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*The Road to Humanity*

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Droga do człowieczeństwa

Socrates's disciple, Plato, (427-347 B.C.) deepened the thought of his master about the ideal political system, by comparing the human psyche with the system of the State.

He taught that man acts under the influence of reason, feelings and emotions. These elements are contained in the human psyche and, to a varying extent, determine one's character. In an ideal human being these three elements (rational cognition, feelings and emotions) are harmoniously combined and, thus, reason enlightens one's conduct, feelings endow it with warmth, while emotions constitute the driving power of one's actions.

In society there exist three strata equivalent to the elements in the human psyche, namely, the labourers, whose main motivation is earning a living, the soldiers, who are directed by the emotion of love to their fatherland, and, finally, the ruling guardians or sages who understand the essence of the world and know the truth about the ideal system.

Plato ascribes a special role to reason in the life of both the individual and society, for only rational cognition can give a complete and clear picture of the world. Emotional response, that is, sensuous cognition, can provide only an obscure and deformed picture of the world.

Naturally, for Plato the key problem is the formation of the ideal political system which would function effectively while simultaneously ensuring a harmo-

nious cooperation of the labourers, the soldiers and the guardians. Thus, it would be a government by an intellectual elite, sanctioned by their education, wisdom, knowledge of the ideal system and experience. The elite would exercise dictatorial power on behalf of the other two social strata deprived of any influence on the affairs of the state.

In this way the Platonic ideal of a political structure was to be crowned with a small group of wise men with absolute power, defended by numerous groups of soldiers and auxiliary forces, and it was to rest on the broad foundation of the population of traders, craftsmen and farmers. "Until philosophers are kings" – says Plato – "or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from these evils – no, nor the human race, as I believe – and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day".

One may raise a question whether Plato's vision has ever been realised.

Yes, the Platonic ideal of the elite system did find a kind of realisation in Christian Europe which for a thousand years was ruled by an elite quite similar to that from Plato's Utopian vision.

Throughout the Middle Ages it was customary to divide Christian humanity into the classes of *laboratores* (labourers), *bellatores* (soldiers) and *oratores* (clergy). The latter group, though numerically small, monopolised the means and possibilities of education and it ruled with an almost unlimited power over half of the Continent. Following the pattern of Plato's guardians, the clergy obtained power not by means of popular elections by the people but on the basis of their own abilities shown during theological studies and in practical management as well as their inclination to contemplation and simplicity of life style. Celibacy strengthened their prestige, for they were not burdened with narrow family egoism, while simultaneously their engrossment in matters of spirit rather than the needs of the flesh contributed to the reverence shown to the clergy by lay sinners who abased themselves at the confessional.

The elite of the Church was an aristocracy characterised by an incredible political insight, so they succeeded in building the most admirable and the most powerful organisation the world had ever seen.

The Jesuits who for some time ruled in Paraguay were half Platonic guardians; they constituted a clerical oligarchy which was powerful thanks to their cunning and knowledge in the milieu of the native population.

What should we say, then, about Plato's political conception?

The ahistorical vision of the utopian system which was to be realised by Plato's guardians exerted its influence in the past and it still affects European thought. The influence is not always advantageous. We remember how much harm was done by various kinds of utopian visions which apparently were meant to save the world while harbouring a tendency to make people happy by force. The idea was to employ force to make happy those "little ones" who are not mature enough or who cannot understand the proclaimed "truths", known only to the ruling guardians.

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Plato's Utopia was strictly connected with the faith in the existence of eternal and unchangeable natural laws, the faith deeply rooted in the mentality of the world of antiquity.

The development of ancient Cities – States was accompanied by philosophical reflections concerning the essence of the social order which maintains ties between people.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., a group of philosophers known as the Sophists introduced a distinction between "*physis*", the natural order, and "*nomos*", the established order. The former was eternal, given by God, while the latter was restricted in time and established by human beings for practical needs. According to some, it was to serve the powerful (and those who had power), while according to others – it was to protect the weak.

The relativism of the established law – according to the Sophists – does not lead to social stability, hence natural law should constitute only an indicator determining the direction of the evolution of the society. For the human being, thanks to his reason, can distinguish between evil and good and should therefore direct his conduct accordingly.

