna, porque, en primer lugar, no sabe bien quién es él mismo, no ha encontrado todavía el término de esa larga exploración de la filosofía y la literatura en su conjunto, y, además, está muy lejos de haberse librado de todo lo que lo condiciona, de todo lo que le quita la alegría” (Saldívar 2004).

<sup>22</sup> The connective “or” is definitely understood here as exclusive disjunction, because as Paolo Freire said: *Cultural invasion through dialogue cannot exist. There is no such thing as dialogical manipulation or conquest. And also: Dialogue is the loving encounter of people, who, mediated by the world, “proclaim” that world. They transform the world and in transforming it, humanize it for all people. This encounter in love cannot be an encounter of irreconcilables* (Freire 2005: 104; emphasis added).

*every love has its art of love.* (Lewis 1988: 44). Then logic as a form of love (i.e. *cariño*) has its own art.

When logic and logical education are considered as a part of global cultural change, they are connected with great hope. Indeed, the hope bound up with the cultural change should be really great, because, as Józef Tischner wrote, *we live only when we become children of our own hope, which has surpassed us.* See, for example (Leśniewski 2022: 23).

### 2.3. On logic and mathematics

It was Bocheński, who formulated distinct and powerful dictum: *Formal logic is currently of mathematical form* (Bocheński 1992: 75). Therefore, if formal logic is treated as a *cariño*, then it is worth formulating a few remarks regarding its relationship between logic and mathematics. The standard version of the history of this relationship is related to a crisis in the foundations of mathematics. Of course, applications of mathematics, and set theory in particular, in logic are associated with certain difficulties: also didactic, when teaching logic is considered. At this point, we could with a wink refer to Ronald Reagan's *Inaugural Address* on January 20, 1981 and the famous phrase: "In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem" (Reagan 1981: 2). Transforming a bit of this Reagan's remark, one can say in the form of a commentary to didactic difficulties in applying and teaching mathematics: In this present crisis, mathematics is not the solution to our problem; mathematics is the problem.

Moreover, Stanisław Ulam wrote about the teaching of mathematics:

One may wonder whether teaching mathematics really makes much sense. If one has to explain things repeatedly to somebody and assist him constantly, chances are he is not cut out to do much in mathematics. On the other hand,

if a student is good, he does not really need a teacher except as a model and perhaps to influence his tastes (Ulam 1991: 128).

However, it should be strongly emphasized that, for example, René Thom not only strongly rejected the concept that logic should be the basis of mathematics. He asked: *why then should mathematics be the only science capable of finding its own foundations in itself or in logic?* [French: (...) *pourquoi donc les mathématiques devraient-elles être la seule science capable de trouver en elle-même ou dans la logique ses propres fondements?*] (Thom 1989: 26).<sup>23</sup>

One of the practical consequences of this approach was the introduction of selected issues of propositional calculus, predicate calculus, and set theory to mathematics curricula in primary and secondary schools.<sup>24</sup> Stanisław Ulam stated directly that set theory is *the most general and abstract part of mathematics* (Ulam

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<sup>23</sup> Earlier in this conversation he stated, among others: “Set theory, logical notation, propositional calculus, quantification theory, etc., these are things which, for the professional mathematician as for the normal student of mathematics, are of very little use.” Here’s the French text just in case: «Théorie des ensembles, notation logique, calcul des propositions, théorie des quantifications, etc., ce sont là des choses qui, pour le mathématicien professionnel comme pour l’étudiant normal en mathématiques, présentent bien peu d’utilité» (Thom 1989: 25).

<sup>24</sup> Of course, for many people, the abbreviation “math” represents the phrase “mental abuse to humans”.

There is an old didactic joke. At lunch, a father-mathematician talks to his little son who has come home from school. “What lessons were at school?” asks the father. The kid replies: “Polish, English, math...”. Father interrupts: “What was in math class?” “Ah, the teacher taught us what a set is. First he told the kids who had the cheese sandwich to get up. The kids got up and he said it was a set of these children that had a cheese sandwich. Then the children who have a ham sandwich for breakfast were supposed to get up. And these children got up and the teacher said this is the set of kids having a ham sandwich for breakfast. And then the teacher asked those children who had no breakfast today to get up, and no one got up. And he said it was an empty set.” The daddy-mathematician asked: “You remember everything perfectly, but tell me, are those carrots on your plate a set or not?” The kid started to think, it was a lot of effort and stress for him, but in the end he replied: “Yes, as long as these carrots will stand up!”

1991: 96). Imagine then, for example, an eight-year-old child who learning *the most general and abstract part of mathematics* and must “understand” that:

$$x \in \{x\} \text{ and } \{x\} \in \{\{x\}\}, \text{ but } x \notin \{\{x\}\}.$$

If someone can be convinced that this is the case, they can believe everything, actually. As a side note, it should be added that we have at our disposal a mereological formula:

$$\forall x \forall y \forall z [(x \varepsilon p(y) \wedge y \varepsilon p(z)) \supset x \varepsilon p(z)],$$

where  $x \varepsilon p(y)$  stands for the phrase “ $x$  is a part of  $y$ ” and “ $\varepsilon$ ” is the epsilon of the Leśniewski’s ontology. Of course, it is not an universally accepted solution; children learn set theory and then algebra, but not mereology.

However Bocheński warned against prejudice that logic is necessary in reasoning in the domain of everyday life. He wrote as follows: *In fact, every man has a natural, innate logic, which allows him to reason correctly, as long as it is not about very complex reasoning* (Bocheński 1992: 76). Therefore, when *natural logic*, in Bocheński’s sense, is considered, the question of the implementation of this logic also arises.<sup>25</sup> It is worth quoting Schopenhauer’s view here, which links this learning process with language acquisition. He wrote as follows:

In learning the use of language therefore, the whole mechanism of Reason that is, all that is essential in Logic is brought to our consciousness. Now this can evidently not take place without considerable mental effort and fixed attention, for which the desire to learn gives children the requisite strength. So long as that desire has before it what is really available and necessary, it is vigorous, and

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<sup>25</sup> When it comes to the connection between learning language and logic, we all remember Quine’s dictum: *Logic chases truth up the tree of grammar* (Quine 1986: 35). It is worth remembering that it was Quine who described the affliction he called *mathemathosis*. (Quine 1987: 127-129).

it only appears weak when we try to force upon children that which is not suited to their comprehension. Thus even a coarsely educated child, in learning all the turns and subtleties of language, as well through its own conversation as that of others, accomplishes the development of its Reason, and acquires that really concrete Logic [German *wahrhaft konkrete Logik* – P. L.], which consists less in logical rules than in the proper application of them; just as the rules of harmony are learnt by persons of musical talent simply by playing the piano, without reading music or studying thorough-bass (Schopenhauer 1903: 117-118).<sup>26</sup>

It should be emphasized in this passage that, according to Schopenhauer, a child assimilate *not* rules of this concrete logic, but *rather* proper application of its rules.<sup>27</sup>

I return, however, to contemporary formal logic, the rise of which is commonly associated with mathematical turn in logic. This turn was revolutionary. And it is worth remembering a remark by Wittgenstein. Peter Geach wrote about it:

As I once heard Wittgenstein say, all logical differences are big differences; in logic we are not making subtle distinctions, as it were between flavours that pass over into one another by delicate gradations (Geach 1972: 48).

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<sup>26</sup> For those interested, here is the relevant excerpt in German: “Also bei der Erlernung der Sprache, sammt aller ihrer Wendungen und Feinheiten, sowohl mittelst Zuhören der Reden Erwachsener, als mittelst Selbstreden, vollbringt das Kind, sogar auch das roh aufgezogene, jene Entwicklung seiner Vernunft und erwirbt sich jene wahrhaft konkrete Logik, als welche nicht in den logischen Regeln, sondern unmittelbar in der richtigen Anwendung derselben besteh” (Schopenhauer 1860: 118-119).

<sup>27</sup> When it comes to the connection between rules of logic and their applications, it is worth remembering the classic opening passage from Condillac's textbook of logic: “It was natural that men should make up for the weakness of their arms by other means which nature had placed within their reach; and thus it is that they became mechanicians before they studied mechanics. It is thus they were logicians, and thought, before they investigated how man thinks. Centuries must have passed away before men could have suspected that thought can be subjected to laws; and even at this time the greatest number of mankind think without conceiving how it is done” (*The Logic of Condillac* 1809: 1).

If logic is treated as a *cariño*, then mighty attention must be paid to these *big distinctions*, and the question should be repeated again after Wittgenstein: *If you use a trick in logic, whom can you be tricking other than yourself?* (Wittgenstein 1980: 24<sup>e</sup>).<sup>28</sup>

Ultimately, the introduction of logic and set theory into mathematics curricula leads to complex and comical situations. For example, there is “mathematical graffiti” in the *Concrete Mathematics: The ultimate goal of mathematics is to eliminate all need for intelligent thought* (Graham *et al.* 1994: 53).

In such a situation, you should, I think, open *The Mathematics of Metamathematics* and, in the form of therapy, read that a mechanization of the process of deduction in mathematics is of *no practical importance*: this is because the aim of mathematicians is to discover new interesting true statements, but not merely to deduce true statements (Rasiowa, Sikorski 1963: 201).

Here is an example of a comical situation. At the end of August 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Steinhaus were returning in a crowded train from a seaside holiday. Only Stefania Steinhaus had a seat in the compartment and after the journey she mentioned to her husband about a short conversation between fellow passengers. Hugo Steinhaus recalled:

A middle-aged man recognized a woman there as someone he knew, and asked her how her children were getting on. She began by saying “My son is now fourteen and refuses to learn anything but mathematics...”. Says her interlocutor: “That’s too bad. Mathematics is a discipline of no use whatsoever, and furthermore the subject hasn’t progressed

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<sup>28</sup> In my opinion, it should be reminded that Alfred Tarski, founder of the dynamically developing metamathematics in a set-theoretical setting, once described himself as a tortured nominalist (Feferman, Feferman 2004: 52). Jan Zygmunt writes: “Tarski’s metamathematics was neither finitary nor constructive, but set-theoretic and semantic in nature” (Zygmunt 2001: IX).

for centuries since it was exhausted ages ago. And since it is related to logic, it is as dull as ditch water into the bargain” (Steinhaus 2016: 208).<sup>29</sup>

From a practical point of view mathematics would therefore be collections of various rules that an user must master; perhaps even just on the path of taming.

#### 2.4. Logic as an art

However, one can look at mathematics completely differently: do not treat mathematics as taming, but as an art. Such a view was formulated, for example, by Ulam in his autobiography:

Mathematics being more **in the nature of an art**, values depend on personal tastes and feelings rather than on objective factual notions. Mathematicians tend to be rather vain – though less so than opera tenors or artists (Ulam 1991: 90). [Emphasis added]

In turn, Goro Shimura writes in his memoirs:

Indeed, mathematics is not just formal logic; it requires **an intuitive sense** of what each mathematical object is. This can be said at advanced levels, but also at very elementary levels, too (Shimura 2008: 51). [Emphasis added]

Moreover, he was also to state:

Most mathematicians do mathematics **from an aesthetic point of view** and that philosophy of goodness comes from my aesthetic viewpoint (Shing 1997: 210). [Emphasis added]

Jenny Teichman, in her review of Martha Nussbaum’s book *Love’s Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, wrote: *There are almost as many styles as there are philosophers*

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<sup>29</sup> Steinhaus recalls in his notes also a similar conversation about mathematics with an Italian merchant in 1928. See (Steinhaus 2015: 159-160).



(Teichman 1991: 1). Perhaps one day it will be possible to look at mathematics in such a way that one might say: There are almost as many styles as there are mathematicians. And logicians as well.<sup>30</sup>

Anyway, since I have such opinions of mathematicians, then perhaps we should agree with major general Carl von Clausewitz that all thinking is an art, really.<sup>31</sup>

Isadora Duncan in her autobiography recalls the following statement in a talk with Cosima Wagner:

“Yes,” I continued, “Man must speak, then sing, then dance. But the speaking is the brain, the thinking man. The singing is the emotion. The dancing is the Dionysian ecstasy which carries away all. It is impossible to mix in any way, one with the other. Musik-Drama kann nie sein.” (Duncan 1928: 163). [Musical drama can never be. In other words: There will never be anything like musical drama. – P. L.]

Thinking is sharply opposed to dance here. But note that the motto in Duncan’s book is a passage from *Thus spoke Zarathustra*. Therefore at this point, I propose to briefly consider the issue of Nietzschean vision of the connection between logic, thinking and dance. His book *Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophize with a Hammer* contains some remarks on logic and thinking, and about the relationship between the latter and dance.

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<sup>30</sup> For the dialogical concept of style see (Gan-Krzywoszyńska 2021).

<sup>31</sup> “All thinking is indeed art. Where the logician draws the line, where the premises stop which are the result of cognition – where judgment begins, there art begins. But more than this: even the perception of the mind is judgment again, and consequently art; and at last, even the perception by the senses as well” (von Clausewitz 1873: 61). And Schopenhauer wrote in a similar way: “For all are capable of drawing a conclusion, but few of judging” (Schopenhauer 1903: 16). For those interested, here is again the relevant excerpt in German: “Denn zu SCHLIESSEN sind Alle, zu URTHEILEN Wenige fähig” (Schopenhauer 2007: 12).

Nietzsche treated formal logic and mathematics, i.e., in his opinion, an application of logic, as systems of signs. He stated that they both had nothing to do with reality; also in the sense that each is equally remote from the question of whether they have any value as such systems (Nietzsche 2005: 168).<sup>32</sup> But about the teaching of thinking, he wrote:

Learning to *think*: our schools do not have any idea what this means. Even in the universities, even among genuine philosophy scholars, logic is beginning to die out as a theory, a practice, a *craft*. Just look at German books: there is not even a dim recollection of the fact that thought requires a technique, a plan of study, a will to mastery, – that thinking wants to be learned like dancing, as a *type* of dancing... Has any German these days ever experienced the delicate shiver that a *light-footed* spirit sends streaming into every muscle! – The stiff clumsiness of a spiritual gesture, the hand with an *awkward* grasp – these are so paradigmatically German that people in other countries mistake them for the German character as such. The German does not have a *finger* for nuances . . . The fact that Germans have put up with their philosophers, and in particular with the most deformed concept-cripple ever to exist, the *great* Kant, is a pretty good indication of German grace and charm. – A *noble education* has to include dancing in every form, being able to dance with your feet, with concepts, with words; do I still have to say that you need to be able to do it with a pen too – that you need to learn to *write*? (Nietzsche 2005: 191).

If logic should be a theory, a practice, a *craft*, it is worth noting that this word is understood e.g. is as strength, power, might, skill, and, of course, an art.<sup>33</sup> But please note the following phrase:

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<sup>32</sup> Nietzsche also firmly formulated three goals that educators must fulfill: “People must learn to see, they must learn to think, they must learn to speak and to write: the goal in all three cases is a noble culture” (Nietzsche 2005: 190).

<sup>33</sup> Also as skillfulness, especially skill in making plans and carrying them into execution, ability, dexterity in managing affairs, adroitness; and even as practical cunning (!).

*thinking wants to be learned like dancing, as a type of dancing.* It can be said that thinking should be taught in a similar way as dancing, because thinking turns out to be a kind of dancing. Hence there is probably no such sharp opposition between thinking and dancing. For example, Kenneth King writes:

For the dancing philosopher, language and body are coextensive and all of one's experiences thus have simultaneously visual, verbal, kinetic and kinesthetic parallels, analog extensions and exemplifications (King 2005: 108).

But I have a suggestion, and I would like to ask to go back to a text written by José Ortega y Gasset *Creencia y verdad* [Belief and truth], that is, the 30<sup>th</sup> paragraph of his work *La idea de principio en Leibniz y la evolución de la teoría deductive* [The idea of principle in Leibniz and the evolution of deductive theory]. He writes about the ritual dance, and the drum, as follows:

Drum is an instrument that symbolizes the system of beliefs and norms for many primitive peoples. This is because religious and “intellectual” action par excellence – which serves to establish a relationship with the transcendent, that is, with the world – is a collective ritual dance.

It is therefore the ritual dance that establishes a system of beliefs and norms: and if we are interested in finally leaving the dark prehistory, such a dance should constitute a culture, but not a civilization, i.e. a relationship between a person or a social group and their environment, which is called *cariño*.

Ortega y Gasset wrote another statements about dance in ancient Greece. I would like to treat them as the most accurate summary of the above considerations: *You see, what a devil, this human reality! In Greece, the festival of ritual dance was called theoria.* [Spanish: *Ahora bien: imire usted cómo es este demonio*

*de la realidad humana!/: a esa fiesta de danza ritual se llamó en Grecia teoría.]]<sup>34</sup>*

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<sup>34</sup> Here's the Spanish text of earlier quote from the work of Ortega y Gasset for those interested: "El tambor es el instrumento que simboliza el sistema de creencias y normas para muchísimos pueblos primitivos. Y ello, porque la acción religiosa e *intelectual* por excelencia – esto es, de relación con la transcendencia que es el mundo – es la danza ritual colectiva" (Ortega y Gasset 1965: 287).

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# *Face-to-Face: Exploring a Path of Reconciliation with the Nature*

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**Abstract:** This article reflects on the possibility of reconciliation with nature by situating the contemporary ecological crisis within a broader horizon of relational and theological reflection. Rather than approaching this crisis primarily as a technical or managerial problem, it draws on Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue to consider it as a disturbance in the ways relations are formed and sustained between human beings and the natural world.

This argument finds its practical application in the Orthodox Academy of Crete, which is serving as a center for local and international dialogue since its founding in 1968. Particular attention is given to a passage from *Apophthegmata Patrum* concerning Abba Makarios, which

offers a striking image of radical isolation described as a condition of being “back-to-back.” This image became an important point of reference for the long-term *Face-to-Face* artistic project and for the later *Face-to-Face Path*, a spatial and experiential work embedded in the landscape surrounding the Academy.

By bringing together philosophical reflection, patristic sources, artistic practice and concrete ecological initiatives, the article suggests that reconciliation with nature requires a relational reorientation. It is a movement away from domination and toward participation, away from isolation and toward encounter. From this perspective, ecological responsibility appears not as a set of abstract obligations, but as an ongoing practice grounded in attentiveness, presence and care.

**Key words:** philosophy of dialogue, environmental humanities, reconciliation with nature, environmental ethics

## **Introduction. On Martin Buber**

The question of whether reconciliation with nature is possible presupposes a particular understanding of relation and of the way such relations are established. In this context, the thought of Martin Buber, one of the key figures of the philosophy of dialogue, offers an especially fruitful framework. Buber understood dialogue not primarily as verbal communication, but as a way of being in the world. The distinction he introduced between dialogical and non-dialogical relations does not concern only interpersonal encounters, but reveals two fundamentally different modes of relating to reality in three spheres: in relation to nature, to other human beings, and to spiritual beings.

In *I and Thou*, Buber distinguishes two basic attitudes: the I–Thou relation and the I–It relation. The I–It attitude is characterised by distance, objectification and utility. What is encountered as an “It” can be measured, classified, analysed and used. When applied to nature, this attitude frames the environment as a resource, a background, or material to be managed and

exploited. This mode of relating has profoundly shaped modern Western culture, influencing economic, political and scientific practices and, in consequence, contributing to the expansionist treatment of the environment as theoretical idea and to the emergence of the contemporary ecological crisis.

By contrast, the I–Thou relation is grounded in presence, openness and reciprocity. It does not eliminate difference or presume symmetry but requires an acknowledgement of the other in their irreducible otherness. As Buber emphasises, dialogue is not a matter of shared language or verbal exchange, but an event that takes place when the other is approached without reduction to function or use. In this sense, even nature may enter a dialogical relation, not through speech, but through the manner it is encountered.

From this perspective, reconciliation with nature cannot be reduced either to technical solutions or to moral injunctions alone. It presupposes a shift in relational orientation: from isolation toward encounter, from domination toward participation. The dialogical framework proposed by Buber allows reconciliation to be understood not as a return to a lost harmony, but as an ongoing practice of sustaining relation.

### **History of the Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC)**

The Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC) started to serve the local and international community in 1968 as Welfare Institution, through the initiative of the Bishop, later Metropolitan of Kissamos and Selinon, Irineos Galanakis, together with his student, the theologian and philosopher Alexandros K. Papaderos, who later became the first General Director of the Academy. Their intention was to create a place of dialogue and reconciliation, bringing together religious, academic and social reflection in response to peacebuilding in post-war European context. This

aim was particularly significant for Crete, a region deeply marked by occupation and the traumatic experiences of the Second World War. In this context, dialogue was not conceived as a theoretical idea, but as a concrete practice of reconciliation and responsibility. The Academy began its activity at a time when public life in Greece was shaped by the conditions of military dictatorship, a period dominated by monological discourse, political pressure and severely limited civic freedoms, in which open dialogue, equality and freedom of expression were exceptionally difficult to sustain. That the Academy not only emerged but endured during this period constitutes one of the most decisive moments in its history. From its very beginning, the OAC was conceived as a space for face-to-face encounter between Church, science and culture, grounded in *symphilosophhein* and a sense of responsibility for creation.

The Academy was founded on the land of the Holy Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of Our Lady Hodegetria of Gonia (Ἱερὰ Πατριαρχική και Σταυροπηγιακή Μονὴ Παναγίας Οδηγητρίας Κυρίας Γωνιάς), described in the founding decree as an area of exceptional beauty and of great historical importance for Crete. The monastery, whose origins date back to the ninth century, was relocated in the seventeenth century to a hill overlooking the Rodopou Bay, near present-day Kolymbari, where a fortified complex was built to withstand raids and destruction. Throughout its history, Gonia endured repeated attacks during the Ottoman period and sustained heavy damage during the Second World War. Its repeated reconstruction transformed the monastery into a lasting symbol of endurance, historical memory and continuity.

Since its establishment, the OAC has remained open to international collaboration and encounters across different traditions, functioning as a worldwide respected Conference and Research Centre. It functions in canonical relationship with the Holy Metropolis of Kissamos and Selinon, and it operates under the spiritual auspices of His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Since 2019, the Academy is a Research Centre.

Its work includes the organisation of conferences, seminars, research projects and educational programmes, both national and international in scope.

Among the historically significant moments in the Academy's history was the organisation of the International Conference "Socialism and Culture" (1977), which brought together figures such as Mikis Theodorakis and François Mitterrand. Another landmark moment was the hosting of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church in June 2016, a historic ecclesial event for global Orthodoxy under His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

One passage that has a particularly important role in the Academy's work is *Apophthegmata Patrum* concerning Abba Makarios. This passage became the point of departure for the artistic project Face-to-Face, developed since the early 1980s.

### ***Apophthegmata Patrum: Abba Makarios***

The passage from *Apophthegmata Patrum* concerning Abba Makarios originates in the tradition of early monasticism. Abba Makarios lived in the fourth century in the Egyptian desert. During one of his journeys across the desert, he found a human skull lying in the sand and began to speak with it. When he asked who it had been, the skull replied that it had belonged to a pagan priest who now suffered after death for the wrongs he had committed. Abba Makarios inquired about the nature of this suffering. The skull explained that the fire, though its flames are powerful, is not the primary source of torment. The deepest suffering arises from a condition in which the condemned remain bound back-to-back, deprived of the possibility of seeing the face of another person. According to the passage, when someone prays for them, their bonds loosen for a moment, so that they can turn and see one another face to face. This moment brings them the greatest relief.

The passage from *Apophthegmata Patrum* concerning Abba Makarios presents an image of radical isolation, understood not as the absence of physical proximity but as the absence of relation. This inability to see the face of the other turns out to be the most profound form of suffering. The state described by the skull indicates a condition of radical isolation and exclusion from relation.

Within the work of the Orthodox Academy of Crete, the passage from *Apophthegmata Patrum* concerning Abba Makarios has become a foundational inspiration for the artistic project Face-to-Face, developed since the 1980s. The project extends the passage of Abba Makarios into visual and spatial form, deepening reflection on relation, visibility, and responsibility for the other.

### **Face-to-Face Art Project**

The Face-to-Face art project was initiated in 1983 by the Orthodox Academy of Crete as an international programme of art and literature. Its aim was to invite artists first from Greece and later from many other countries to engage creatively with Abba Makarios.

Over the years, approximately 350 works were created by 230 artists from various countries, including paintings, sculptures, installations, prints, literary texts, musical compositions and theatrical pieces. Most of these works explored the theme of broken relations, alienation and the absence of communication, interpreted in existential, social and environmental dimensions. Artists addressed a broad range of contemporary issues such as violence, exclusion, racism, migration, the erosion of solidarity and environmental degradation, all of which can be understood as consequences of disrupted relationships at the interpersonal, ecological and spiritual levels. At the same time, many works pointed to the possibility of restoring these relations. Motifs of peace, prayer, forgiveness and solidarity emphasised that

alongside experiences of alienation there remains a genuine possibility of reconciliation, through the renewed act of turning toward the other.

All works were donated to the Academy and are displayed in its facilities. In 1989 a conference accompanied by an exhibition was organised at the OAC, creating a space for face-to-face encounters among the participating artists.

The Face-to-Face project became one of the ways in which the Academy carried out its mission of dialogue. It derived from a passage from *Apophthegmata Patrum* concerning Abba Makarios and introduced this passage into an international context, becoming a point of reference for the later conception of the Face-to-Face Path, developed since 1996 in the landscape surrounding the Academy.

### **Face to Face Path**

The Face-to-Face Path, leading to the chapel of Abba Makarios on the grounds of the Orthodox Academy of Crete, represents one of the most compelling contemporary reflections on reconciliation. The project began in 1996 as the result of a collaboration between the Academy and students of the School for Garden and Landscape Architecture in Rheinland-Pfalz. Each year, new groups travelled to Crete to extend the path, working with local stone. The use of local material was integral to the project, as the path was intended to grow out of the existing landscape and remain in harmony with it. It has been created in stages, not as a finished design, but as a space that gradually takes shape through successive encounters, by the cultivation of ideas of collaboration of people, cultures and the natural environment – all together in an active face-to-face dialogue.

The path opens onto the surrounding landscape. Numerous viewpoints direct the gaze toward the Cretan Sea and the nearby Holy Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of Our Lady





**Figure 1.** Face-to-Face Path, Orthodox Academy of Crete.  
Photo: Aleksandra Walas, 2025

Hodegetria of Gonia, a site deeply embedded in local history. These vistas form an integral part of the experience of walking the path, reminding the visitor that it is not merely a surface but a space of relation with everything that co-creates it: the sea, the mountains, the vegetation, the sky, the light and the history inscribed in the place.

Walking the path, the visitor is invited into a narrative articulated in space, in which individual elements unfold as successive sentences of a story about the importance of face-to-face dialogue. In its physical form the path consists of mosaics, sculptures and altars. These elements invite reflection and a recognition of one's posture toward the other person, toward nature, and toward the importance of reconciliation. Each station invites a pause and a moment of reflection on what such turning away means, what forms renewed encounter may take and how reconciliation might unfold.

Shared concern for the environment can be one of the spaces in which such encounter becomes possible. The path's mosaics address the environmental dimension of reality. One example is the mosaic of the dove carrying an olive branch, recalling the biblical covenant after the flood and indicating human responsibility for creation, which should not be exploited for purely instrumental ends. The mosaic of the world held in human hands highlights the ecological dimension of responsibility and reminds the visitor that the earth has been entrusted to humanity as a common good. The mosaic depicting an olive tree directs attention to time and continuity. Through reference to the olive tree of Vouves, one of the oldest olive trees in the world, estimated at three to four thousand years old and growing not far from the Academy, it expands the reflection on relation by introducing a historical and ecological horizon that far exceeds the span of individual human life.

The Place of Encounter embodies the intuition that a human being does not exist as a solitary individual, but as a wayfarer whose path intersects with the paths of others. In this sense, the



**Figure 2.** Viewing opening along the Face-to-Face Path, overlooking the Holy Monastery of Panagia Hodegetria of Gonia. Photo: Aleksandra Walas, 2025





**Figure 3.** Face-to-Face Path, Orthodox Academy of Crete.  
Photo: Aleksandra Walas, 2025



physical act of walking the Face-to-Face Path resonates deeply with the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, who described the human condition as *homo viator*, the human being on the way. For Marcel, life is not a predetermined state, but “a road that one creates by walking”. It is a process of becoming, in which one meets others, discovers the unknown and encounters situations that cannot be foreseen.

Similarly, walking the Path at the Academy is an experience that cannot be fully predicted or planned, even when its route is already familiar. Although its physical elements, such as mosaics and small altars, are intended to foster reflection, the walk itself remains open to what is unexpected, to the possibility of an experience that may initiate inner transformation. Moving through a landscape marked by the memory of past conflicts makes the theme of reconciliation particularly vivid. The one who walks may realise that reconciliation is not a state achieved once and for all, but a way of being that requires continual renewal. And just as the Path is formed gradually through the work of many people, the capacity to live in relation also grows through patient effort and a sustained readiness to respond.

The possibility of a face-to-face encounter is one of the significant challenges of contemporary life, in which individualism has become so radicalised that it has produced a crisis of relation affecting increasingly isolated individuals. The highly individualised person lives as a disconnected unit and loses the capacity to be a person understood as a relational being. The passage from *Apophthegmata Patrum* concerning Abba Makarios reveals that such isolation, the condition of being “back-to-back”, is among the most painful forms of human experience.

This relational dimension, echoing Buber’s thought, extends beyond the human sphere and includes our relation to the natural world. Contemporary individuals often stand “with their backs turned” to the environment, treating it instrumentally, as mere background or resource. The Path, with its openness to



**Figure 4.** Face-to-Face Path, Orthodox Academy of Crete.  
Photo: Aleksandra Walas, 2025



**Figure 5.** Face-to-Face Path, Orthodox Academy of Crete.  
Photo: Aleksandra Walas, 2025





**Figure 6.** View from the Face-to-Face Path, Orthodox Academy of Crete.  
Photo: Aleksandra Walas, 2025



**Figure 7.** Chapel of Abba Makarios Chapel, Orthodox Academy of Crete.  
Photo: Aleksandra Walas, 2025

the sea, the rocks and the resilient vegetation, challenges this stance and invites a face-to-face encounter with nature. Such an encounter may bring reconciliation to isolated suffering, taking the form of a call that seeks a response and awakens responsibility.

### **Joint Message for the Protection of Creation**

The *Joint Message for the Protection of Creation* is an ecumenical appeal issued on the 1st of September 2021 at the commencement of the 2021 Season of Creation. It marks a significant moment of cooperation among leading Christian figures from three major ecclesial traditions: Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, and Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury, the principal leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Anglican Communion respectively.

This Joint Message calls upon Christians and, more broadly, people of goodwill everywhere to recognize that the interconnected crises of climate change, environmental degradation, and social injustice are not only technical or political problems, but also moral and spiritual imperatives that require a collective response. It articulates a shared theological conviction that creation is not a neutral backdrop to human activity, but a sacred gift entrusted to humanity that requires care, stewardship, and justice.

The three signatories emphasize that the environmental crisis disproportionately affects the most vulnerable communities, especially those living in poverty who have contributed the least to ecological degradation yet suffer its gravest consequences. They therefore call for a unified response that transcends ecclesial boundaries and cultural differences, one grounded in cooperation, shared responsibility, and a willingness to transform lifestyles and economic structures for the common good.

A defining feature of the Joint Message is its integration of spiritual and ethical imperatives with tangible worldly concerns. The authors acknowledge the urgent need for generosity, fairness, and sustainable practices in economic life, public policy, and everyday conduct. Rather than framing the ecological crisis solely as a matter of regulation or policy, they present it as an invitation to conversion: not only a change of environmental practices, but a deeper transformation of the heart and mind that realigns human priorities with the long-term flourishing of all creation.

The Message also underscores the importance of global cooperation among religious communities, civil society, and political leaders. In doing so, it situates environmental responsibility within a broader horizon of justice, dignity, and mutual interdependence, inviting all people to listen to “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” Such an appeal broadens the discourse beyond doctrinal statements to encourage concrete collaboration toward shared goals of sustainability and social goals.

In this sense, the *Joint Message for the Protection of Creation* functions both as an expression of theological solidarity across Christian traditions and as a moral appeal for collective action in the face of ecological disruption, articulating a vision in which spiritual renewal and environmental stewardship are inseparably linked.

## **Environmental Challenges**

The contemporary environmental situation calls for a response. The philosophical appeal to renew our bond with nature takes on new significance when set against the ecological realities of the present. Phenomena such as droughts, heatwaves and the loss of biodiversity show that the consequences of the climate crisis are no longer a theoretical threat, but have

become part of everyday experience in many regions. In this context, the question of whether a new relationship with nature is possible is no longer a purely hermeneutical inquiry, but a question about our capacity to respond to concrete environmental challenges.

Crete belongs to the region of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME), identified as one of the global climate-change hotspots, that is, areas in which the impacts of warming manifest with particular intensity (Zittis, Almazroui, Alpert, et al. 2022). Climate projections indicate a consistent decrease in average annual precipitation and an increase in evaporation due to rising temperatures, which together lead to a marked reduction in water availability. The growing frequency and intensity of both meteorological and hydrological droughts, along with increasing salinisation of aquifers, pose a serious threat to the island's traditional agricultural and water cycles. Olive trees, so characteristic of the island's landscape and long regarded as symbols of continuity and resilience, are already experiencing water stress and shifting climatic zones, resulting in reduced yields and increased vulnerability to disease (Cramer, Guiot, Fader et al. 2018).

At the same time, extreme weather events are intensifying, including more frequent and severe heatwaves, sudden storms and heightened flood risk, all of which destabilize ecosystems and accelerate soil erosion. Across Mediterranean regions more broadly, the risk of wildfires is rising, amplified by the concurrence of drought, high temperatures and strong winds (Zittis, Almazroui, Alpert et al. 2022).

The changes observed on Crete reflect a wider pattern of global environmental transformation. The increasing frequency and intensity of droughts, heatwaves and extreme hydrometeorological events are now documented across many regions of the world and have become one of the central challenges of contemporary civilisation.

According to data published by NASA, climate analyses available in 2025 indicated that the Earth's average temperature had already risen by about 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, and that the rate of warming was among the highest recorded since measurements began (NASA, 2025).

Based on data available up to 2022, surface temperatures had continued to rise, and the preceding eight years were identified as the warmest since the beginning of modern instrumental records in 1880 (NASA Earth Observatory, 2022). These indicators are closely linked to the destabilisation of hydrological cycles, declining soil moisture and the increasing occurrence of extreme weather events. This trend continues into the present.