Accepting the possibility of knowing the natural order, Socrates, Plato, as well as Aristotle, wanted to evaluate the established law on the basis of this order. However, they limited the cognition of the whole truth and full enjoyment of life to a small group of people, distinguished by talents, birth, wealth and education. And by education they understood the formation of character as a result of living in a respectable family and respectable state.

The Stoics who appeared at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. introduced a radical change by proclaiming one equal law of nature for everybody. In their opinion the ability of rational thinking characterizes all human beings rather than

only a small elite of the citizens of the City – State. According to the Stoics, the state of nature expresses social harmony, achieved as a result of the rational behaviour of human beings. However, human egoism disturbs this natural harmony and, therefore, the task of the positive law is to recover the lost natural order. In the view of the Stoics, life in harmony with reason is a natural life as well as moral life, since the laws of nature are identical with moral norms.

For the conception of the law of nature, of great significance was the *jus gentium*, that is, the law of nations applied in ancient Rome to the Romans and non-Romans.

*Jus gentium* was a system of practical rules used by Roman officials. It was neither an established law nor a result of developing some philosophical premises; it was a collection of practical principles applied to all peoples; with the passage of time it was eventually identified with natural law.

On the other hand, Saint Augustine (354-430) taught that before committing the original sin man lived under natural law and he was then free and happy. Only the original sin made him a helpless prisoner of the deserved punishment such as the positive law.

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In medieval Europe it was the Church that was the main centre of science and education, so it was also up to the Church to work out a theory of law which would meet the needs of the times.

Ancient conceptions could certainly be adopted but the popularization of the views of pagan thinkers could easily lead to an erosion of the authority of the Church. The dilemma was solved in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by the father of the canon law, Gratian, who reconciled the natural law of antiquity and the revealed divine law of the Old and New Testaments. Thus, instead of accepting the “golden rule”, which claimed “Do to others whatever you would like people to do to you”, he proclaimed Christ's command – “Love thy neighbour as thou love thyself”.

If in antiquity the idea of harmony was predominant, in the Middle Ages this role was played by the idea of hierarchy. Perhaps the most emphatic expression of this idea is to be found in the system of Saint Thomas Aquinas which resembles a hierarchically rising structure of the Gothic castle. St. Thomas taught that the rungs of the universe are eternal and unchangeable; that every fragment of the hierarchic construction serves its own proper function, subordinated to the higher elements of the structure. Each component and all the rungs of the structure –

ted by the links of mutual interdependence – had to move towards God who is the ultimate aim.

And thus in the 13<sup>th</sup> century St. Thomas Aquinas worked out a coherent system which also took into account the relations between the eternal divine law, natural law and human law, thus connecting ancient concepts and the needs of the Church. The **eternal law** – according to St. Thomas – is God's reason, and although in its full perfection it is unfathomable for man, it can nevertheless be partly comprehended by the mortals thanks to the revelation and due to the functioning of human reason. In turn, natural law – “Which is nothing else but only a manifestation of the participation of rational beings in eternal law” – contains rules which man can formulate as a result of participating in the eternal law. On the other hand, the **human law** is a specific application of natural law in the life of the society.

What seems most striking in the Thomistic conception is the uncompromising appeal to the reason and wisdom of God. Other Scholastics, such as John Duns Scotus, William Ockham, or Francesco Suarez thought that it was God's will rather than God's reason that constituted a source of natural law.

The medieval vision of the world was undoubtedly simple, understandable, appealing with its images to man's imagination. The idea of the hierarchy permeating the social structure determined the human picture of the world which constituted a coherent whole. It had one language – Latin, one faith – Christianity, one capital – Rome, one superior authority – the Pope, one organisational pillar – the Church. That world of the faithful was opposed to the world of the unfaithful. Although the Papacy and the Empire fought fierce battles for the power over this world, it did not change the fact that in human imagination it was a consistent conception.

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However, the intellectual climate in which the Middle Ages were drawing to their end was one of tensions and anxieties caused by various factors operating with different force, among others, by the growth of competing Christian denominations, the birth of national states, the anthropocentrism of Italian humanists or the advances made in natural sciences.