The effects of these processes are visible across the globe. In recent years, Europe has experienced exceptionally hot and dry summers, with the summer of 2022 identified as the warmest on record (Copernicus Climate Change Service, 2022b). Heatwaves, prolonged droughts and an increase in wildfires, in some countries reaching levels not observed for more than two decades, have reshaped landscapes and placed severe pressure on ecosystems. Over the same period, Pakistan faced catastrophic floods triggered by rainfall exceeding seasonal averages by more than 240% (Copernicus Climate Change Service, 2022a), while China experienced an exceptionally prolonged heatwave accompanied by severe drought (Copernicus Climate Change Service, 2022b). North America was similarly affected, confronting both extreme temperatures and episodes of violent flooding. Climate-related phenomena increasingly cross regional and continental boundaries, as illustrated by smoke from Canadian wildfires reaching Southern Europe in 2023 (NASA Earth Observatory, 2023).

Taken together, these parallel events occurring across distant regions demonstrate that climate change cannot be understood as a collection of isolated anomalies. They form a global process that is reshaping the social, economic and ecological conditions of life.



Its consequences are already palpable today, and in the coming years are likely to become even more acutely felt.

### **Good Practices**

In the face of escalating environmental challenges, it is becoming increasingly clear that diagnosing the crisis, even with great precision, is no longer sufficient. What is needed is a response that dislodges the human being from the role of a passive observer and restores a form of agency grounded not in domination, but in a dialogical relation. Yet public debates often offer narratives that weaken this capacity. Some reduce climate change to natural variability and relegate the problem to a realm of events supposedly beyond human influence. At the other extreme are catastrophic narratives that portray the ecological crisis as so overwhelming that any action seems destined to fail. Though these perspectives appear far apart, both lead to a similar experience of powerlessness that can easily become paralysing.

Ecological responsibility, however, need not rely on expanding control over the natural world or on increasing the efficiency of our interventions. It may instead lie in reconsidering the kind of responsible relation in which the human recognises their own interdependence with the rest of nature. Such a response does not have to take the shape of spectacular actions. The allure of grand, “superhero-like” actions that promise to change the fate of the planet often distracts from what is real and within reach. At times, responding well may require not doing more, but doing less, a deliberate narrowing of action rather than its intensification. In this sense, the most enduring form of saving energy lies not in producing it ever more efficiently, but in a deliberate reduction of its use. Such limitation is not a deficit, but a shift in orientation. Away from constant expansion and

toward forms of life grounded in cultivating attentiveness, proximity and care.

The Face-to-Face Path at the OAC is one example of an international project deeply rooted in the *genius loci* of its landscape. Responding to the call to care for our “common home”, the Academy also undertakes other initiatives that integrate reflection, education and practice, highlighting the ethical dimension of ecology as a responsibility grounded in theology, and enlighten the importance of cooperation inside every community, cultivating a model that can offer inspiration through good practices.

The Academy has developed several renewable-energy initiatives that highlight its ecological commitments into concrete practice. Its photovoltaic installation generates more than one-third of the Academy’s annual energy needs and reduces its carbon emissions by over 50 tonnes each year (Vourdoubas et al., 2020). These measures significantly reduce the institution’s dependence on fossil fuels and form part of a broader effort to reduce its overall carbon footprint. The OAC also supports the development of local energy communities, emphasising that the use of resources is a matter of shared responsibility.

Alongside these efforts, the Academy conducts educational programmes and youth workshops aimed at cultivating environmental awareness and sensitivity. A central component of this educational approach is the practice of *symphilosophēin* (συμφιλοσοφεῖν), the art of philosophising together, drawing on the tradition of Plato’s Academy. It is a dialogical form of learning in which knowledge is not transmitted as a set of ready-made solutions but emerges through relationship, shared inquiry, interpretation, questioning and the discovery of meaning. Such practice fosters critical thinking, openness to the perspective of others and a form of curiosity that is not stifled by purely encyclopaedic approaches.



The Academy is also engaged in biodiversity protection through the Herbarium Jacques Zaffran, which houses a collection of more than six thousand local herbs, and through educational nature walks and organic farming practices. These initiatives contribute both to a tangible reduction of environmental impact, through specific technological and infrastructural decisions, and to the cultivation of attitudes grounded in responsibility and a caring, attentive presence.

## Conclusions

The present work has outlined an interpretive and experiential framework that situates humanity's ecological crisis within a broader horizon of relational and theological reflection. Across its different threads, from the theological insights contained in the passage from *Apophthegmata Patrum* concerning Abba Makarios, through the experiential Face-to-Face Path, to the practices developed around the Orthodox Academy of Crete, a central motif emerges: the crisis of creation may be understood, at its core, as a crisis of relationship.

Environmental degradation, climate destabilisation, and biodiversity loss are not distant future threats, but realities already shaping the present. They reflect the consequences of human patterns of exploitation and disconnection. These phenomena are symptomatic of an underlying attitude that approaches nature instrumentally, rather than as a fellow participant in creation's flourishing. The ecological crisis thus calls for a response that transcends technical fixes, requiring instead a transformation of perspective, a reorientation from domination to care, from isolation to relationship.

In this process, the work of the Orthodox Academy of Crete stands out for its insistence on relational engagement – between human beings, between communities, and between humanity

and the more-than-human world. The lived experience of the Face-to-Face Path exemplifies this ethos: the movement from estrangement toward encounter, from abstraction toward embodied presence, suggests a model of ecological ethics rooted in attention, respect, and mutual responsiveness.

The *Joint Message for the Protection of Creation*, as issued by Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and Archbishop Justin Welby, extends these themes into a global, ecumenical dimension. This unprecedented collaborative appeal reinforces the idea that ecological responsibility is not peripheral to spiritual life but is integral to it. The Message frames environmental stewardship as a shared commission that involves theological reflection, ethical commitment, and collective action. Its emphasis on listening to “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” situates environmental care firmly within the larger call to justice and compassion.

Together, these strands of reflection suggest that the path toward sustainability is inseparable from the path toward restored relationship – with God, with neighbour, and with creation itself. The shift from extraction to stewardship, from alienation to encounter, and from narrow self-interest to shared responsibility remains the defining challenge of our times.

Ultimately, the core conclusion articulated here is that the ecological crisis will be met not simply through new policies or technologies, but through a renewed capacity for encounter, a relational stance in which the human person truly acknowledges the integrity of the world’s living systems and acts on behalf of their flourishing. This relational ethos reconfigures sustainability not as a set of obligations, but as a shared journey toward healing and reconciliation in a wounded world.

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*Bridging Civilizations: A Comparative  
Study of Cultural and Civilizational  
Concepts in Western and Chinese  
Thought*

*Conectando Civilizações: Um Estudo  
Comparativo dos Conceitos Culturais  
e Civilizacionais no Pensamento  
Occidental e Chinês*

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**Abstract:** This study delves into the intricate interpretations of “culture” and “civilization” within Western and Chinese paradigms, underlining the profound impact of symbolic constructs (*wén* 文) in shaping societal norms and philosophical understandings. It scrutinizes the nuanced discrepancies between the Western narrative of civilization, often aligned with technological advancement and individual survival, and the Chinese perspective, which accentuates social cohesion and collective moral *ethos*. By dissecting the historical and philosophical underpinnings of these concepts, the paper sheds light on how cultural and civilizational identities are constructed and perceived differently across these civilizations. This comparative analysis not only illuminates the divergent thought patterns but also seeks to bridge cultural divides, fostering a more harmonious global community through mutual understanding and respect for varied cultural legacies.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural thought pattern, symbolism in cultural perspectives, comparative analysis: West and China, harmonious global cooperation

## **Analysis of Western and Chinese Thoughts on Culture and Civilization: An Inquiry into Conceptual Divergences**

This paper explores the relationship between the concepts of culture and civilization in Chinese and Western contexts. These terms are occasionally employed synonymously to describe social groups with complex structures. In the Western context, they are frequently interchangeable – with “culture” commonly referring to a people’s artistic, social, and linguistic expressions, and “civilization” referring to an advanced stage of social organization and technological development. Conversely, in China, these notions may be interpreted distinctly, where an

emphasis on collectivity and social harmony influences the understanding of “culture”, and “civilization” may be more closely tied to historical and philosophical traditions. In comparing these worldviews, it is crucial to consider not only linguistic differences but also the historical, philosophical, and social roots that shape the comprehension of these concepts in different modes of thought.

It is pertinent to consider whether the perception of “civilizations” and “culture” as essential components of a group's social identity is an inherent predisposition of the Western thought. In contrast, other belief systems might regard these concepts as nearly interchangeable, yet assign them different meanings. This variance in interpretation could be the root of significant misunderstandings. When studying “civilized society” and ‘inter-cultural dialogue’, we rely on divergent values that lead to distinct inferences. A thorough investigation of the language and the context in which it is employed is indispensable for enhancing intercultural communication, and preventing conflicts between diverse entities, arising from discrepancies in the understanding of fundamental concepts. Therefore, recognizing and valuing different forms of thought is crucial in fostering more productive and harmonious international interactions.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, civilization in the West is defined as the stage of human social and cultural development considered most advanced.<sup>36</sup> This term originates from the Latin “civis”, referring to a citizen with rights and responsibilities linked to a specific state.<sup>37</sup> Historically, according to this definition, the primary function of the state has been to protect citizens against external threats and facilitate communication between different social groups, thereby ensuring collective representation. Moreover, the concept of civilization

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<sup>36</sup> (Oxford English Dictionary).

<sup>37</sup> (Lewis & Short 1879).

encompasses access to accumulated knowledge, technology, and social amenities, which together foster individual well-being.<sup>38</sup> These aspects can be categorized into “social” and “cultural” development. While theoretically distinct, in practice, they are almost inseparable, suggesting that civilization comprises a set of benefits associated with social affiliation.<sup>39</sup> This elucidates why the widely accepted notion of civilization includes “culture”, defined as the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a nation, people, or other social groups. Therefore, a comprehensive study of this concept must consider the complex interaction between social structures and the predominant modes of thought in each culture.<sup>40</sup>

In the Chinese language, the concepts of culture and civilization have direct correspondences, but their interpretations and applications are shaped by a unique historical and cultural context. The modern Chinese terms for “culture” (文化, *wénhuà*) and “civilization” (文明, *wénmíng*) were formed through interactions with Western scientific thought and language during the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>41</sup> This process involved the adaptation of Western ideas within the existing Chinese linguistic and conceptual framework. Prior to this Western influence, China had its own rich conceptual tapestry, deeply rooted in its lengthy history and philosophy. For instance, the traditional Chinese emphasis on education, Confucian ethics, and the value

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<sup>38</sup> (Geertz, 1973).

<sup>39</sup> (Bourdieu, 1977).

<sup>40</sup> (Foucault, 1970).

<sup>41</sup> Intellectual movements such as the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement in China, which advocated for modernization and reform, also spurred critical reflection on these concepts. There were intense debates about how to integrate the best practices and ideas from the West while simultaneously preserving Chinese traditions and values. Chinese intellectuals not only translated but also adapted these concepts to fit the Chinese context. This led to a unique synthesis where Western concepts of culture and civilization were reinterpreted through a Chinese lens, incorporating China’s philosophical, historical, and social traditions.

of social harmony are aspects that have historically informed the Chinese understanding of these concepts. The term 文化 (*wénhuà*), which literally translates into “transformation through writing” or “cultivation through education”, carries connotations of refinement and moral and intellectual development, aligning with Confucian traditions. Conversely, 文明 (*wénmíng*). The first example of the use of these two characters together is in *Zhou Yi* 周易 (the *Book of Changes*), compiled during the Warring States period (475-221 BC). The literally meaning of 文明 (*wénmíng*) is a “bright light of culture/writing”, which can be understood as a reference to the enlightenment and progress brought about by cultural and educational advancement.

With the introduction of Western ideas, there was an effort to align these traditional concepts with Western notions of culture and civilization. This led to an expansion of the meaning of these terms to include ideas of technological progress and social development, concepts that were more explicit in Western notions of civilization. In contemporary Chinese, 文明 (*wénmíng*, civilization) is defined as “accumulated benefits throughout human history that aid in understanding and adapting to the objective world, conforming human intentions and recognized by the majority.”<sup>42</sup> A definition of *wénhuà* 文化 (culture) is “the systematic totality of all commonly recognized and used symbols (visual, auditory, and others), which are created by the incessant process of self-awareness and transformation, continuous investigation, and modification of the natural environment.”<sup>43</sup>

In classical Chinese, the language primarily used single characters to represent words or concepts. Each character, being ideographic, conveys a specific meaning or idea. This contrasts with many other languages, especially Western ones, where

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<sup>42</sup> *Civilization*. Baidu Encyclopedia [Accessed 9 January 2024]. Our translation.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*



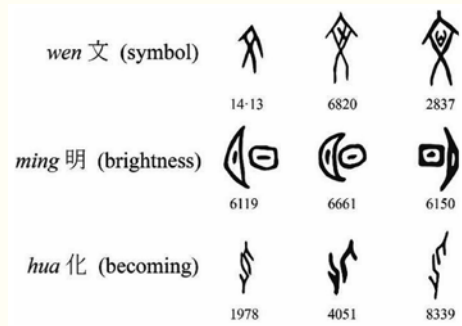
words are typically formed by combining letters. However, the combination of two or more characters to form compound words or phrases was a significant development in the Chinese language. This approach allowed for the expression of more complex or nuanced ideas that could not be captured by a single character. In this context, combining two characters was an intentional act to convey a specific concept that neither character could fully express on its own. For instance, in the words 文明 (*wénmíng*, “civilization”) and 文化 (*wénhuà*, “culture”), each compound is formed by two characters. The first character, 文 (*wén*), in both compounds, relates to writing, literacy, or culture. The second characters, 明 (*míng*) and 化 (*huà*), bring additional meanings: 明 suggesting brightness or enlightenment, and 化 implying transformation or change. Together, these compounds convey more complex ideas than any of the individual characters could on their own. This practice of creating compounds became a fundamental aspect of the Chinese language, allowing it to express a vast range of concepts and ideas.

The character *wén* 文 meant “character”, “writing”, “literacy”. It was found in oracle bones (a divination practice that was an official augury during the Shang dynasty, c. 1600-1046 BC).<sup>44</sup> The initial meaning was probably an image of a human body with a tattoo or painting. The second character, *míng* 明, has the same ancient origins, representing the Sun and the Moon together, signifying maximum brightness. Thus, in ancient texts, *wénmíng* 文明 was the proposition that referred to enlightenment, clarification, or further propagation of symbols, writings, and knowledge. The character *huà* 化 could represent two human figures in a complementary back-to-back position. Throughout history, this character has acquired a standard meaning of “transformation” or “becoming”. Therefore, the concept of *wénhuà* 文化 can be

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<sup>44</sup> (Keightley 2014).

interpreted as a process of knowledge growth and transformation.



**Figure 1. Oracle bones inscriptions.**

The predecessors of modern Chinese characters: *wen* 文 (symbol) represents the body with a painting; *ming* 明 (brightness) is a composition of the Sun and the Moon; *hua* 化 (becoming) demonstrates two human figures in a supplementary position. Excavations from the Late Shang (c. 1250-1046 BCE); correspondently redrawn after (Ma 2014, 208, 165, 193).

As can be observed, the character *wén* 文 is central to the concepts of *wénmíng* 文明 and *wenhua* 文化, playing a critical role in theorizing “culture” and “civilization” in China. We suggest that the most apt interpretation of the character *wén* 文 might be the concept of “symbols”, as its extensive use distinguishes humans from other known species, thus constituting a particular feature of humanity. Hence, the concept of *wénmíng* 文明 (civilization) can be interpreted as illuminating or clarifying cultural symbols, their overwhelming emanation, which aligns with the sense of “civilizing” under the Heavens. In the *Book of Changes* *Zhou Yi* 周易), the commentary Tuan Zhuan 彖传 states:

The intertwining of Firmness and Flexibility constitutes the symbols of the Heavens. Illuminating the perseverance of symbols is the way of human life. Investigating the way of life of the Heavens yields knowledge of the interplay of

the four seasons. Investigating human way of life provides knowledge on how to carry out all becoming under the Heavens.<sup>45</sup>

The concept of civilization in the Chinese language, denoted by the term *wénmíng* 文明, which literally means 'to illuminate symbols', emphasizes the importance of symbolic reality. This perspective highlights that the essence of human rituals, arts, and sciences is a process of creating and interpreting a world that not only complements but also imparts specific meanings to the natural environment. This symbolic understanding of the world can be likened to the Platonic notion of “Idea”, a transcendental entity rooted in Ancient Greek antiquity. Such a thought system, where the immutable is considered the only “true being”, co-evolved with particular social structures in the West. This viewpoint has contributed to establishing the idea of citizenship and, by extension, the social structure, as the highest expression of culture.

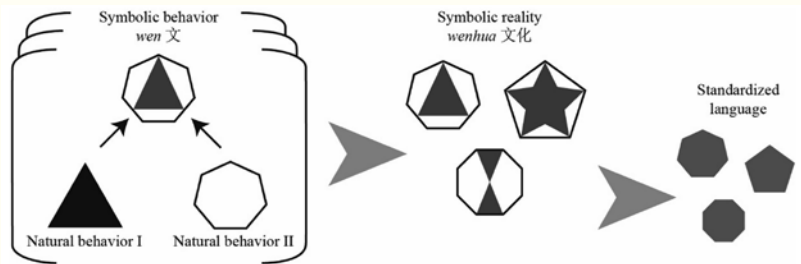
In parallel, in Chinese culture, the conceptualization of “hero”, expressed by the term 英雄 (*yīngxióng*), reflects a synthesis of bravery and influence. The character 英 (*yīng*) suggests bravery, excellence, or someone exceptional, while 雄 (*xióng*) symbolizes masculinity or power. Thus, 英雄 (*yīngxióng*) represents a person who is not only courageous and exceptional but also powerful and influential. This definition extends beyond mere physical strength or military feats, incorporating wisdom, moral virtue, and commitment to the greater good of society. In Chinese tradition, heroes are admired not only for their physical abilities but primarily for their moral qualities and dedication to justice and the well-being of the people. Therefore, in analyzing the concepts of civilization and hero in Western and Chinese cultures, we observe a complex interplay between symbolism,

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<sup>45</sup> (Zhou Yi 2018: 207 – Our translation).

social structures, and moral values. While the West emphasizes a symbolic reality based on immutable ideas that shape its social structure and concept of citizenship, China values the combination of moral qualities, wisdom, and strength in the concept of hero, reflecting a more holistic and integrated approach to virtue and social influence.

Since a symbol (*wén* 文) links human activities, it exists only within its context. Thus, the cornerstone of any specific way of life encompasses consistent patterns of how natural behaviors are synthesized into a symbol. These pillars of worldviews can be conceptualized as values, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “principles or standards of behavior; one’s judgment of what is important in life”.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, the meaning of a symbol (*wén* 文), as an established connection between behaviors, depends on a specific value system that outlines the lifestyle of those employing these symbols.



**Figure 2. Simplified structure of symbolic reality.**

Establishing a firm link between natural behaviors allows using a symbol as the substitute for the other, which can cause a similar effect. Subsequently, symbols tend to transform into a self-sufficient set of reactions, which causes the emergence of symbolic reality and its further complication.

<sup>46</sup> *Value*. Oxford English Dictionary [Accessed 9 January 2024]. Available from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/value>

	Western concepts	Chinese concepts
<b>Civilization</b> <i>Wénmíng</i> 文明	The stage of social and cultural development and organization is considered most advanced.	Benefits accumulated during human history that help in understanding and adapting to the objective world, which conform to intentions of the human spirit and are recognized by the majority of the people.
<b>Culture</b> <i>Wenhua</i> 文化	The way of life of people, including their attitudes, values, beliefs, arts, sciences, modes of perception, and habits of thought and activity.	The systematic totality of all commonly recognized and used symbols (visual, audial, and others), which is created by the unceasing process of self-awareness and transformation, unceasing investigation, and modification of the natural environment.

For the Western reader, the concept of *yinyang* 陰陽/阴阳 is one of the most familiar symbols representing Chinese culture. *Yin* 陰/阴 and *yang* 陽/阳 initially corresponded respectively to the shaded and sunlit sides of a mountain. Robin Wang explains that *yinyang* are not substances, but rather functions of something, and are inevitably linked to relationships or contexts.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, any fixed definition of *yinyang* will lead to a problematic understanding of the terms. The qualities of *yin* 陰/阴 (dark) and *yang* 陽/阳 (light) can only be established in correlation with each other, and they possess a universal explanatory power: revealing different qualities in different relationships.

The analysis presented above sheds light on points of both convergence and divergence when Western concepts are juxtaposed with traditional Chinese philosophical ideas. This comparison highlights the intricate tapestry of cultural and intellectual

<sup>47</sup> (Wang 2012).

traditions that shape diverse societies. From a standpoint of similarity, both Western and Chinese philosophies emphasize the importance of holistic development. Western notions of “civilization” and “culture” extend beyond mere intellectual enrichment to include moral and aesthetic growth. This resonates with the Chinese ideals of moral excellence and personal cultivation, revealing a shared appreciation for well-rounded character development that integrates intellectual, moral, and aesthetic dimensions.

Furthermore, both Western and Chinese philosophies place significant emphasis on integrating the individual into society. “civilization” is not an isolated or purely self-focused pursuit; it entails an individual’s harmonious integration into the broader societal fabric, echoing the Chinese emphasis on societal harmony and the maintenance of proper roles and relationships within the social structure.

The dedication to continuous learning and self-improvement is another shared characteristic. In Western thought, the concept of “culture” represents a lifelong process, a perpetual journey towards intellectual and moral development. Similarly, Chinese philosophy, deeply influenced by Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist traditions, values the lifelong pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, and ethical refinement.

Emphasizing social cohesion carries particular implications for the formation of rites, arts, sciences, and other practices that constitute culture (文化, *wénhuà*). In the West, the progress of a particular culture is often gauged in comparison with others, assuming a dialogue of societies rather than individuals. In China, majority recognition denotes the value of a specific mode of thought, as certain behaviors benefit social selection. Consequently, the high value of traditional practice fosters a self-perpetuating cycle for its preservation in the form of a rite. However, adhering to tradition does not equate to clinging to the past. On the contrary, prioritizing social cohesion as the

highest value necessitates a subtle yet inevitable transformation of tradition. As human life is subject to environmental and social changes, each generation introduces new knowledge and beliefs, which are subsequently incorporated into what is recognized by the majority. Thus, the authentic tradition of the ancestors becomes a relic that no longer conforms to the requirement of majority recognition. This is how contemporary culture takes precedence over tradition.

Demonstrative negotiations concern classical texts, such as the *Book of Changes*. While several excavated manuscripts from the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC exist, the transmitted text is considered the most authoritative. It seems that the excavations of the 道德经 (DàoDéJīng) manuscript, dating to around 300 BC, have had a greater influence on Western scholars. For Western scientists, discovering a text closer to the origin of a tradition provides an opportunity to reconstruct initial meanings. For Chinese scholars, older texts lack meanings that have become part of the tradition of commentaries over the centuries and were recognized by the majority, thus acquiring higher value. Such a value system facilitates the incorporation of beliefs into the worldview system, as seen with Buddhism and Marxism.

In summary, while notions of “civilization” and “culture” in Western and traditional Chinese concepts of 文明 (*wénmíng*) and 文化 (*wénhuà*) share a commitment to holistic development and societal integration, they significantly diverge in their cultural roots and in establishing higher values. Western thought emphasizes the progress of the individual and society, sometimes assuming a revolutionary leap and the creation of a new world according to the accepted ideal. Chinese thought seeks to preserve the existing order and gradually modify it in accordance with an already established nature.

The Chinese concept of 文 (*wén*, culture, way of life) maintains a strong connection with symbols, whose role in human cognition is pivotal. The symbol (文, *wén*) acts as a link between available

behaviors and thus exists solely within the process of action. Establishing a link between behaviors ascribes value to that action. Consequently, the core values of specific cultures predetermine the lifestyles of those who embrace them. Mutual understanding between China and the West, as well as between worldviews with differing values, requires appreciating the other's values rather than attempting to change them. Therefore, the Western and Chinese approaches to understanding civilization as a paramount value appear to be complementary. While this juxtaposition could be a source of significant conflict, if genuine dialogue is established, it could form the foundation for the advancement of humanity.



**Resumo:** Este estudo aprofunda-se nas interpretações intrincadas de “cultura” e “civilização” dentro dos paradigmas ocidental e chinês, sublinhando o profundo impacto das construções simbólicas (*wén* 文) na formação de normas sociais e compreensões filosóficas. Examina as discrepâncias matizadas entre a narrativa ocidental da civilização, frequentemente alinhada com avanço tecnológico e sobrevivência individual, e a perspectiva chinesa, que enfatiza a coesão social e o *ethos* moral coletivo. Ao investigar os fundamentos históricos e filosóficos desses conceitos, o artigo lança luz sobre como as identidades culturais e civilizacionais são construídas e percebidas diferentemente nessas civilizações. Esta análise comparativa não apenas ilumina os padrões de pensamento divergentes, mas também busca construir pontes entre cisões culturais, fomentando uma comunidade global mais harmoniosa e diversificada através do entendimento mútuo e do respeito por legados culturais variados.

**Palavras-chave:** padrões de pensamento interculturais, simbolismo em perspectivas culturais, análise comparativa: Ocidente e China, cooperação global harmoniosa

## **Análise do Pensamento Ocidental e Chinês Relativo à Cultura e Civilização: Uma Investigação sobre Divergências Conceituais**

Este artigo explorará a relação entre os conceitos de “cultura” e “civilização” nos contextos da China e do Ocidente. Estes termos são ocasionalmente utilizados sinonimamente para descrever grupos sociais com estruturas complexas. No contexto ocidental, eles são frequentemente intercambiáveis – “cultura” comumente referindo-se às expressões artísticas, sociais e linguísticas de um povo, e “civilização” referindo-se a um estágio avançado de organização social e desenvolvimento tecnológico. Em contrapartida, na China, esses conceitos podem ser interpretados

distintamente, onde uma ênfase na coletividade e na harmonia social influencia o entendimento de “cultura”, e o entendimento de “civilização” pode estar mais intimamente ligada às tradições históricas e filosóficas. Ao comparar essas visões de mundo, é crucial considerar não apenas as diferenças linguísticas, mas também as raízes históricas, filosóficas e sociais que moldam a compreensão desses conceitos em diferentes modos de pensamento.

É pertinente considerar se a percepção das “civilizações” e da “cultura” como componentes essenciais da identidade social de um grupo é uma predisposição inerente ao pensamento ocidental. Em contraste, outros sistemas de crenças mundiais podem considerar esses conceitos como quase intercambiáveis, mas atribuir-lhes diferentes significados. Essa variação na interpretação poderia ser a raiz de significativos mal-entendidos. Ao estudar conceitos como “sociedade civilizada” e “diálogo intercultural”, nos baseamos em valores divergentes que levam a inferências distintas. Uma investigação aprofundada da linguagem e do contexto no qual ela é empregada faz-se indispensável para aprimorar a comunicação intercultural e prevenir conflitos entre entidades diversas, decorrentes de discrepâncias na compreensão de conceitos fundamentais. Assim, reconhecer e valorizar diferentes formas de pensamento é crucial para fomentar interações internacionais mais produtivas e harmoniosas.

Segundo o *Dicionário Inglês de Oxford*, a civilização ocidental é definida como o estágio de desenvolvimento social e cultural humano considerado o mais avançado.<sup>48</sup> Este termo tem origem no latim “civis”, referindo-se a um cidadão com direitos e responsabilidades relacionadas a um estado específico.<sup>49</sup> Historicamente, de acordo com essa definição, a função primária do Estado tem sido proteger os cidadãos contra ameaças externas

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<sup>48</sup> Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). *Civilization*. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com>.

<sup>49</sup> (Lewis & Short 1879).

e facilitar a comunicação entre diferentes grupos sociais, garantindo assim a representação coletiva. Além disso, o conceito de civilização engloba o acesso ao conhecimento acumulado, tecnologia e comodidades sociais, que juntos promovem o bem-estar individual.<sup>50</sup> Estes aspectos podem ser categorizados como desenvolvimento “social” e “cultural”. Embora teoricamente distintos, na prática, são quase inseparáveis, sugerindo que a civilização compreende um conjunto de benefícios associados à afiliação social. Isso esclarece porque a noção amplamente aceita de civilização inclui “cultura”, definida como um conjunto de costumes, artes, instituições sociais e realizações de uma nação, povo e/ou outros grupos sociais. Por isso, um estudo abrangente deste conceito deve considerar a interação complexa entre estruturas sociais e os modos predominantes de pensamento em cada cultura.<sup>51</sup>

Na língua chinesa, os conceitos de cultura e civilização têm correspondências diretas, mas suas interpretações e aplicações são moldadas por um contexto histórico e cultural único. Os termos chineses modernos para “cultura” (文化, *wénhuà*) e “civilização” (文明, *wénmíng*) foram formados através de interações com o pensamento científico e a linguagem ocidentais durante os séculos XIX e XX.<sup>52</sup> Esse processo envolveu a adaptação de ideias ocidentais dentro do quadro linguístico e conceitual

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<sup>50</sup> (Geertz, 1973).

<sup>51</sup> (Bourdieu, 1977).

<sup>52</sup> Movimentos intelectuais como o Movimento da Nova Cultura e o Movimento de Quatro de Maio na China, que defendiam a modernização e a reforma, também estimularam uma reflexão crítica sobre esses conceitos. Houve intensos debates sobre como integrar as melhores práticas e ideias ocidentais preservando, ao mesmo tempo, as tradições e os valores chineses. Os intelectuais chineses não apenas traduziram, mas também transformaram esses conceitos para adequá-los ao contexto sinótico. Isso levou a uma síntese única, onde os conceitos ocidentais de cultura e civilização foram reinterpretados através de uma perspectiva chinesa, incorporando as tradições filosóficas, históricas e sociais da China.

chinês existente. Antes dessa influência ocidental, a China possuía sua própria rica tapeçaria conceitual, profundamente enraizada em sua longa história e filosofia. Por exemplo, a ênfase tradicional chinesa na educação, ética confucionista e no valor da harmonia social são aspectos que historicamente informaram o entendimento chinês desses conceitos. O termo 文化 (*wénhuà*), que se traduz literalmente em “transformação através da escrita” ou “cultivação através da educação”, carrega conotações de refinamento e desenvolvimento moral e intelectual, alinhando-se com as tradições confucionistas. Por outro lado, 文明 (*wénmíng*), significando literalmente “luz brilhante da cultura/escrita”, pode ser entendido como uma referência ao esclarecimento e progresso trazidos pelo avanço cultural e educacional.

Com a introdução das ideias ocidentais, houve um esforço para alinhar esses conceitos tradicionais com as noções ocidentais de cultura e civilização. Isso levou à expansão do significado desses termos para incluir ideias de progresso tecnológico e desenvolvimento social, conceitos que eram mais explícitos nas noções ocidentais de civilização. No chinês contemporâneo, 文明 (*wénmíng*, civilização) é definido como “benefícios acumulados ao longo da história humana que ajudam na compreensão e adaptação ao mundo objetivo, conformando as intenções humanas e reconhecidos pela maioria”. O primeiro exemplo do uso desses dois caracteres juntos é em *Zhou Yi* 周易 (o *Livro das Mutações*), compilado durante o período dos Estados Combatentes (475–221 a.C.). Uma definição de *wénhuà* 文化 (cultura) é “a totalidade sistemática de todos os símbolos comumente reconhecidos e utilizados (visuais, auditivos e outros), que são criados pelo processo incessante de autoconsciência e transformação, investigação contínua e modificação do ambiente natural”.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Civilization*. Baidu Encyclopedia [Accessed 9 January 2024]. Nossa tradução.

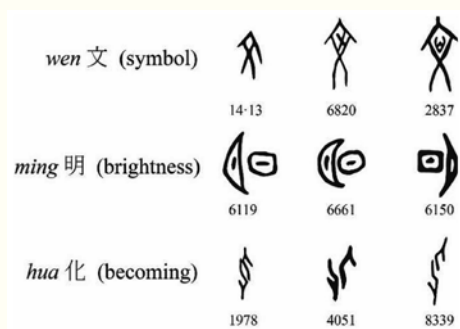
O chinês clássico usava principalmente caracteres isolados para representar palavras ou conceitos. Cada caractere, sendo ideográfico, transmite um significado ou ideia específica. Isso contrasta com muitas outras línguas, especialmente as ocidentais, onde as palavras são tipicamente formadas pela combinação de letras. No entanto, a combinação de dois ou mais caracteres para formar palavras compostas ou frases foi um desenvolvimento significativo no idioma sinítico. Essa abordagem permitiu a expressão de ideias mais complexas ou nuances que não poderiam ser capturadas por um único caractere. Neste contexto, combinar dois caracteres era um ato intencional para transmitir um conceito específico que nenhum dos caracteres isoladamente poderia expressar completamente por si só. Por exemplo, em 文明 (*wénmíng*, “civilização”) e 文化 (*wénhuà*, “cultura”), cada palavra é formada por dois caracteres. O primeiro caractere, 文 (*wén*), em ambos os compostos, relaciona-se com escrita, alfabetização ou cultura. Os segundos caracteres, 明 (*míng*) e 化 (*huà*), trazem significados adicionais – 明 sugerindo brilho ou esclarecimento, e 化 implicando transformação ou mudança. Juntos, esses compostos transmitem ideias mais complexas do que qualquer um dos caracteres individuais poderia por si só. Esta prática de criar compostos tornou-se um aspecto fundamental da língua chinesa, permitindo-lhe expressar uma vasta gama de conceitos e ideias.

O ideograma *wén* 文 significava “caractere”, “escrita”, “alfabetização”. Ele foi encontrado em ossos oraculares (uma prática de adivinhação que era um augúrio oficial durante a dinastia Shang, c. 1600-1046 a.C.).<sup>54</sup> O significado inicial era provavelmente uma imagem de um corpo humano com uma tatuagem ou uma pintura. O segundo caractere, *míng* 明, tem as mesmas antigas origens, representando o Sol e a Lua juntos,

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<sup>54</sup> (Keightley 2014).

significando brilho máximo. Assim, em textos antigos, *wénmíng* 文明 era a proposição que se referia à iluminação, esclarecimento ou maior propagação de símbolos, escritas e conhecimentos. O caractere *huà* 化 pode ser encontrado em ossos oraculares e representa duas figuras humanas em posições complementares, de costas uma para a outra. Ao longo da história, este caractere adquiriu um significado de “transformação” ou o verbo “tornar-se”. O conceito de *wénhuà* 文化 pode ser interpretado, portanto, como um processo de crescimento e transformação do conhecimento.