The breakdown of Christian unity was caused by various differences in the understanding of fundamental principles, leading to the differentiation of judgements. Machiavelli even openly postulated pluralism, that is, the coexistence of absolutely different moral systems, and advised his Prince to utilise both Christian ethics

and pagan ethics, depending on the needs of the republic. Italian humanists – especially their idea of the “manly man” (*vir virtutis*) who, thanks to his physical, intellectual and moral power can overcome all life obstacles and even oppose the fate – paved the way to individualism. And the appearance of national states makes the question about whether the relations between states are to be based only on force still topical.

Europe entered the age of deep intellectual ferment.

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The development of natural sciences indicated the need to follow natural phenomena and, analogously, to subject social phenomena to a rational and critical scrutiny and thus provide a rational justification of natural law.

This task was accomplished in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) who, while referring to the Stoics, thought that the universe is permeated with the rational law of nature. In his opinion, in man natural law appears as principles resulting from the essence of human nature. They are unchangeable but comprehensible. They distinguish the human being from animals by the desire of peaceful co-existence with others. The rules of the law of nature command: to keep promises, to acknowledge the equality of men, to observe rightness and justice, to take the parental responsibility for children, and also to remain faithful in marriage. In this way Europe was provided with new, universal moral standards, independent of the Church and the Holy Gospel, but not restricted to narrow national traditions, either. It was believed that the new principles result from the nature of the human being, and that they are binding for all, both the rulers and the subjects.

For Grotius the law of nature has a broader scope, because – in his opinion – it also regulates relations between sovereign states treated as moral subjects. Grotius was aware of the fact that not all the principles of natural law (e.g. the duty of parental care or marital fidelity) can be applied to relations between states. That is why he lay special emphasis on the duty of keeping promises both by individuals and by the states, regarding this rule as a basic condition of state and international order.

In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, experiencing the drama of the Civil War in England, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) made use of the idea of social contract to justify the absolute power of the ruler who – in his opinion – was the only guarantor of order. He thought that people in the state of nature are egoists, cruel to each other. Therefore, in order, to prevent the devastating, mutual brutality,

they decide – by way of contract – to subordinate themselves to a sovereign who becomes a social Leviathan. The only possible protection of the individual against the unlimited power of the sovereign is to be found in moral rules, contained in natural law, which – depending on his will – are used by the absolute ruler, responsible only to God.

In the next generation a milder version of social contract was proclaimed by John Locke (1632-1704). By that time the situation had changed since the reign of the Stuarts had revealed the pitfalls of absolutist rules, enslaving the subjects. That is why Locke claimed that people did not transfer all their rights to the sovereign but only entrusted him with the duty of protecting the legal order and care for the safety of the citizens. On the other hand, different natural laws, inseparably connected with the personality of the individual and constituting his property, are retained by the individual because they constitute – according to Locke – the essence of humanity. In this way Locke attempted to protect the individual from arbitrary decisions of the sovereign.

In 18th-century France the defence of the individual against absolutist monarchy was undertaken by Montesquieu (1689-1755) and Rousseau (1712-1778). The former maintained that natural laws precede all social bonds and are therefore superior in relation to both religious and state commands. On the other hand, Rousseau claimed that man, untainted by civilisation, “the innocent savage”, although he does not yet determine his conduct on the basis of reason, nevertheless possesses an instinct of self-defence and instinctive sympathy for the wronged. Rousseau believed that by social contract individuals do not transfer their rights to the sovereign but to the society as a whole, and therefore its general will is the only guarantor of freedom and equality. “Therefore I claim” – says Rousseau – “that sovereignty, being nothing but the exercise of the general will, can never be alienated, and that the sovereign power, which is only a collective being, can be represented by itself alone; power indeed can be transmitted, but not will”.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Rousseau's doctrine became the philosophy of the French Revolution.

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The European Enlightenment differs radically from the American Enlightenment; the former replaces faith in God with faith in Reason, while the latter turns Reason into a eulogist of God.

The European Enlightenment removes God from the universe or restricts His role to that of the Great Clock Maker who had created the world only to stop dealing with it altogether. On the other hand, the American Enlightenment is convinced of the perfection of God's order, about the priority of laws given to man by God, about the limitation of all human authorities and about the unceasing battle against the forces of evil, threatening the world and man.

When Jefferson was drafting the Declaration of Independence, the population of the thirteen colonies fighting for independence reached about 2.5 million, of which about half represented various denominations of Puritanism and related sects. It was just Puritanism that shaped the mentality of American colonists, inculcating in them – along with deep faith – the command: rationality, practicality and modesty in both private and public life. Puritan piety demanded from the faithful the reverence of God through honesty, severe life, and hard work, but also knowledge of the world.

On the other hand, the philosophers of the French Enlightenment and their revolutionary successors treated reason as an objective historical force which – when liberated from the chains of despotism – would make the world a realm of progress and happiness. In their opinion, all that exists demands a legitimisation by reason, which is nothing else but a totality of the possibilities of nature and man.

In this respect quite illustrative is Rousseau when in his famous *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750) he says: “It is a great and fine thing to see with one's own eyes how man, by his own efforts, somehow soars out of nothingness; when with the light of his reason he dispels darkness”. And Hegel says: “Reason is the autonomous lawgiver and cannot adopt norms from any other agency in earth or in heaven”.

While rejecting religious dogmas, the European Enlightenment brought people a new promise. A rationally operating authority was to make man happy here, on earth, that is, something that religion had never succeeded in doing. The point was to make life concur with nature, to allow reason to unveil the authentic world, the natural world, the world of order and harmony, and distinguish it from the world of appearances, injustice and exploitation.

The inhabitants of the New World, although their roots were deeply fixed in European tradition, could not accept that philosophy. The new situation gave birth to a new way of thinking; even though the colonists tried to imitate Europe, they first had to adapt themselves to the living conditions in the new continent. First of all, they were bound by the ties of religion, the person of the pastor, austerity of life, unshakeable belief in the divine order of the universe which is constantly



threatened by the satanic forces of evil both in the universe and in the human soul. The Bible was for them a foundation which enabled an understanding of all events they encountered in their hard life. They thought that reason enables the cognition of the world, revealing the divine wisdom and that a deeper knowledge of this world brings man closer to God. Their religious faith was intertwined with an apotheosis of reason and knowledge.

The colonists desired clear and obvious truths, which would concur with reason and experience. Thus, they accepted Locke's doctrine which, in their eyes, was a formulation of obvious truths, for it spoke, among others, about inalienable, natural rights of man. Locke did not have to convince the colonists; he merely reinforced their convictions.

The colonists rejected all ideas about the authoritative rules of sages or guardians. Jefferson simply called Platonic ideas of political system sheer "non-sense". In the New World people unshakeably believed in the republican system, because they thought that the authorities cease to threaten the freedom of the citizens only when nobody can rise above the others.

Both republicanism and rationalism of the Americans were deeply rooted in religion which accompanied them in their daily life. Colonial America was the country of believers. From the very beginning it was religion that constituted one of the most significant aspects of the American experiment. After all, it was initiated by the Puritan Pilgrims travelling to the Promised Land. But even later on, in spite of the secularisation that was spreading in subsequent periods, the inhabitants of the New World did not surrender the support provided by the Bible. Also in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the preacher was one of the most important figures to reckon with in the American scene.

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Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century there has been taking place an advancing process of industrialisation in Western Europe, and then in the United States. The process of industrialisation brought with it some radical changes in the mentality of societies. Among others, there occurred a considerable rise in the population of cities, known as urbanisation. There followed an increased mobility of population which was moving mainly from the countryside to the cities. There appeared advanced division of labour and unprecedented development of communication. Education became more widespread as a result of compulsory school training. Driven by the idea of constant progress and the accumulation of wealth, the

economy caused an intensification of modernisation and innovation. Industrialism demanded rational and effective operation, that is, a selection of proper means and methods to achieve a desired end. Life styles were becoming similar to each other, resulting in an apparent cultural unification, in spite of the fact that differentiation, assuming a variety of forms, is and will still be a feature of genuine humanity.

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Today cultural variety has become an acknowledged feature of modern society, It seems that we have gone a long way away from any apotheosis of any uniformity. Modern society is characterised by various visions of a good system and of worthy life. People tied with common language, religion or tradition form more or less compact groups which often look with mistrust or even hostility at their neighbours when they speak a different language, observe different traditions, profess different views, or attend churches of other denominations. To describe these differences we usually use the term "pluralism" which is meant to denote the differentiation of modern society. Such differentiation has always existed but today it has become part of our awareness; it is a natural consequence of the development of human qualities, especially in the climate of freedom, which has led man to self-awareness of his identity and sense of dignity.