**Figura 1. Inscrições em ossos oraculares.**

Os predecessores dos caracteres chineses modernos: *wen* 文 (símbolo) representa o corpo com uma pintura; *ming* 明 (brilho) é uma composição do Sol e da Lua; *hua* 化 (tornar-se) demonstra duas figuras humanas em uma posição complementar. Escavações do final da dinastia Shang (c. 1250-1046 a.C.); redesenhadas conforme (Ma 2014, 208, 165, 193).

Como pode ser observado, o caractere *wén* 文 é central para os conceitos de *wénmíng* 文明 e *wénhua* 文化, desempenhando um papel crucial na teorização de “cultura” e “civilização” na China. Sugerimos que a interpretação mais adequada do caractere *wén* 文 possa ser o conceito de “símbolos”, já que seu uso extensivo distingue os humanos de outras espécies conhecidas, constituindo assim uma característica particular da humanidade. Desse modo,

o conceito de *wénmíng* 文明 (civilização) pode ser interpretado como “iluminar ou esclarecer símbolos” culturais, sua emanação avassaladora, o que se alinha com o sentido de “civilizar” sob os Céus. No *Livro das Mutações* (*Zhou Yi* 周易), o Tuan Zhuan 彖传 afirma:

A interligação de Firmeza e Flexibilidade constitui os símbolos dos Céus. Iluminar a perseverança dos símbolos é o caminho da vida humana. Investigar o caminho de vida dos Céus produz conhecimento sobre a interação das quatro estações. Investigar o modo de vida humano fornece conhecimento sobre como realizar todo o devir sob os Céus.<sup>55</sup>

O conceito de civilização na língua chinesa, denotado pelo termo *wénmíng* 文明, que literalmente significa “iluminar símbolos”, enfatiza a importância da realidade simbólica. Esta perspectiva destaca que a essência dos rituais humanos, das artes e das ciências é um processo de criação e interpretação de um mundo que não apenas complementa, mas também confere significados específicos ao ambiente natural. Esse entendimento simbólico do mundo pode ser comparado à noção platônica de “Ideia”, uma entidade transcendental enraizada na antiguidade grega. Tal sistema de pensamento, onde o imutável é considerado o único “ser verdadeiro”, coevoluiu com estruturas sociais específicas no Ocidente. Esse ponto de vista contribuiu para estabelecer a ideia de cidadania e, por extensão, a estrutura social, como a mais alta expressão de cultura.

Em paralelo, na cultura chinesa, a conceituação de “herói”, expressa pelo termo 英雄 (*yīngxióng*), reflete uma síntese de bravura e influência. O caractere 英 (*yīng*) sugere bravura, excelência ou alguém excepcional, enquanto 雄 (*xióng*) simboliza masculinidade ou poder. Assim, 英雄 (*yīngxióng*) representa uma pessoa que não

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<sup>55</sup> (Zhou Yi 2018: 207 – Nossa tradução).



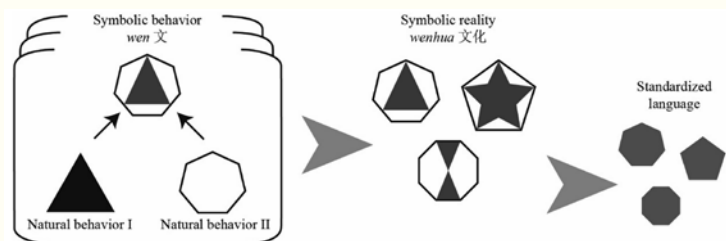
é apenas corajosa e excepcional, mas também poderosa e influente. Esta definição vai além da mera força física ou proezas militares, incorporando sabedoria, virtude moral e compromisso com o bem maior da sociedade. Na tradição chinesa, os heróis são admirados não apenas por suas habilidades físicas, mas principalmente por suas qualidades morais e dedicação à justiça e ao bem-estar do povo. Portanto, ao analisar os conceitos de civilização e herói nas culturas ocidental e chinesa, observamos uma interação complexa entre simbolismo, estruturas sociais e valores morais. Enquanto o ocidente enfatiza uma realidade simbólica baseada em ideias imutáveis que moldam sua estrutura social e conceito de cidadania, a China valoriza a combinação de qualidades morais, sabedoria e força no conceito de herói, refletindo uma abordagem mais holística e integrada à virtude e influência social.

Uma vez que um símbolo (*wén* 文) vincula atividades humanas, ele existe apenas dentro de seu contexto. Assim, a pedra angular de qualquer modo de vida específico abrange padrões consistentes de como comportamentos naturais são sintetizados em um símbolo. Esses pilares das visões de mundo podem ser conceituados como valores, definidos pelo *Dicionário Oxford de Inglês* como “princípios ou padrões de comportamento; o julgamento de alguém sobre o que é importante na vida”.<sup>56</sup> Consequentemente, o significado de um símbolo (*wén* 文), como uma conexão estabelecida entre comportamentos, depende de um sistema de valores específico que delinea o estilo de vida daqueles que empregam esses símbolos.

Para o leitor ocidental, o conceito de *yinyang* 陰陽/阴阳 é um dos símbolos mais familiares que representam a cultura chinesa. *Yin* 陰/阴 e *yang* 陽/阳 inicialmente correspondiam, respectivamente, aos lados sombreado e iluminado de uma montanha. Robin Wang explica que *yinyang* não são substâncias,

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<sup>56</sup> *Value*. Oxford English Dictionary [Accessed 9 January 2024]. Available from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/value>



**Figura 2. Estrutura simplificada da realidade simbólica.**

Estabelecer uma ligação firme entre comportamentos naturais permite usar um símbolo como substituto do outro, o que pode causar um efeito similar. Posteriormente, os símbolos tendem a se transformar em um conjunto autossuficiente de reações, o que provoca o surgimento da realidade simbólica e sua posterior complicação.

mas sim funções de algo e estão, inevitavelmente, ligados a relações ou contextos. Portanto, qualquer definição fixa de *yinyang* levará a uma compreensão problemática dos termos. As qualidades de *yīng* 陰/阴 (escuro) e *yáng* 陽/阳 (luz) só podem ser estabelecidas em correlação um com o outro, e possuem um poder explicativo universal: revelam diferentes qualidades em diferentes relações.

	Conceitos Ocidentais	Conceitos chineses
<b>Wénmíng 文明</b> <b>Civilização</b>	O estágio de desenvolvimento social e cultural considerado mais avançado.	Benefícios acumulados durante a história humana que ajudam na compreensão e adaptação ao mundo objetivo, que estão de acordo com as intenções do espírito humano e são reconhecidos pela maioria das pessoas.
<b>Wenhua 文化</b> <b>Cultura</b>	O modo de vida das pessoas, incluindo suas atitudes, valores, crenças, artes, ciências, modos de percepção e hábitos de pensamento e atividade.	A totalidade sistemática de todos os símbolos comumente reconhecidos e utilizados (visuais, auditivos e outros), que é criada pelo processo incessante de autoconsciência e transformação, investigação contínua e modificação do ambiente natural

A análise apresentada acima lança luz sobre pontos fascinantes de convergência e divergência quando conceitos ocidentais são justapostos a ideias filosóficas tradicionais chinesas. Esta comparação destaca o intrincado mosaico de tradições culturais e intelectuais que moldam sociedades diversas. Do ponto de vista da semelhança, ambas as filosofias, ocidental e chinesa, enfatizam a importância do desenvolvimento holístico. As noções ocidentais de “civilização” e “cultura” estendem-se além do mero enriquecimento intelectual para incluir crescimento moral e estético. Isso ressoa com os ideais chineses de excelência moral e cultivo pessoal, revelando uma apreciação compartilhada pelo desenvolvimento de um caráter bem-desenvolvido que integra dimensões intelectuais, morais e estéticas.

Além disso, ambas as filosofias, ocidental e chinesa, colocam significativa ênfase na integração do indivíduo na sociedade. “Civilização” não é uma busca isolada ou puramente focada no eu; implica na integração harmoniosa do indivíduo no tecido social mais amplo, ecoando a ênfase chinesa na harmonia social e na manutenção de papéis e relacionamentos adequados dentro da estrutura social.

A dedicação à aprendizagem contínua e ao autodesenvolvimento é outra característica compartilhada. No pensamento ocidental, o conceito de “cultura” representa um processo vitalício, uma jornada perpétua em direção ao desenvolvimento intelectual e moral. De forma similar, a filosofia chinesa, profundamente influenciada pelas tradições confucionistas, daoístas e budistas, valoriza a busca contínua por conhecimento, sabedoria e refinamento ético.

Enfatizar a coesão social acarreta implicações particulares para a formação de ritos, artes, ciências e outras práticas que constituem a cultura (文化, *wénhuà*). No ocidente, o progresso de uma cultura específica é frequentemente medido em comparação com outras, pressupondo um diálogo de sociedades em vez de indivíduos. Na China, o reconhecimento da maioria

denota o valor de um modo específico de pensamento, uma vez que certos comportamentos beneficiam a seleção social. Consequentemente, o alto valor da prática tradicional fomenta um ciclo autopropetuoante para sua preservação na forma de um rito. Contudo, aderir à tradição não equivale a se apegar ao passado. Pelo contrário, priorizar a coesão social como o valor mais alto exige uma transformação sutil, porém inevitável, da tradição. Como a vida humana está sujeita a mudanças ambientais e sociais, cada geração introduz novos conhecimentos e crenças, que são posteriormente incorporados ao que é reconhecido pela maioria. Assim, a autêntica tradição dos ancestrais torna-se um relicário que já não se conforma à exigência de reconhecimento da maioria. É assim que a cultura contemporânea ganha precedência sobre a tradição.

Negociações demonstrativas dizem respeito a textos clássicos, como o *Livro das Mutações*. Embora existam vários manuscritos escavados dos séculos II e III a.C., o texto transmitido é considerado o mais autoritativo. Parece que as escavações do manuscrito 道德经 (DàoDéJīng), datadas de cerca de 300 a.C., tiveram uma influência maior sobre os estudiosos ocidentais. Para os cientistas ocidentais, descobrir um texto mais próximo da origem de uma tradição oferece uma oportunidade para reconstruir os significados iniciais. Para os estudiosos chineses, textos mais antigos carecem de significados que se tornaram parte da tradição de comentários ao longo dos séculos e foram reconhecidos pela maioria, adquirindo, assim, maior valor. Tal sistema de valores facilita a incorporação de crenças no sistema de visão de mundo, como visto com o budismo e o marxismo.

Em suma, enquanto as noções de “civilização” e “cultura” nos conceitos ocidentais e chineses tradicionais de *wénmíng* 文明 e *wenhua* 文化 compartilham um compromisso com o desenvolvimento holístico e a integração social, elas divergem significativamente em suas raízes culturais e na estabelecimento de valores mais elevados. O pensamento ocidental enfatiza o

progresso do indivíduo e do ser social, assumindo às vezes um salto revolucionário e a criação de um novo mundo de acordo com o ideal aceito. O pensamento chinês esforça-se para preservar a ordem existente e modificar gradualmente de acordo com a natureza já estabelecida.

O conceito chinês de 文 (*wén*, cultura, modo de vida) mantém uma conexão robusta com símbolos, cujo papel na cognição humana é fundamental. O símbolo (*wén* 文) atua como um elo entre comportamentos disponíveis e, assim, existe exclusivamente dentro do processo de ação. Estabelecer um elo entre comportamentos atribui valor a essa ação. Consequentemente, os valores centrais de culturas específicas predeterminam os estilos de vida daqueles que as adotam. O entendimento mútuo entre a China e o ocidente, bem como entre visões de mundo com valores distintos, exige a apreciação dos valores alheios em vez da tentativa de alterá-los. Portanto, as abordagens ocidental e chinesa para entender a civilização como um valor supremo parecem ser complementares. Embora essa justaposição possa ser fonte de conflito significativo, se um diálogo genuíno for estabelecido, poderá formar as bases para o avanço da humanidade.

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# *Overcoming Tyranny: Models of Reconciliation from Political Doctrines of 16th and 17th Century Poland*

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**Abstract:** The aim of the paper is to present Polish religious freedom and its political foundations, especially *The Warsaw Confederation* and *Henrician Articles*. It also analyzes dialogical aspects and effectiveness of Polish 16th and 17th century political doctrines in contrast with brutal religious conflicts, especially in France in the era of The Reformation. The emphasis is on legal ways of preventing tyranny and the logic and mechanism behind it. Moreover, these models of reconciliation lead us to redefine tyranny.

**Keywords:** reconciliation, dialogue, tolerance, The Reformation, tyranny



## **Introduction**

16th and early 17th century Poland was famous for its long tradition of dialogue, religious and civil liberties. As a relatively extensive country with large and diverse population, it was free from absolutism, tyranny and brutal religious wars, especially comparing to western European countries (for instance France, England and Spain). That is why it is worth analyzing Polish political systems, ideology and institutions in the context of reconciliation.

First of all, Polish people were aware of dangers of tyranny and bloody conflicts and did not believe themselves to be exempt from succumbing to extreme violence. For more than a century they managed to avoid it, the Kingdom of Poland and its main ally Grand Duchy of Lithuania (later Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) was known as a “country without pyres” and fruitful intercultural trade, religious tolerance and layered political institution enabling dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts. The Polish-Lithuanian cooperation was based not only on alliance against common enemies within foreign policies (from the east – the Moscow princes, from the south – the Tatars, and the north the Teutonic Order), but also on shared apprehension of danger of tyranny in internal relations (Tazbir 1982/1983: 163, 168, 174-175).

A tyrant is described in both ancient and Christian sources as a ruler who disregards divine laws, all moral and legal precepts and desires unlimited power and goods from the subjects. A tyrant's primary goal was to maintain power at all costs. Already Aristotle noted that a tyrant (if he wanted to maintain power) had to keep the population in a state of uncertainty, suspicion, and a lack of education and cooperation (Cottret 2012: 13-19). In other words, the tyrant divides his subjects and then creates a unanimous, ignorant, and obedient mob. It is also worth mentioning here Albert Maysles' definition of tyranny as “deliberate removal of nuance” (Gan-Krzywoszyńska, Pires Ting 2025: 17).

The tyrannical system very often used religion as an tool for oppression. In the early modern period, the line between absolutism and tyranny was very thin and many bloody conflicts broke out against the king as a tyrant, as well as in order to defend or introduce “the one true faith” (for example German Peasants’ War in 1524-1525, the Pilgrimage of Grace 1536, The French Wars of Religion 1562-1598).

It is crucial to observe that tyranny implies univocity, it may occur in a form of one ruler, one religion, one ideology etc. Furthermore, it causes violent dichotomies for/against, with precisely no nuance to it. One is either following the leader (tyrant) or is an enemy of the state. Hence, the case of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is worth analyzing since from the beginning it was not only an union between two different countries but also both of these countries were diverse in terms of ideology, religion, languages, even in some cases nationality. Therefore, they were prepared and accepting of a danger of conflicts on various levels and were working on peaceful solutions and most of all on avoiding bloodshed.

In western Europe the Baroque coincided with the blossoming of court culture and absolutism; Sarmatism with its followers in thousands of small manor houses professed the principle of the “golden freedom”. This freedom meant the respect of the rights of an individual member of the gentry and only of the gentry. It should be noted, however, that by the end of the 18th century, in Western Europe there were three to four nobles per 100 inhabitants, while in Poland the ratio was eight to ten. Only the gentry in Poland enjoyed the equivalent of the English Habeas Corpus (here called “*Neminem captivabimus*” in Poland) which ruled that a member of the gentry could be imprisoned only following a valid court judgment unless he had been caught red-handed while committing the crime of manslaughter, arson, theft or rape. Despite far-reaching differentiation, the whole gentry had absolute equality in law, irrespective of property and position on the social ladder. The whole class had the right to vote and to be elected to the chamber

of deputies without the consent of which taxes could not be imposed, the gentry called to arms, wars declared, or laws passed concerning that class. Beside those privileges, there was also a well-developed territorial autonomy and class representation, and all regional differences were very much respected. There was also a deeply ingrained conviction that the freedom of expressing, in word and writing, of one's own political, social and religious ideas was unlimited, theoretically at least. In the matter of fact, opinions on this subject differed (Tazbir 1982/1983: 162-163).

I propose to consider series of historical conflicts within Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with special emphasis on religious conflicts, their origins, development and non-violent solutions. At the same time, the following choice of cases is dictated by the fact that at the time in many other countries within Europe this strife resulted in many catastrophic bloodsheds.

### **Religious conflicts in Europe**

In 16th century Europe absolutism became the dominant system of power. Its role was also strengthened by The Reformation. Identity of the head of state was based on religion, following the famous Latin principle: *cuius regio eius religio* (*Whose realm, their religion*, meaning that the religion of the ruler was to dictate the religion of those ruled) implemented in 1555 by the Treaty of Augsburg (Kras 2014: 70; Krzywoszyński 2012: 106-107). The complexity of functioning of this principle was explained by Sabine in the following way:

[S]imilarity of political conviction depended more on circumstances than on theology, and political differences resulted rather from the varying situations in which the churches found themselves than from theological differences. Thus an Anglican, a Lutheran, and a Gallican Catholics might agree much better about divine right of kings than about their theology, and also they might agree

to regard both Calvinists and Jesuits as a public enemies (Sabine 1962: 304).