The multiplicity and dissimilarity of people whose features cannot be compared or evaluated because we have no valid and legitimate criteria for such comparison or evaluation, has become an unquestionable truth. We can merely ascertain their dissimilarity. People cannot be seen or painted with one colour only. The beauty of our world consists in its variety. It should be accepted that humanity does not develop according to one pattern but through various cultures, each of which has its own laws.

If pluralism is a reality of our modernity, if it speaks about the development of the society and constitutes an expression of its greater maturity, then in such a situation we need a new conception of the state which would enable the co-existence of people who think and feel differently. The new state which should correspond to the new pluralistic society should provide for it an organisational framework. It should establish procedures necessary for an unbiased confrontation of various views. Under no circumstances should it express any ideology. Its main feature must therefore be an absolute ideological neutrality and absolute tolerance in respect to the professed views. At the same time the new state should embrace

an absolute rule which would enable the recalling of the government which exercised its powers in an unsatisfactory way. The ruled should have a right to decide about the ruling.

The conception of a system which would look for a *modus vivendi* for the pluralistic society is unquestionably difficult to achieve, for it is based only on mutual toleration and good will of those participating in the negotiation process. But it is perhaps the only road leading to a peaceful and voluntary co-existence of the pluralistic society, if we treat it as the highest form of the existence of open society.

And speaking about open society Karl Popper says: "...if we want to remain human beings – we must have the courage to aspire to open society"; he then adds: "We must dive deep into the unknown, the uncertain and the dangerous, taking advantage of all our reason to create security and freedom".

Our subjectiveness and our dignity spring from our humanity, that is, from our rational self-determination, not from our life style or our tradition, and even less from this or that ideology.

Obviously, in practice we are bound to maintain a balance between all the elements which shape our lives, yet constantly bearing in mind our humanity.

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In these remarks a special place is reserved for Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who achieved a Copernican breakthrough in approaching human dignity, by claiming that the human being can never be treated instrumentally. His views also close our considerations.

It is Kant's great merit to show that we cognize the external world only as our impression and the consciousness is by no means a passive "*tabula rasa*" but an active force by means of which our impressions – once they have entered our consciousness – are selected and constructively worked out.

But Kant also taught that the foundation of human ethics has an absolute value, that is, it does not result either from the doubtful sensuous experience or from uncertain inductions of experimental knowledge; nor is it justified by fallible reason.

According to Kant, the foundation of ethics has an *a priori* character and it has a universal and necessary significance, similarly to the absolute principles of mathematics.

This *a priori*, universal and unconditional ethical principle constitutes the categorical imperative of our conscience which commands; “act as if the principle of your action was to become a universal law of nature through the power of your will”.

The ethical imperative is also manifested as a live and direct intuition which says that we should avoid acts which – if all people committed them – would make social life impossible. For instance, a lie may temporarily help me out of an inconvenient situation, yet “I shall be immediately aware of the fact that although I want the lie, nevertheless, I certainly do not wish the lie to become a universal law; in such a situation no promise would have any value”. Hence, there is awakened in me a sense that I should not lie even for the sake of my own advantage.

The philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century assumed a very harsh attitude towards Kant's ethics, with its teaching about the inborn ethical sense, *a priori* and absolute. The science of evolution has shown unequivocally that the awareness of duty is a superimposition of the social character on individual psyche, that conscience comes into being by way of gradual development, although the social disposition, in an unclear form, should be regarded as an inborn feature.

Nevertheless, it should be remarked, that after over a century of objections against Kant's ethics, we find ourselves again in the chaos of metropolitan sensuality, of disregard of morality and ruthless individualism which has not been harnessed either by democratic conscience or by the aristocratic sense of honour. Hence, we may soon see the day when our culture, threatened by decline, again pays homage to Kant's ethical imperative.