The effect of unification of political and religious power generated many conflicts like religious persecutions, brutal civil wars and radical social movements.

The development of the absolutist form of the state was closely linked to the limiting of the political rights acquired by the estates at the time of an estate-based system. In most cases this was paralleled by the significant limitation, if not liquidation, of estate councils by the monarch and his takeover of absolute sovereign power (Malec 2020: 100).

Jean Bodin, the founder of modern classical absolutism, in his *The Six Books about the Republic* prioritized the state (represented by king) above religion. He postulated the introduction of so-called “pure” monarchy with full judicial, arbitral authority of the hereditary king. According to him, the king as “the father” of all the subjects should have complete power, strong central control of a national monarchy that at the same time constituted an antidote to factional strife. Thus, following his opinion, religious peace can be guaranteed only by the power of the king. Consequently, Bodin saw no need for cooperation nor for social contract (Sabine 1962: 320 an ff.; Allen 1951: 33-36). It is worth recalling that both French kings, i.e. Henry III (the last member of The Valois dynasty, who was shortly king of Poland known as Henryk Walezy) and Henry IV (the first king from The Bourbon dynasty) were both assassinated by people who claimed they were tyrants (Cottret 2012: 116-125, 149-154).

On the contrary, the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania in the 16th century enjoyed religious tolerance, where no state-organized religious oppression took place. In the 16th century Poland nobles tried to prevent the monarchy from using religion for limiting of liberties. The country became an asylum for many oppressed religious minorities including Jewish community,

severely persecuted in Germany and Spain. Various ethnic and religious groups in Polish-Lithuanian society owed their peaceful coexistence to the democratic structure of the state. The relation between political and religious affairs was accurately described by Jan Tarnowski (a renowned Polish magnate and hetman, i.e. the chief commander of the armed forces), he said: *It is not the matter of faith but a matter of freedom* (Hintz 2004: 3).

The nobles supported dialogue between dissenters, took an active part in it and did not agree to use religion instrumentally. Furthermore, last Jagiellonian King Sigismund II Augustus knew that only the maintenance of religious tolerance would let him rule the multicultural population peacefully and efficiently. He was well known for his progressive declaration: *I am not king of your consciences* (Kras 2014: 65).

As I mentioned, the society of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (7 million people) was very diverse in terms of religion, ethnicity and culture.<sup>57</sup> The most prominent groups (for instance in 1569) were: the Poles (4.5 million), Ruthenians (2 million) Lithuanians (750,000), Germans (750,000), and Jews (700,000). There were also considerable numbers of Czechs, Hungarians, Livonians, Romanis, Vlachs, Armenians, Italians, Scots, and

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<sup>57</sup> Please also note the following description of Tazbir about the originality of the society:

»The cultural syncretism of Polish Baroque consisted not only in its orientalizing, for Sarmatism was made up of many elements, among which western culture was still playing a considerable role. In the 17th century, Poles still participated (on a smaller scale) in European cultural life, reading works written in Latin (later in French), following the trends in architecture and painting, etc. Yet, the eastern and western impacts on Polish Baroque seldom merged together. The Orient influenced the decorative art, dress or arms, never ideology; while the West made its mark on Polish literature, architecture, and, to a certain extent, also on science. None of these two cultural systems had any essential influence on the social and political system of the Commonwealth of the gentry. Although, for instance, it would be easy to detect oriental inspiration in Baroque Poland art of war, there was nothing like the “Golden Freedom” in the Turkish, French or Spanish monarchies« (Tazbir 1982/1983: 170-171).

the Dutch. In 1618, the Commonwealth's population reached 12 million people, of which Poles constituted 40% (Bideleux, Jeffries 1998: 150-151). At that time the nobility made up 10% of the entire population and the townsmen around 15% (Tazbir 1982/1983: 162-163; Bues 2001: 77). As Tazbir emphasized:

William Bruce, who visited Poland at the close of the 16th century, wrote, visibly shocked, that “any gentleman may speake without daunger, whatsoever he thinketh, which maji cause greate stirrs, seditions, troubles, yealousyes etc.”. On the other hand, the “golden freedom”, that is the Polish social system, had considerable enthusiasts among the Hungarian and Silesian gentry, as well as among Russian boyars. Also many of the gentlemen in Ducal Prussia still insisted in the second half of the 17th century that they wanted to be returned to the rule of the Polish kings. **The attractiveness of the system proved more important than the differences in the language, religion, culture or customs.** The Prussian gentry, caught in the wheels of a modern administration which was building a strong state at the expense of the purses and privileges of its citizens, looked with envy across the frontier to their neighbours, where every squire was master in his own manor and a potential candidats to the throne (Tazbir 1982/1983: 163, emphasis added).

A long tradition of peaceful coexistence of various Christian and non-Christian confessions was based on mutual acceptance and cooperation, which functioned rather well even during the period of The Reformation. In the 16th century, the medieval traditions of religious pluralism paved the way for the principle of religious freedom, which became the cornerstone of the Polish legal system (Kras 2014: 57; Krzywoszyński 2012: 107-108).

### **Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Education**

The peaceful cooperation was also achieved thanks to the developed educational and political system. For example, in the

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the 16th century there were three large universities: Jagiellonian, Jesuit Academy of Wilno, the Zamoyski University.

The first and the oldest one – the Jagiellonian University was founded already in 1364 (in Kraków as an Academy by King Casimir the Great (in Polish: *Kazimierz Wielki*). The monarch wanted to create the competent class of educated lawyers and administrative staff. Later the royal couple queen Jadwiga and her husband King Władysław II Jagiello upgraded it to the status of University. In the 15th and 16th centuries among others scholars and rectors were Stanisław of Skarbimierz and Paweł Włodkowic, both distinguished jurists and diplomats.<sup>58</sup> Nicolaus Copernicus studied at the university during the years 1491-1495. The Jagiellonian University provided intellectual elites of 16th and 17th century.

The second one, The Jesuit Academy of Wilno, was founded already the early Baroque era (in 1579) by the King Stephan Batory. Despite its clear Counterreformation foundation it became famous for its universalist approach and very high standards of education. The first rector of the academy was a Jesuit Piotr Skarga – one of the most famous leaders of Polish Counterreformation. He advocated strengthening the monarch power and called for the moral renewal of the political elites. As the rector of the Academy he invited many scientists from

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<sup>58</sup> Stanisław of Skalbierz (1360-1431) was the first rector of the university after its restoration (1399). His sermons laid the foundations for Noble's Democracy. Together with Paweł Włodkowic (ca. 1370-1435), a scholar and rector of the Jagiellonian University, they founded the Polish School of International Law. Włodkowic was against the aggressive policies of the Teutonic Order at the Council of Constance (1414-1419). He advocated for the peaceful coexistence of Christians and so-called at the time pagans, arguing that cooperation between them could bring better results in Christianization than the Crusades. The most famous text of Stanisław of Skalbierz's is *On Just War*, Włodkowic's is *Treatise on the Power of the Pope and Emperor towards the Unfaithful* (Latin *Tractatus de potestate papae et imperatoris respectu infidelium*).



Europe and considerably extended its library (Kowalewska 2011: 35-36).

The last one, the Zamojski Academy was founded by Jan Zamoyski in 1594, in Zamość. Szymon Szymonowicz (a famous poet) assisted him in organizing the Academy. The name refers to famous Polish aristocratic family known, among others, for their contribution to development of science, art and religious tolerance. The founder was a famous Polish politician – the crown chancellor and the commander of the crown army. It is worth noting that the majority of students were from townspeople families. The Academy was the first private upper educational institution and was modeled on the Academy of Strasbourg. It is worth mentioning that in the foundation act Jan Zamoyski wrote: *such are countries, as is the education of their youth* (Kowalewska 2011: 88-90).

Moreover, there were many secondary schools and primary schools founded by the Church, council states and later by Jesuits as well as by dissidents. In the 16th century, townspeople and even peasants were educated in schools alongside gentry youth. Most importantly, nowadays we would say that these were very modern and dialogical institutions, since their goal was to truly educate and not indoctrinate.<sup>59</sup> Tazbir points out that this pedagogical system was free from “education by fear”:

It was a foreign scholar (Claude Backvis) who first pointed to the independent values of the Polish political culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, one of the “most valuable and permanent aspects of which is the loftiness, subtlety and effectiveness of the political thinking engendered by it.” Should we analyse the frequency of various notions in the political writings of the gentry in the 16th-18th

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<sup>59</sup> Please note the distinction between education and indoctrination following John Corcoran. He stated that the main goal of education is to teach *how to think*, while indoctrination’s *what to think*. See for example (Gan-Krzywoszyńska 2024).

centuries, we would probably find that **the most frequent was the word “freedom”, the rarest “fear.”** The latter is mostly to be found in the context which says that a king who breaks the assumed obligations (called *pacta conventa*) should fear the gentry; on the other hand, the gentry was extremely rarely threatened with royal reprisals. **“Education by fear” was a system unknown to the Polish gentry.** This applied both to the political system and to religion. For the preachers, too, presented God not as an absolute ruler but as a kindly monarch whose rule was limited by His own goodness and man’s free will. Now wonder then that Backvis saw the fundamental feature of the old-Polish political culture in putting civic liberties above the ruler’s rights (Tazbir 1982/1983: 174-175, emphasis added).

The king’s court and many aristocrats (both clergy and laity) created centers of education, science and art. For instance, Queen Bona, the second wife of King Sigismund I the Old, initiated and inspired many cultural enterprises. She brought and sponsored outstanding artists from Italy, among others Bartolomeo Berecci. Bona also funded many scholarships for people willing to study abroad. Moreover, we should also mention Jan Tarnowski – famous statesman and commander. Despite his highly aristocratic origins, he was considered a paragon of gentry virtues, especially equality. He was a patron of the poet Jan Kochanowski and the publicist Stanisław Orzechowski (Krzywoszyński, 2010: 19, 73). Other prominent magnate families that contributed to the development of science and culture include the Potocki, Lubomirski, Żółkiewski, and Sobieski families in Poland and the Radziwiłł and Sapieha families in Lithuania.

We must add that travels became a crucial element of education:

As early as the 16th century, the Polish intellectual elite realized its affiliation to the European cultural community, though, of course, such a notion was not in use at the time. It was realized through the flow of students to the most

renowned universities (at first, only Italian, later also German, Swiss, Dutch or French), the use of Latin in learned writings, official documents or correspondence, the exchange of fictional plots and proverbs (Tazbir 1982/1983: 165).

### **Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Political System**

Unlike most European states at the time with hereditary, absolute and centralized monarchies, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (created in 1569) was characterized by decentralization of power, system of confederation and federation, democracy and religious tolerance.

The essential rule of Polish political system was mixed government (mixed constitution) that combines of elements monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Polish nobility was inspired by Aristotle, and liked to compare their political system to his famous *politeia* (Krzywoszyński 2021: 39; Butterwick 2021: 44). Decentralization consisted in limiting the central role of the king and his officials (Salmonowicz, 1994: 25-28). The confederation grew as a result of close (but also difficult, complicated and complex) cooperation of the founding states of the union – the Kingdom of Poland and the Duchy of Lithuania. The federation played a crucial role in the structure of the entire complex state. Its functioning was based on a grassroots, self-governing administrative structures. Most Western monarchies (as well as the neighboring eastern and southern states of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) were based on a single, promoted political group, both in terms of nationality (language) and/or religion. In contrast, the foundations of the political class structure of Poland and Lithuania were diverse in terms of language, culture, and confession. This may be considered a crucial difference from the principle “one country, one king” which led later to national state. In contrast, it is worth emphasizing Robert Frost opinion:

Yet the union was no empire. In its origin it was a classic summer medieval composite state, in which the various realms that came together under the rule of the Jagiellonian dynasty between 1386 and 1569 gradually formed a strong political union through negotiation and consent, despite some spectacular disagreements as to its nature and form (Frost 2018: VI).

The geographically large country developed original system of democratic power on both local and central levels. Local organs consisted of self-government councils' communities.

The most important local institution was *sejmik* (a kind of regional council) where all nobles from the region decided about local matters (such as for example: taxes and candidates for local offices). Moreover, these institutions could influence central organs by sending representatives to the Sejm (Parliament) and consequently could decide on taxes and main political decisions and the Crown Tribunal (highest appellate court).

It was on this as yet ill-defined body that the Polish tradition of consensual politics originally rested. Documents were issued 'de consilio' or 'de consilio et consensu praelatorum et baronum'; this phrase usually referred to the council rather than some proto-parliament. Casimir was clear on the council's role, stressing that he had chosen it to advise him above all; its duty to advise the 'country' – that is the community of the realm – was of secondary importance, and he specifically excluded the 'commonality' (*pospólstwo*) from council debates (Frost 2018: 287).

### **Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Internal Conflicts**

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century Polish ideologists and statesmen were aware of preexisting controversies, conflict of interests, as well as universal tendency to corruption and abuse of power. Therefore, the fundamental question was how to avoid violence in case

of conflict? At the same time, it is noteworthy that they were insisting on keeping religious freedoms and ethnic diversity. They consciously rejected the idea of unification, univocity, which is the answer of absolutism and/or tyranny.

Let me briefly review some of the most frequent and profound conflicts of 16th and 17th century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

#### a) The king *versus* the people

Polish nobles were wary of hereditary monarchy and consequently rejected the idea of infallibility of the ruler. For them this kind of system introduced slavery and tyranny. That is why, since 1370 noblemen elected the king that was obliged to take into consideration their will (Krzywoszyński 2012: 108).

Please kindly note, that when I wrote “the people” I mean the noblemen. This class considered themselves as political nation/people (since 1454)<sup>60</sup> and believed to be the foundation of the whole system; a kind of middle class between the king and the townsmen and peasants. They were not the largest social class (about 10%) however, still their freedoms and status was essential for so-called “Golden Freedom”. Already from the first privileges in 1374 and 1388 nobles emphasized limitations of the king’s power and the domination of the rule of law (Ekes 2010: 46-49).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> In 1454, at the beginning of the Thirteen Years' War with the Teutonic Order (1545-1466), King Casimir IV was obligated by the nobility to consult local communities on major decisions – for example, regarding war and taxes. At that time, the nobility effectively excluded other social classes from participating in these decisions.

<sup>61</sup> Louis the Great (known as Louis I of Hungary in Poland) who approved the first privilege, i. e. the Privilege of Koszyce, granting in 1374 the Polish nobility special rights under which the king promised not to levy any taxes without agreement from the gentry in return for the election of his daughter as successor. The next one was approved by Władysław II Jagiełło confirmed

For instance, one of the main ideologists of the Nobles' democracy wrote:

What can be said or more beautiful than that he whose power is supreme among you, and who was not born a king, but you made him king, made use of this mixture, which you entrusted to him only according to your will? (Orzechowski 1972: 103).

It must be pointed out that Polish nobles believed precisely that tyranny not only did not provide stability but they were convinced it was the cause of civil wars, violent conflicts and instability of the country (Opaliński 1995: 85; Krzywoszyński 2010: 39-42, 52).

The two main assumptions of the system were: a dynamic concord between the king and the nobility and the need of establishing of institutions in order to maintain freedom of the gentry against the centralization of power. This unique attitude indicated extraordinary far-sighted thinking about creating a guarantee of harmony and mutual limitation of power due to the inherent universal tendency to corruption.

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of previous ones; and obliged to pay to gentry 3 fines for a copy in a foreign expedition. From that time until 1572, the monarch in Poland was elected and no longer hereditary, though the candidate was always a member of the royal family. The origins of the "Polish golden freedom" dates back to precisely this time, when the nobility obtained the power and privilege of choosing the king. Since then, each time the monarch wanted to appoint his successor, he had to grant electors – the community of nobles – new rights and privileges. Thus, this practice can be considered an example of contractual theory. (Krzywoszyński, 2012: 108)

<sup>62</sup> *Rákos* is the Hungarian name of a tributary of the Danube in Pest. It is also where was a field, a place where Hungarian nobles gathered to protest or negotiate with the king. The word in Polish was probably introduced during the reign of the king Louis the Hungarian. The first time the name "rokosz" was used for a rebellion in 1371, so-called *Rokosz Gliniański* – it was a resistance movement of Polish nobles against the abuse of the Hungarian clerks. Many researchers questioned the occurrence of this event and consider it just a useful myth (from the XVII century) emphasizing the role of this institution in the ideology of the nobility. The first time it was mentioned in the privilege of Mielnik (1501) (Malec-Lewandowska 2010; Krzywoszyński 2021: 38-39).

Among main institutions providing guarantees of balance of power one must mention *rokosz* (from Hungarian: *Rákos*),<sup>62</sup> a type of insurrection, at the same time as an institution it was the right of nobles to form a legal rebellion against a king in case of violation of their guaranteed freedoms. It was a powerful tool, a collective right to oppose for all nobles. It started as a customary law against tyrant prince or king, with time *rokosz* became a legal institution (First time it was formalized in Privilege of Mielnik in 1501). It should be pointed out that gentry used it only when all legal means have been exhausted, as a type of guarantee for them to be heard out. For instance, the *rokosz* from 1537 was caused by Polish nobles who were afraid of the king's alliance with aristocracy and of risk of absolutism.<sup>63</sup> Worthwhile to note that this rebellion in fact took form of peaceful deliberation between the nobles on the one hand and King Sigismund I and his supporters on the other hand without any violence. This particular *rokosz* constitutes an unprecedented example of civil liberties, especially freedom of speech on an international scale.