#### STRESZCZENIE

Rozprawka zatytułowana *Droga do człowieczeństwa* jest próbą skrótego przedstawienia zmian w poglądach europejskiej myśli polityczno-społecznej na temat miejsca człowieka w społeczeństwie. Składają się na nią niewielkie ustępy, które nie mają najmniejszej ambicji ani pełnego przedstawienia problemu, ani też nie są schematem, w który by można siłą wcisnąć wielorakość myśli polityczno-społecznej. Są jedynie punktami orientacyjnymi na pokrętnym szlaku, wiodącym do poszanowania godności człowieka. Rozważania rozpoczyna omówienie elitarniej doktryny Platona, w której rządy mędrców uzasadniają: wykształcenie, wiedza, znajomość idealnego ustroju i doświadczenie. Elita platońska miała realizować dyktaturę w interesie społeczeństwa, pozbawionego jakiegokolwiek wpływu na sprawy państwa. Ahistoryczna wizja utopijnego ustroju, jaką mieli realizować platońscy mędrcy, wywarła olbrzymi wpływ na myślenie europejskie. W niej bowiem chodzi o „uszcześliwienie maluczkich”, którzy są ślepi i głusi na głoszone prawdy, znane jedynie rządzącym mędrcom. Stąd już krok do uszcześliwiania siłą.

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Utopia platońska była ściśle związana z wiarą w istnienie wiecznych i niezmiennych praw natury – wiarą głęboko tkwiącą w mentalności antycznego świata. W V i IV wieku p.n.e. grupa myślicieli – nazywanych sofistami – dokonała rozróżnienia między naturalnym porządkiem (*physis*) a porządkiem ustanowionym (*nomos*). Pierwszy jest wieczny i doskonały, nadany przez Boga, drugi natomiast, ustanowiony przez człowieka dla potrzeb praktycznych, jest niedoskonały i czasowo ograniczony. Wedle jednych sofistów porządek ustalony przez ludzi miał służyć silnym, tzn. posiadającym władzę, zaś wedle drugich – osłaniać słabych. Relatywizm prawa stanowionego ujawniał wyższość praw naturalnych nad normami prawa pozytywnego. Zasadniczą zmianę w pojmowaniu prawa natury wprowadzili w III wieku p.n.e. stoicy, nauczając, że jest jedno równe prawo natury, charakterystyczne dla wszystkich ludzi. Stąd „prawo natury” jest punktem orientacyjnym w poszukiwaniu godności ludzkiej.

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Następny punkt wyraża średniowieczną wizję wszechświata, w której idea hierarchii stabilizuje całą strukturę. Najdobitniejszym wyrazem tej idei jest system św. Tomasza z Akwinu, przypominający hierarchicznie wznoszącą się budowlę tumu gotyckiego. Nauczał św. Tomasz, że stopnie wszechświata są odwieczne i niezienne, że każdy fragment hierarchicznej struktury spełnia właściwą sobie funkcję podporządkowaną wyższym częściom budowli.

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Punkt następny nazwany jest „przełomem”. Klimat intelektualny, w jakim kończyło się średniowiecze, był pełen napięć i niepokojów wywołanych różnymi czynnikami, działającymi z różną siłą, m.in. wzrostem rywalizujących ze sobą sekt chrześcijańskich, narodzinami państw narodowych, antropocentryzmem włoskich humanistów czy rozwojem nauk przyrodniczych. Załamanie się jedności chrześcijańskiej spowodowało różne rozumienie podstawowych zasad, doprowadzając do zróżnicowania ocen. Machiavelli otwarcie postuluje pluralizm etyczny, tj. współistnienie absolutnie różnych systemów moralnych, radząc swemu księciu posługiwanie się i etyką chrześcijańską, i etyką pogańską – zależnie od potrzeb republiki. Humanści włoscy swą ideą „mężnego człowieka” (*vir virtutis*) – który dzięki swej mocy fizycznej, intelektualnej i moralnej łamie wszelkie przeszkody życiowe, a nawet przeciwstawia się fatum – torują drogę indywidualizmowi. Rozwój zaś nauk przyrodniczych sugerował, aby zjawiska społeczne, wzorem zjawisk przyrody, poddawać racjonalnej analizie i tym samym dać racjonalne uzasadnienie prawa natury. Zadaniu temu zadość uczynił w XVII wieku H. Grotius, który nawiązując do stoików uważał, że wszechświat jest przeniknięty rozumnym prawem natury. Uczył, że jego reguły nakazują: dotrzymywanie przyrzeczeń, uznanie równości ludzi, przestrzeganie słuszności i sprawiedliwości, ponoszenie odpowiedzialności rodzicielskiej za dzieci, a także dochowywanie wierności małżeńskiej. W ten sposób Europa otrzymała nowe, powszechne standardy moralne, niezależnie od Kościoła i Pisma Świętego. W połowie XVII wieku Thomas Hobbes, przeżywający dramat angielskiej wojny domowej, posłużył się ideą umowy społecznej dla uzasadnienia absolutnej władzy panującego, jedynego – jego zdaniem – gwaranta ładu i porządku. Uważał, że ludzie w stanie natury są egoiści i okrutni wobec siebie. Dlatego decydują się na drodze umowy poddać się absolutnemu suwerenowi, który staje się społecznym Lewiatanem. Łagodniejszą wersję umowy społecznej głosi