The second institution that deserves to be mentioned is an election of the king by all nobles wishing to participate, known as "free election" (in Polish: *wolna elekcja*). The first free election took place in 1572. There were six male candidates from Poland but also few other countries, representing different dynasties. Before his coronation, the elected King Henri Valois had to agree and sign a set of rights prepared by nobles which limited the power of the elected king and guaranteed the conservation of their privileges. The king had to sign a pledge of these rights known as the *Henrician Articles*. He was obliged to conform to these laws that were guaranteed with the right to resistance, specifically in

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<sup>63</sup> This anti-royalist and anti-absolutist event for its non-violent nature got a sarcastic name of „Hen's War” or “Chicken War”, since the joke inspired by a wordplay. A Polish word “kokosz” (a hen laying eggs) sounds similar to “rokosz”, the Polish magnates who were against it spread a rumor that participants' only achievement was a consumption of poultry.



the form of *rokosz*. Another institution protecting the rights of different estates in case of destabilization of the balance of power, was so-called *pacta conventa* (“articles of agreement”). In 1573 Henri Valois signed the document, derived from *Henrician Articles*, that described personal obligations of the king (for example: bring French squadron to the Baltic Sea, pay the debt of Sigismundus II Augustus, end the Livonian War).

The third institution, introduced at the beginning of 17th century in the document entitled *Articulus de non praestanda oboedientia* (1607-1609), constituted another layered procedure of legal disobedience. It enabled every nobleman to communicate with the monarch through senators, local councils and even parliament. This three-degree procedure provided a dialogical way of resolving a given problem. Moreover, again, taking into consideration the possibility of miscommunication or failed dialogue, offered another one peaceful solution in a form of kind of association or convention (Polish: *zjazd*) before any armed conflict. This multi-level measure created various opportunities of non-violent resolution of conflict in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It has to be emphasized that every member of the gentry could defend all the political and social community rights (Lewandowska-Malec 2010:16-20).

#### b) Conflict between different institutions within the country

Another example of foreseen conflicts in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was between institutions within the country, for instance Senate *versus* House of Commons also Chamber of Deputies (Polish: *izba poselska*) or the king with Senate against House of Commons.

The essential rule of Polish political system was mixed government that combines elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Three classes: the monarch (king), aristocracy

(magnates), gentry (nobles) were members of the Parliament (in Polish: *Sejm*). The king was at the same time a separate state and the head of Senate. The members of Senate, which was a chamber of the Parliament were all rich aristocrats (magnates). Gentry (nobles) constituted Chamber of Deputies (House of Commons) (Grzybowski 1999: 29-32; Butterwick 2021: 44-46).

Since 1493 they all had common parliamentary deliberations. However, the king (Aleksander Jagiellończyk) wanted to limit the position of Chamber of Deputies. In response, the gentry prepared the legal act entitled so-called *Nihil novi* act (constitution) that was approved by *Sejm* in 1505. It said that any piece of legislation could only be introduced after a debate and agreement by all estates of Parliament. That law, protecting the mixed system, was respected for two centuries, that is also in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth Parliament (Frost 2018: 327-253).

For the same reason the institution of the resident senators was established, they were on the one hand the king's advisors, but on the other hand were controlling his policy. They were also the ones to warn him of any decisions inconsistent with previous agreements and obligations (Malec 2020: 103-104).

Similarly, the obligation of holding the Commonwealth parliament every two years was as well foreseen in order to keep the dialogue and all three estates involved in the mixed system of government.

Finally, the institution of *liberum veto* (from Latin: *I oppose*) needs to be mentioned. This last procedure gave every member of Parliament a right to block the introduction of any harmful law and was considered as an individual right to protest (Grzybowski 1966: 52 and ff.; Malec 2020: 105-106).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> See also (Leśniewski 2021: 41-42).

- c) Conflicts between and within estates/political classes: for instance: aristocracy vs. noblemen, noblemen vs. peasants, noblemen vs. townsmen

Throughout the duration of Noble's Democracy there was a constant apprehension within the gentry (considered an Aristotelian middle-class keeping the political and social order) on the one side of the hegemony mainly from aristocracy and clergy and on the other side of the destructive anarchy in the case of domination of lower classes (Krzywoszyński 2021: 39). Similarly, the theory of predestination taken from Calvinism also proved helpful in strengthening the position of the nobility as a central axis of the political and social structure of the country. At the same time, many of these conflicts and social unrest were caused by The Reformation that had shaken traditional order of the Commonwealth. As an example of such a conflict one may mention a peasant uprising inspired by Lutheran thought from 1525 that took place in the Polish fiefdom of Ducal Prussia. In Gdańsk, the 1525 revolt was both of religious and social origin. The common people demanded lesser influence of Catholic orders, a reduction in the number of clergy, and a renewal of morality. The uprising was suppressed in 1526 (Urban 1988: 17-18). Another example of conflict, this time between the nobles, constitutes an inspired by Calvinism, gentry grassroot political movement against Catholicism (Schramm 2015: 219-243; Urban 1988: 23-31). That is why Orzechowski blamed The Reformation for creating chaos and precisely serving tyranny (Krzywoszyński 2010: 82, 95-96).

It is worth pointing out that Polish Catholics were very critical of the Roman Church and its negative influence in the political life, especially its institutions such as the Inquisition. Tazbir described their views in the following way:

Each new event in Europe was greeted by the gentry either with fears that it might adversely affect the Polish freedom,

or with satisfaction that such excesses as the Massacre of St Bartholomew would not be possible in Poland, a land of free people. Suffice it to recall that one of the causes of the hatred felt for the Habsburgs by practically the whole gentry was their absolute rule in Bohemia and Hungary. Jakub Sobieski (father of the future king), who travelled in France early in the 17th century, was horrified by the Bastille where — he wrote — the Bourbons could lock up anybody and let him rot. Similarly, **Polish Catholics condemned the Spanish and Italian inquisition considering its judicial procedure an infringement of the gentry's privileges, since people were imprisoned and sentenced to death following an anonymous denunciation.** A writing in praise of Thomas More emphasized that he defended not only the Catholic faith and the pope but also the rights of his country and class freedoms against a tyrannical monarch. It has been rightly remarked that Jan Kochanowski, the outstanding poet of the Polish Renaissance, began the dedication of one of his works (*Satires*, 1563) with words which no French poet would have penned: “My Lord (this is the grandest title among free people)”. For, though Molière and Racine were men of genius, it is worthwhile to “compare their dedications in order to realize that as men they were not really free” (Tazbir 1982/1983: 164-165, emphasis added).

In order to deal with these serious threats, thanks to grassroots political initiative religious freedom was guaranteed by the first religious peace treaty called *Warsaw Confederation Act* (1573). All signatures of that document were considered as equal politically, although at the same time as “dissidents in faith/confession”. The candidature of Henri Valois frightened both Protestants and Catholics. Polish nobles, as well as the whole nation, wanted to make sure that no massacres like the Saint Bartholomew Day can happen in the country. When Henry Valois was to be elected as future king the nobles of different confessions came to agreement and included this act to *Henrician Articles* as the constitutional principle of the state (Krzywoszyński 2012: 109-110; Schramm 2015: 380).

The Polish “asylum for heretics” made it possible for the Bohemian Brethren, who were being progressively expelled from their own country (after 1627), to set up schools which later served as models for both Protestant and Catholic schools in many countries of Europe. Leading educational centres existed in Leszno (college of the Bohemian Brethren), Raków (Socinian academy), in Toruń and Gdańsk (Lutheran colleges). Leszno owed a great deal to the prestige and experience of Jan Amos Komensky who had been rector of the school from 1635. In Raków, many foreign followers of anti-Trinitarianism, mostly from Germany, used to give lectures. In turn, Toruń and Gdańsk professors (including Bartholomew Keckermann) taught at western universities (Tazbir 1982/1983: 172).

The Polish Noble's ideologists supported a very original system close to anarchy, called *misrule* that is very important in the context of models of reconciliation. In Polish it is called *nierząd* (literally *nie* means *no*, *rząd* means *government* Polish), it was a type of constructive “permanent” anarchy (Opaliński 1959: 70-71; Krzywoszyński 2024: 107).

## Overlooked Tyrants

Unfortunately, later corruption, the domination of magnates and numerous wars led to the weakening and collapse of these well-designed solutions (Butterwick 2021: 48-49). We should not forget about the peasant and other lower yet essential to society classes that were practically not included in “Golden Freedom”. However, the originality of Polish political thought consisted in the strong belief that universal tendencies towards abuse of power and tyranny should lead us not towards desperation and violent conflicts, but to preparing in advance procedures of reconciliation as well as mechanism that prevent and limit corruption and monopoly of power.

It happens often that tyrannic structures, like the opposition oppressors – oppressed, the most pervasive in social structure according to Paulo Freire, survive because people believe that the only possibility of change is to switch places, as it happened in many disappointing revolutions. Freire wanted to – through dialogue and education – eliminate this tragic opposition since it gives two dehumanized version of human beings and sought to create new horizontal ones (Freire 1996). In my opinion, the above mentioned misrule system can be considered an example of such dialogical system and effectively may dispose of tyranny.

At the same time, I would like to point out, that contemporary Polish dialogical thinker Józef Tischner who was considered a spiritual leader of Solidarity movement defined monological and dialogical society (Tischner 1991). The former is characterized by the fact that the rulers attribute themselves the truth about society and they establish censorship to control this only “right” point of view. At the time, he spoke about communist regime in Poland, however, already in the early 1990’s he emphasized that the danger of monological society was not overcome, since after the ’89 transformation the people seemed to attribute themselves the full truth about society. I propose to consider the decline of the Golden Freedom as a moment when the danger, corruption and in some extent tyranny came from the side of the gentry. They were so afraid of losing their freedom, yet they oversaw the fact that they usurp the only truth about society and therefore may become another tyrant.

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# *Towards Dialogical Physical Culture. On Reconciliation in Sport*

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**Abstract:** Reconciliation in sport is particularly linked to harmony between body and mental health. The contemporary philosophy of dialogue is presented as a basis for a dialogical physical culture. Selected views from Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber and Ludwig Feuerbach are briefly discussed. Some negative phenomena associated with competitive sports are discussed briefly. Three stories are presented. The first one is about the runner Mary Cain and the second is about Lidia Yuknavitch, a swimmer and a writer. The third is about the Polish karateka Przemysław Spadło. Their examples testify to the possibility of reconciliation with body and self, and nature. They are also prospects of how to build dialogical physical culture.

**Keywords:** reconciliation, sport, philosophy of dialogue, culture

## **1. Introduction. On physical culture and logical culture**

In the book *Niemyte dusze* [Unwashed Souls], completed in the summer of 1936, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz:

When I returned from London to Krakow in 1911, almost in one fell swoop, I was horrified by the interior of a third-class carriage. It was all weaklings, sir. It was the same on the streets, in the pubs, everywhere. Anyone who wants to prevent physical rebirth would be a fool. But alongside the Institute of Physical Education, a similar Institute of Mental Education should be established simultaneously, automatically. Otherwise, we will go to the dogs very quickly (Witkiewicz 2004: 329).

This subtle observation by Witkacy clearly points to the role of harmony between the body and what today is referred to as mental health. Reconciliation in sport is particularly linked to harmony between these two elements. Contemporary sport is characterized by, among other things, two tendencies: first, the pursuit of achievement; and second, the dynamically increasing mass participation in sport. As a result of both of these tendencies, the old issue of harmony is resurfacing in contemporary culture. Perhaps this very term can be used in reference to this issue, because it ultimately relates to perhaps the most important question in philosophy: “how to live?” Of course, this question should be closely linked to what Michel Foucault called care of the self (see, for example Foucault 1988, *A Companion to Foucault* 2013). Practicing competitive sport often requires young people to devote their entire lives to this activity. It often leads to tragic results; failure breeds discouragement, and excessive exertion devastates the body. For many people, hobby-based sport increasingly becomes a fundamental activity within the search for life-work balance. In the context of these challenges of contemporary culture and taking into account Witkacy’s remark, I consider, in this paper, the philosophy of dialogue as a perspective that opens the possibility of a *dialogical physical culture*.

In *The Cognitive Role of Language* Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz presents the concept of logical culture. Logical culture is founded on clarity, order, rational criticism, the ability to draw valid inferences and the consistency of thinking. Without logical culture,

we cannot express our thoughts or feelings appropriately. We need logic to think and act in everyday life. Logical culture is constantly caring about the quality of thinking. In short, as Jan Łukasiewicz said, logic is the ethic of thinking. Modern physical culture should not be solely founded on the ethic of thinking but also this culture should be complemented by a lively, open and inspiring philosophical rethinking, namely, by contemporary philosophy of dialogue.

## **2. Sport as a branch of culture. A few historical remarks**

Sport is a cultural phenomenon present in all civilizations. Modern sport has its roots deep in the ancient Greek culture and the birth of democracy. Olympic sport and philosophy are closely linked. Ancient Olympic Games were a religious-based project that challenged social hierarchies – proving worth and virtue were up to the contest, not birth or wealth. At the time of the Olympic Games truce was held between Greek tribes. It was a time of cooperation with significant diversity and acting toward a common goal. The tradition of the Olympic Games survived over a thousand years and has modern continuation because of their pressure on justice and fair results. Western philosophy was born in a gymnasium – a place where young boys trained not only their bodies but also their minds. Ancient Greeks' understanding of human nature was the combination of *psyche* (Greek: ψυχή) and *soma* (Greek: σῶμα) – intentional movement is the work of the mind. Socrates and Plato presented their philosophies to young athletes.

Movement, body and sport are silent background of the rise of western ancient philosophy. There are no philosophers without the body but it became secondary to them. In Plato's dualism soul is more important than the body, they should be in harmony but not equal. Aristotle's school of thought involved movement –

peripatetics, thinking and conversing while walking. But again the body was something secondary, less important, and practical but not worth a philosophical approach. Philosophy's relation with the body is complex – through centuries body has been in different positions. Christian religion establishes a dualism distinction between the immortal godly soul and mortal and human flesh, an obstacle on way to the eternal life. Renaissance and religious reformation brought some value to the body. Protestants' virtue was to earn salvation through hard and honest work. Turning towards nature has its darker side. Ernesto Sabato, an Argentinean writer in *Man and Mechanism* sees the dangerous side of the Renaissance – innocent love for nature can lead to a desire to dominate it. Love and dominance can go side by side. Humans in the Renaissance had an interest in nature and appreciated it thus they wanted to disenchant the world. The Enlightenment with its scientific discoveries made the world even less mysterious. Descartes's dualism and its maxim *cogito ergo sum* divided substances into the essence of mind and essence of the matter leading to the degradation of the matter. Jason W. Moore argues that capitalism is the first civilization based on substantial dualism. Previous dualistic views of the world did not implicate such objectifying approach to Nature. But capitalism is not only economy but also ecology – in a sense capital needs Nature to use it and fuel its mechanism. Moore emphasizes that the division between Mind and Matter leads to a split between Nature and Human. But in this system not all people are humans – this exclusive term incorporates that some people are part of the Nature, such as natives of the colonies and semi-colonies – they can be abused and exploited. The distinction between mind and body deepens. Among other thinkers, Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* demonstrate that the logic of enlightenment leads to the rise of the totalitarian rule. Glorification of the reason has not stopped the unreasonable violence and chaos of the two great wars.

As a summary of the above remarks, I quote the following Nietzsche's note no. 226, dated March-June 1888:

They despised the body: they left it out of the account: more, they treated it as an enemy. It was their delusion to believe that one could carry a "beautiful soul" about in a cadaverous abortion - To make this conceivable to others they needed to present the concept "beautiful soul" in a different way, to revalue the natural value, until at last a pale, sickly, idiotically fanatical creature was thought to be perfection, "angelic," transfiguration, higher man (Nietzsche 1968: 131).