jedno pokolenie później J. Locke, twierdząc, że ludzie nie przekazali suwerenowi wszystkich swych praw, ale jedynie powierzyli mu obowiązek zapewnienia porządku prawnego i troskę o bezpieczeństwo obywateli. Inne natomiast prawa naturalne, wiążące się nierozdzielnie z osobowością człowieka i jego własnością, zachowuje jednostka, gdyż stanowią one – zdaniem Locke'a – istotę człowieczeństwa. W XVIII-wiecznej Francji obronę jednostki przed absolutną monarchią głoszą Montesquieu i Rousseau. Pierwszy utrzymywał, że naturalne prawa poprzedzają wszelkie związki społeczne i wobec tego są nadrzędne tak wobec nakazów religijnych, jak i państwowych. Drugi, Rousseau, uważał, że ludzie nie mogą przekazywać swych praw naturalnych jednostkowemu suwerenowi, ale tylko całemu społeczeństwu. Wówczas wola generalna całego społeczeństwa jest gwarancją wolności i równości. „Twierdzą – mówi Rousseau – że suwerenność polegająca jedynie na sprawowaniu woli powszechnej, nie może nigdy podlegać odstąpieniu i że zwierzchnik, będący istotą zbiorową, może być reprezentowany tylko przez samego siebie [...]”. Nic dziwnego, że doktryna Rousseau staje się filozofią Rewolucji Francuskiej.

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Na krętych drogach wiodących do pełnego uznania człowieczeństwa należy zatrzymać się przy nowym punkcie, nazwanym „relacje”. Chodzi po prostu o stosunek rozumu do wiary, który to stosunek zdecydowanie różnie ukształtował się w starej Europie w porównaniu z Nowym Światem. Innymi słowy – oświecenie europejskie w tej materii różni się zasadniczo od oświecenia amerykańskiego. Pierwsze zamienia wiarę w Boga w wiarę w Rozum, drugie czyni z Rozumu chwałę Boga. Oświecenie europejskie usuwa Boga z Wszechświata, albo Go ogranicza do roli Wielkiego Zegarmistrza, który stworzył wszechświat, aby potem więcej się nim nie zajmować. Oświecenie amerykańskie natomiast jest przekonane o doskonałości porządku boskiego, o prymacie praw nadanych człowiekowi przez Boga, o ograniczoności wszelkich ludzkich autorytetów oraz o nieustającej walce z siłami zła, grożącymi światu i człowiekowi. Odrzucając religijne dogmaty, oświecenie europejskie niesło ludziom nową obietnicę. Racjonalnie działająca władza miała uszczęśliwić człowieka tu na ziemi, czego nigdy wcześniej nie udało się uczynić religii. „Rozum jest autonomicznym prawodawcą – mówi Hegel – i nie może przejmować norm od jakiegokolwiek innej instancji na ziemi lub w niebie”.

Mieszkańcy Nowego Świata, mimo że swymi korzeniami głęboko tkwili w tradycji europejskiej, nie mogli akceptować takiej filozofii. Nowa sytuacja rodziła nowy sposób myślenia. Nawet jeśli koloniści starali się naśladować Europę, musieli dostosować się do warunków życia na nowym kontynencie. Przede wszystkim łączyła ich więź religijna, osoba pastora, surowość życia, niezachwiana wiara w boski porządek wszechświata, któremu stale grożą szatańskie siły zła zarówno we wszechświecie, jak i w duszy człowieka. Biblia była dla nich podstawą rozumienia wszystkich wydarzeń, z którymi stykali się w swym niełatwym życiu. Uważali, że rozum umożliwia poznanie świata, przejawiającego mądrość boską i że głębsza wiedza o nim zbliża człowieka do Boga. Ich wiara religijna spletała się z apoteozą rozumu i wiedzy. W obu światach całkowicie różnie kształtowała się relacja rozumu do wiary, stąd nasz punkt odniesienia, określony jako „relacje”.

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Jeśli pluralizm jest rzeczywistością naszej współczesności, jeśli mówi o rozwoju społeczeństwa i jest wyrazem jego większej dojrzałości – to w takim wypadku musimy mieć nową koncepcję państwa, które by umożliwiło koegzystencję różnie myślących i różnie od-

czuwających ludzi. Nowe państwo, odpowiadające pluralistycznemu społeczeństwu, winno być dla niego ramą organizacyjną. Winno stworzyć proceduralne warunki, aby bezstronnie umożliwić konfrontacje różnych stanowisk. Nie może też pod żadnym pozorem wyrażać jakiegokolwiek ideologii. Jego główną cechą zatem musi być absolutna neutralność ideologiczna i absolutna tolerancja wobec głoszonych poglądów. Jednocześnie w nowym państwie musi bezwzględnie obowiązywać zasada pozwalająca na odwołanie rządu, jeśli sprawuje on władzę w sposób niezadowolający obywateli. Koncepcja ustrojowa poszukująca *modus vivendi* dla społeczeństwa pluralistycznego jest bezsprzecznie trudna do realizacji, opiera się bowiem jedynie na wzajemnej tolerancji i dobrej woli uczestniczących w procesie negocjacyjnym. Ale jest to chyba jedyna droga wiodąca do pokojowej i dobrowolnej koegzystencji pluralistycznego społeczeństwa, jeśli je traktujemy jako najwyższą formę egzystencji ludzkiej. Nasza podmiotowość i nasza godność wyływają z naszego człowieczeństwa, w żadnym wypadku nie wynikają z naszego stylu życia, ani z naszej tradycji, a tym bardziej z takiej lub innej ideologii.

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W niniejszych uwagach szczególne miejsce należy się I. Kantowi, który dokonał kopernikańskiego zwrotu w pojmowaniu godności człowieka poprzez twierdzenie, że człowiek nigdy nie może być traktowany instrumentalnie. Jego też pogląd zamyka te rozważania. Kant uczył, że podstawa etyki ludzkiej ma walor absolutny, to znaczy nie wynika ona ani z wątpliwego zmysłowego doświadczenia, ani z niepewnych wnioskowań wiedzy doświadczałnej, ani też nie jest uzasadniona omylnym rozumem. Podstawa etyki – zdaniem Kanta – jest aprioryczna oraz ma powszechną i konieczną ważność, podobnie jak absolutne są zasady matematyki. Owa aprioryczna, powszechna i bezwarunkowa zasada etyczna jest kategorycznym imperatywem naszego sumienia, nakazującym: „Postępuj tak, jak gdyby zasada twego postępowania przez potęgę twojej woli stać się miała powszechnym prawem natury”. Dobrze wiemy, że filozofia XIX wieku surowo obesza się z etyką Kanta, z jego nauką o przyrodzonym zmyśle moralnym, apriorycznym i absolutnym. Wszakże nauka ewolucji wykazała niedwuznacznie, że świadomość obowiązku jest nawarstwieniem o charakterze społecznym w psychice jednostki i że sumienie powstaje drogą stopniowego rozwoju. Wszelako godzi się zauważyć, że po upływie ponad stulecia sprzeciwu względem etyki Kantowskiej, znaleźliśmy się znowu w chaosie wielkomięjskiej zmysłowości, lekceważenia moralności i bezwzględnego indywidualizmu, który nie dał się ujarzmić ani sumieniu demokratycznemu, ani arystokratycznemu poczuciu honoru. Może więc wkrótce nastąpić dzień, kiedy nasza kultura, zagrożona rozkładem, ponownie odda hołd Kantowskiemu imperatywowi etycznemu.

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Sens niniejszego szkicu poświęconego drodze do człowieczeństwa najlepiej oddają piękne i głębokie słowa B. Pascala: „Człowiek jest tylko trzcina najwątliwszą w przyrodzie, ale trzcina myślącą. Gdyby nawet wszechświat go zmiążdżył, człowiek byłby i tak czymś szlachetniejszym niż to, co go zabija, ponieważ wie, że umiera i zna przewagę, którą wszechświat ma nad nim, wszechświat zaś nie wie nic o tym”.