As an aside, I think it is worth quoting the following statement by Foucault at this point:

I can only respond by saying: **I am simply a Nietzschean**, and I try as far as possible, on a certain number of issues, to see with the help of Nietzsche's texts – but also with anti-Nietzschean theses (which are nevertheless Nietzschean!) – what can be done in this or that domain. I attempt nothing else, but that I try to do well (Foucault 1996: 471). [emphasis added, French original phrase is: *je suis simplement nietzschéen*]

### 3. A brief introduction to the philosophy of dialogue

The beginning of the modern philosophy of dialogue is directly linked to the publication of Franz Rosenzweig's work "Der Stern der Erlösung" [English *The Star of Redemption*] in 1921. It is directed against the philosophical tradition *from Ionia to Jena* (Rosenzweig 2005: 18), i.e. from the ancient Ionian Islands to Hegel's Jena. Rosenzweig could be said to accuse this tradition of offering poor consolation to man in the face of suffering, misery, and death. The method of this tradition is thought, whose a proper object is the All (German *das All*, i.e. the Universe, and in this case, this word can be treated as a proper noun, the Whole,

a cosmos etc.). This tradition ultimately recommends thinking about a “higher,” “better,” “timeless” zone. Through thinking, the philosopher “dwells” in the timeless zone. According to Rosenzweig, thinking is always solitary; even when the thinker engages in the thinking of other similar philosophers (German: *Symphilosophierenden*). A thinker does not need another person, perhaps only as a helper in the development of thoughts. Therefore, according to Rosenzweig, *this is the reason why the great majority of philosophic dialogues including most of Plato’s – are so tedious*; German: (...) *worauf ja die Langweiligkeit der meisten philosophischen Dialoge, auch des überwiegenden Teils der platonischen, beruht* (Rosenzweig 1925: 440). The experience of the First World War likely played a decisive role in shaping Rosenzweig’s position; he initially enlisted as a volunteer in the medical corps and was then assigned to the artillery corps – he underwent, among other things, artillery training in Rembertów (today a district of Warsaw). It was in Rembertów that he began writing his main work, which he completed in his hometown of Kassel in 1919. Rosenzweig’s book begins with the statement that all knowledge of the All begins with the fear of death (German phrase *von der Furcht des Todes*) and ultimately leads the reader, in the author’s words, to the gate that opens to life.

According to Rosenzweig’s proposal, the new philosophical method that must be contrasted with this tradition is speech. Speech is bound to time, and another person (the Other) is necessary. This is how the modern philosophy of dialogue begins, but it is important to remember that in *The New Thinking*, Rosenzweig identifies Ludwig Feuerbach as the discoverer of this method. I will therefore point to selected excerpts from *The Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*. The introduction to this work is dated June 9, 1843. For the sake of clarity, it’s worth adding here that Karl Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach* is dated the spring of 1845 (Marx 1978). To illustrate the importance of Feuerbach in the philosophy of dialogue, I quote below three short paragraphs

of the aforementioned *Principles* (i.e., paragraphs 59, 60, and 62):

59. The single man *in isolation* possesses in himself the *essence* of man neither as a *moral* nor as a *thinking* being. The *essence* of man is contained only in the community, in the *unity of man with man* – a unity, however, that rests on the *reality* of the *distinction* between “I” and “You.”

60. Solitude means being finite and limited, community means being free and infinite. For himself alone, man is just man (in the ordinary sense); but man with man – the unity of “I” and “You” – that is God.

62. The *true* dialectic is not *a monologue of the solitary thinker with himself*; it is a *dialogue between “I” and “You”* (Feuerbach 2012: 244).

In the context of the paragraph 59<sup>th</sup>, it is worth noting Marx’s famous sixth thesis on Feuerbach, a fragment of which reads as follows:

Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations (Marx-Engels 1973: 14).

I also provide the original German text here:

Feuerbach löst das religiöse Wesen in das *menschliche* Wesen auf. Aber das menschliche Wesen ist kein dem einzelnen Individuum inwohnendes Abstraktum. In seiner Wirklichkeit ist es das ensemble der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse (1978: 6).

Given Marx’s astonishing and terrifying influence on millions of people, which continues to this day, it is worth noting a slight ambiguity in this passage. Does the pronoun *its* (German: *seiner*) in the last sentence of this fragment refer to *the human essence* (German: *das menschliche Wesen*) or to each single individual



(German: *das einzelnen Individuum*)? It is interesting whether, according to Marx, *the ensemble of the social relations is the human essence* or *each single individual*? Of course, this last question is quite interesting if the connective *or* is understood as an exclusive disjunction. This is a marginal issue here, I leave it unresolved. But at the same time, such consideration is important if we assume that the philosophy of dialogue rejects the old philosophy along with the old metaphysical oppositions.

In relation to Feuerbach 60<sup>th</sup> paragraph, it seems that he disenchantes “God” – this supernatural “God” is replaced by some kind of relationship between human beings, i.e. between “I” and “You.” I would add that Feuerbach, in his 1850 work *Die Naturwissenschaft und die Revolution*, considered Copernicus the first revolutionary of the modern era. The author of *Principles* wrote that Copernicus *has robbed humanity of its heaven* (German: *Copernicus ist es, der die Menschheit um ihren Himmel gebracht hat*). As Peter C. Caldwell writes: *The natural scientist was a revolutionary, like Copernicus, who not only decentered the earth but also profaned the heavens* (Caldwell 2009: 123).

In relation to paragraph 62, it is worth quoting here Buberian *dialogical principle* (German: *das dialogische Prinzip*), which states:

Man becomes an I through a You (Buber 1970: 80).  
[German: *Der Mensch wird am Du zum Ich*. (Buber 1995: 28)]

The following important statement should also be linked to this principle: *All actual life is encounter* (Buber 1970: 62). The 1937 English translation reads: *All real living is meeting* (Buber 1937: 11).

Martin Buber is another famous representative of contemporary philosophy of dialogue. He was a close friend of Rosenzweig's. They worked together on, among other things, a German translation of the Old Testament. It was Buber who read Psalm 73

(“God Is My Strength and Portion Forever”) at Rosenzweig’s funeral. Buberian main work *I and Thou* was published in 1923. Two main pair of words and two attitudes are introduced, namely *I-Thou* and *I-It*. Due to the importance of speech in the philosophy of dialogue, I quote the following remark from this work:

Being I and saying I are the same. Saying I and saying one of the two basic words are the same. Whoever speaks one of the basic words enters into the word and stands in it (Buber 1970: 54).

The word I-You *establishes the world of relation* (*ibidem*: 56). According to his standpoint each relation is reciprocity. We read in *I and Thou*:

My You acts on me as I act on it. Our students teach us, our works form us. (...) How are we educated by children, by animals! Inscrutably involved, we live in the currents of universal reciprocity (*ibidem*: 67).

Expanding on the approach outlined in the paragraph 60<sup>th</sup> of Feuerbach’s *Principles*, Buber considers encounters beyond just human encounters. He introduces three spheres (German word *Sphären* is used here literally) in which encounters can occur: (1) life with nature, (2) life with men, (3) life with spiritual beings (*ibidem*: 56-57). I assume that in the third sphere, instead of talking about an encounter with spiritual beings (German: *die geistigen Wesenheiten*), it is more convenient to introduce the term *cultural objects*. This approach avoids interpreting Buberian text as a work drawing on traditional philosophy, particularly classical metaphysical concepts. After all, the philosophy of dialogue stems from a rejection of traditional philosophy.

Generally speaking, it can be said that in the dialogical relation of an encounter no harm can happen, it is the opposition of the domination. Truly dialogical encounter is always life-changing. Since the dialogical attitude is anti-idealistic, it embraces humans as a whole being.

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher in *Pedagogy of The Oppressed* presents the possibility of dialogical revolution. From Freire's perspective, the basic relation between people is oppression. Oppressors representing the elite are tied to the oppressed – exploiting them and dehumanizing them. Only the oppressed can free themselves by changing the system, not only changing elites. Liberation can be achieved by reformed education. Instead of the traditional subject-object relations between teacher and students, Freire suggests a more dialogical perspective and subject-subject relation. The purpose of education is to promote critical thinking and situated thinking – taking into account social, political and economic conditions and overcoming fear of freedom. In this process we can create biophilic, open, conscious and inclusive communities.

#### **4. Contemporary sport. A dialogue challenge**

Nowadays sport evolved most probably from a human urge to participate in plays and games. Sport has changed over the centuries, but it has always been linked to culture, including such cultural sectors as economics and politics. It has also been closely linked to various social structures, including several institutions. The modern sport was born in the XIX century – with technological changes and the popularization of broadcast in the XX century – sports unified their rules. The end of the XIX century is also a moment of the reborn tradition of the Olympic Games. The XX century was – according to Buber and Sabato – the collapse of the world and showed dangerous side of the science, reason and philosophy. The second half of the XX century was a moment of development in the medicine and pharmacology which led to increase cases of doping in sports. Rivalry in sports was an emanation of the political conflicts – winning at all costs damaged athletes health and life on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Modern sport is not free from capitalistic machine, since it is sponsored by big corporations and oil companies. Sports can be harmful to participants and society, it can be a tool of the control and support social inequality. But my argument is that sport can be a dialogical, life-changing, biophilic practice, that can enrich human existence but to be so it needs a dialogical revolution. Looking at sports from the perspective of the philosophy of dialogue can make a path to create more open, inclusive, liberating structures.

David Foster Wallace, an American writer, in his essay *Tennis Player Michael Joyce's Professional Artistry as a Paradigm of Certain Stuff about Choice, Freedom, Discipline, Joy, Grotesquerie, and Human Completeness* followed one of the professional tennis players in 1995, 79 in ATP – Michael Joyce on qualification tournament to the Canadian Open. Joyce is a perfect example of what is anti-dialogical in sport. His career was orchestrated by his father who wanted to raise a good tennis player. Wallace acknowledges Joyce's lack of choice in life, but Joyce seems to not care about it – is not a matter of choice: he plays tennis, he loves tennis, he is tennis. His love is almost religious – sacrifices of choice, self in the base of this emotion. It is difficult to capture this character from a dialogical perspective. Joyce seems to be immersed in I – it relation. In I – it relation, we cannot reflect in long term perspective – it is forever now. Wallace exposes the American approach to professional sports – people admire good performance but want to ignore what comes with top-level sports – suffering and sacrifices. In Wallace's narration reality cannot be challenged, he sees what it is, but does not bother to question it. He compares professional players to saints – people want them to suffer for their salvation. Wallace sees Joyce as grotesquely limited and fully human at the same time, he sees him as an artist of his discipline, somebody who can explore states of mind that normal people do not have access to. The problem is – Joyce cannot think about himself in this category because he

lives in a small world, almost like a child, unconscious. Joyce is an example of banking education from Freire's perspective. He was treated like an empty bank account which can take whatever teachers or parents want them to become.

Mary Cain, one of the greatest American runners, and the youngest running phenomenon was broken by a big corporation. It's Freire's relation Oppressed and Oppressor that took away career and health from Cain. Anti-dialogical and violent coach Alberto Salazar abused Cain mentally – leading her into an eating disorders. Big corporation in the role of the Oppressor, tried to make money of Cains's talent – she joined Salazar's team to become the best runner she could be. She was left with broken bones from training not adapted to her age and gender, suicidal thoughts and eating disorder. She is an example of how the Oppressed can be liberated by taking action. Her op-ed for *The New York Times* started a discussion about the whole track and field system – with a win-at-all-cost culture, unsustainable training leading to injuries and career shortening. This toxic and abusive system was not created for people, especially not for developing women who require different training than developing men. Oppressors work for themselves, treating everything as a resource to exploit. Nike was making raising stars broke and fade away from sports – there are more stories just like Cain's. She created her own running club – Atalanta NYC which is professional female running team. Its mission is to create a dialogical space for young girls to fulfill not only as athletes but also as human beings. It is an opposition to the anti-dialogical system that Cain experienced. Taking a more dialogical approach consists of looking at the human as a whole being: with its limitations and intellectual needs, remembering that everything comes in time. Taking shortcuts in sport always backfires.

Lidia Yuknavitch, an American writer and swimmer is another example of how sport can be life-changing and harmful at the same time. In her book *The Chronology of Water. A Memoir* she takes the

reader on a journey through her life – filled with abuse, literature, water and swimming. These memories were adapted into a film. It was directed by Kristen Stewart and stars Imogen Poots (as Lidia Yuknavitch). The movie was presented at the Cannes Film Festival on May 16, 2025. It was released in select cinemas on December 8th of this year, it opens wide on January 9th, 2026.

As Buber writes, a dialogical encounter is possible with You – it can be the other person, nature or some cultural object, for example a work of art, a sculpture, a string quartet, or *Principia Ethica* by G. E. Moore or the second volume of the first edition of *Principia Mathematica* by B. Russell and A. N. Whitehead. In the case of Yuknavitch the You she met was Water. Always with her as a swimmer, mother of a stillborn, and molested daughter of an abusive father. Swimming and being good at it helped her escape from family. Her Olympic dream was crushed by the 1980 boycott of The Olympic Games in Moscow. Water was always referenced, in the background. In the pool, that helped her escape from the father. In the ocean where ashes of her stillborn daughter disappeared. The water in the ocean that almost killed her father. It took years for her to come back to the swimming pool, just to be there, in peace, voiceless blue. *The Chronology of Water* is a story of how profound the impact sport and Nature can have on us. Yuknavitch's writing takes part in naming the world. In *Pedagogy of The Oppressed* Freire emphasizes how important in liberation process is participating in telling the story about the world. Yuknavitch takes her life and with writing regain control over her story, pain and talent. By embracing and reconciling different perspectives and identities of a swimmer, an artist, an addict, a mother of a dead and living children, she makes her own story, return to herself and to the water. She could not change the past but she created new framework to live in the world without Oppressor-Oppressed scheme.

The last example of the dialogical physical culture is a small Olympic karate club in Głowaczewo (the former German name

of this village is Papenhagen), a village in north-western Poland, located in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Kołobrzeg County. The club is led by Przemysław Spadło. Karate has its roots deep in feudal Japanese culture and in its traditional form is not very dialogical. But true dialogue can happen outside the language and show in an action. Spadło was born in 1978. After ten years in Wrocław (2000-2010) he returned to his home village and built his club from scratch. Stepping away from old structures he made his way of practicing Olympic karate. With a small group of students, mostly from the surrounding villages, they started to make international successes taking podiums at important events. This one-of-a-kind club is based on the non-authoritarian leadership of Spadło. Morote Club meets the conditions of dialogical physical culture – it is about reuniting with body, Nature, celebrating life and giving opportunities to the local community.

## **5. On reconciliation with body. A dialogical approach**

The first step to reconciliation is to understand violence and injustice. Sports is full of tragic stories that happened because of old “mythology” – that one should suffer to become a great athlete or human. The philosophy of dialogue is searching for a win-win situation, rejecting unnecessary violence and suffering. The examples I mentioned are proof that different philosophy in sport is not only possible but also beneficial for all of the participants.

For centuries the body was neglected. Our relationship with the body was practical and for the best, utilitarian. Seeing the body as an integral part of the self and make more dialogical relation with it can happen through sports. But sports tangled in capital can alienate from the body by forcing people to fall into body-enhancing and self-maintaining dogma.

As Mark Grief wrote in *Against exercise* – humans cannot be counted by numbers they can produce. When we step away from mechanizing practices, we are opening to more dialogical possibilities of being. Sport is more than the illusion of control. It grew from the most primary need – to be with others, to engage in games and to immerse in them.

In the context of the above remarks, let me try to take the first step towards a dialogical physical culture. Here, I propose a very short exercise from Buber. In *I and Thou*, he provided a description of a dialogical encounter with a tree (Buber 1970: 57-59; Buber 1995: 7-8). Let me try to apply this description, sometimes literally, to my own body. For the most part, I retain the important phrases from Buber's text verbatim. I make only minor changes relating to the body. Such an attempt might look like this:

I contemplate my body. I can accept it as this or that image, for example, its reflection in a mirror or a photograph. I feel it as movement: flowing veins, desire, breath, infinite communion with earth and air – and growth itself. I can assign it to a species and observe it as an instance, paying attention to its structure and way of life. I can overcome its uniqueness and form so rigorously that I recognize it only as an expression of law – those laws according to which the constant opposition of forces is constantly adjusted, or those laws according to which elements mix and separate. I can dissolve it into a number, into a pure relation between numbers, and eternalize it. Throughout all of this, my own body remains my object and has its place and time span, its kind and state. But it can also happen, if will and grace unite, that, while contemplating my body, I am drawn into a relationship, and my body ceases to be It. The power of exclusivity has enveloped me. This does not require me to renounce any mode of contemplation. There is nothing I cannot see to see, and there is no knowledge I must forget. Rather, everything – image and movement, species and chance, law and number – is contained and inextricably linked.

Everything that belongs to my body is contained: its form and mechanics, its colors and chemistry, its conversation



with the elements and its conversation with the stars – all of this in its entirety.

My body is no impression, no play of my imagination, no aspect of my mood; it confronts me bodily and must deal with me as I must deal with it – only differently.

One should not try to dilute the meaning of relationship: relationship is reciprocity.

So does my body have my consciousness? I have no experience with this. But thinking that you have brought this off in your own case, must you again divide the indivisible?

## 6. A final remark

In Juvenal's tenth Satire there is the following well-known phrase:

Nevertheless that you may have something to pray for, and be able to offer to the shrines entrails and presaging sausages from a white porker you should pray for **a sound mind in a sound body** (...) (*Juvenal and Persius* 1928: 219).

[Latin: *ut tamen et poscas aliquid voveasque sacellis exta et candiduli divina tomacula porci, orandum est **ut sit mens sana in corpore sano*** (...)] (*idem*: 218) [emphasis added – D. B.] See also for example (*Juvenal* 1998: 167).

Stefan Kisielewski (1911-1991), Polish composer, music critic, editor and founder of the journal *Ruch Muzyczny* and columnist, once stated that a modern paraphrase of the recommendation written by Juvenal is actually the Polish formula: *W zdrowym ciele, zdrowe ciele* (English: healthy calf in a healthy body); here the word “calf” is a synonym of healthy, naive and thoughtlessness person.

The point is then that if we want to avoid these sinister conflicts and oppositions in present-time culture in general and in sports in particular, we should, I suppose, consider the perspectives

of investigations that are related to the contemporary philosophy of dialogue.

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