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## SEARCHING EUROPE'S DESTINATION

### ABSTRACT

According to Andrzej Grzegorzczak's vision, Europe has "reached" Christianity as its conjectural ideological termination. This view, though tempting, arouses reservations. First of all, Christianity is not a cultural monolith. There is a huge chasm between the "Protestant ethic" with its ideal of *perfection* exhibited by rational effectiveness, and the Catholic and Orthodox ideal of *perfecting oneself* in one's sinfulness. Nor can one ignore Europe's deep cultural and religious split into a Latin West and a Byzantine East.

Secondly, we have been witnessing diverse cultural and demographic transformations in European civilization, some of which appear to be almost universal. They manifest themselves in a "decay" of individual Christianity, either in the form of "neolibertinism", or in a separation of normative ethics from religious ideology. In this context, counter-cultural movements find ideological support in the American social consciousness, as in the 1960's phenomena of flower children and hippies. These tendencies may have evolved into the developing New Age ideology, although they do not exercise the same degree of influence on the population. Some of them stand in opposition to Judeo-Christian moral principles—especially in their advocacy of permissiveness. Others propagate the traditional values found in Oriental doctrines. All of them are apparently anti-Christian; they may lead Europe in a new, so far unknown direction.

The decay of traditional morality was predictable, given the new permissiveness, especially in the area of sexual morality. Some of the effects may be considered alarming in that they appear side by side with an increase in wealth. One measurable consequence is observable in statistical yearbooks, which show a dramatic decline in the birth rate. For example, in Poland in 1980 (i.e., before the "moral revolution") the birth rate was 19.5 per 1000 inhabitants. By 1995, it had declined to 11.2, and in 1999 it was slightly lower, at 9.9. Some consequences are more clearly visible even without taking emigration into account—as the death rate declines only very slowly: In 1980 and 1999 it was equal, at 9.9 per 1000 inhabitants. The implications of these trends are noticeable throughout Europe. The demographic gap is nowadays often filled by Muslim Turks, who introduce not only non-Christian ideology, but in case of Poland—also bring traditions of an alien civilization (in contradistinction to our "own" Muslim Tatars, for al-

most a half of a millennium living together with Slavic and Christian Poles, who became participants of a common culture). Taken together, these developments challenge the thesis that Europe's cultural trajectory culminates with Christianity.

**Key words:** assertiveness; Buddhism; Christianity; counter-culture; culture; Europe; flower children; happiness; hedonism; Hinduism; hippies; holism; Human Potential Movement; ideology; Islam; Jainism; Judaism; *Karma*; knowledge; metempsychosis; "New Age"; Paweł Włodkowic; permissiveness; preaching; promiscuousness; "Protestant ethics"; psychedelic; rebirthing; reincarnation; *samsara*; totalitarianism; transpersonal psychology.

I would like to offer make some comments\* on Andrzej Grzegorzczak's book, *Europa. Odkrywanie sensu istnienia* [Europe: Discovering the Meaning of Existence] (Warszawa 2001).

To begin with, I cannot refrain from stating that I was immensely impressed by this book, amazed by its universalistic, historical, and philosophical narration of the spiritual and mental development of Europe. The author depicts these phenomena in a flowing, persuasive, and easily readable style. Professor Grzegorzczak's central argument is that Europe has reached Christianity as its conjectural ideological termination. I would like to focus my criticism on this matter only. However, the author exhibits a rich repository of knowledge that is woven into his main line of argumentation about Europe's intellectual traditions and spiritual trajectory. *Europe: Discovering the Meaning of Existence* is truly a magisterial work.

### EUROPE VERSUS ASIA

"European" Christianity, with its postulate of active good deeds in the world, emerges here as an ideology *sui generis*, as opposed to Asia's religions and great ethical systems. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism are characterized by *ahimsa*; they exhibit no imperative to perform good deeds, and even less a tendency for peaceful preaching (indeed, the Muslim idea of a jihad or holy war goes even further in direction incompatible with Christian trends). This line of analysis does not arouse my reservations, except perhaps for the somewhat light emphasis on the other distinguishing aspect, namely the unconditional acceptance in ancient Hindu ideologies of the impersonal and almost "mechanical" law of *karma*, which is inseparable from still another element of *samsara*, better known to us as metempsychosis, with its "mechanism" of rebirth, or reincarnation. The essential difference between Hinduism and Buddhism on the one hand, and Judaism and Christianity on the other, is exhibited also in their comprehension of human souls

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\* Extended *oral* voice in the discussion on the book at the Philosophical Seminar at the Warsaw University, held on 19th December 2001.

and of their ultimate fate<sup>1</sup>. It is, however, not my intention to blame the author for neglecting such aspects in his work. I could cite Goethe: “In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister”<sup>2</sup>—in his limitations he showed his mastery. Still, a few other somewhat critical observations must be made.

As mentioned earlier, the work appears to be a history of European spirituality. Thus, even if we assume its metaphoric (i.e. analogous) reasoning to be accurate, its conclusion will not necessarily follow previous historical situations. For, in history, as in evolutionism, no *prediction* is possible but only *retrodiction*<sup>3</sup>.

With a more pessimistic approach to the recent times<sup>4</sup> than that represented by the author, one should then complement the book's final and ideal picture with a few words in the form of “concluding remarks”. The matters that I intend to touch upon are preliminary, and perhaps (God grant!) marginal. Hence, at this stage this discussion does not affect the “validity” of the original reasoning. Only in distant future, should these “alternative” trends (as they are called) prove stable, could they force revising of conclusions on Europe's “meaning of existence”.

Let me start by saying that the author's vision seems to have been constructed with two key premises in mind: that all Europeans fit into it, and that Europe has been experiencing a process which in biology is referred to as *orthoevolution*. I will attempt to demonstrate that both premises are, in fact, incorrect.

Referring to the *first matter*, one could divide humans into two sub-populations. One would be people who try to achieve and maintain consistency between their life and their outlook of the world, and the other one would be those who without any cognitive or moral concerns use numerous and inconsistent theories that fit various aspects of the world and/or their behavior. It is the former group that Grzegorzcyk described and addressed.

Clearly, I appreciate his motivation to such understanding of the world, for I share it myself. However, I believe such “people of one theory” are a minority among the human kind, and by the same token, in Europe. The majority seems to be composed of people who use “knowledge” as it is understood by Profes-

<sup>1</sup> S. Schayer, “Braminizm” [Braminism], in *Religie Wschodu* [Religions of the East], Warszawa [1938], 119–190; S. Schayer, “Buddyzm indyjski” [Indian Buddhism], *ibid.*, 191–252; E. Kluba, *Z dawnych wierzeń indyjskich* [From Old Indian Beliefs], Warszawa 1965; A. Tokarczyk, *Hinduizm* [Hinduism], Warszawa 1986; J. L. Brockington, *The Sacred Thread of Hinduism in its Continuity and Diversity*, Edinburgh 1981; Polish ed.: *Święta nić hinduizmu*, Warszawa 1990. Note: [here and below] years of publication not printed in books are given in square brackets.

<sup>2</sup> J. W. von Goethe, *Von deutscher Art und Kunst: Einige fliegende Blätter*, Hamburg 1773.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Retrodiction’ Lat. *rētrō* ‘backward’, late Lat. *dīctiō* ‘speaking’, process of reasoning opposite to prediction, i.e. against the axis of time, as adopted in all historical sciences, e.g. in phylogenetic considerations—where it is based on a fundamental thesis—that each phenomenon may have many consequences but is a result of a mere developmental line.

<sup>4</sup> Author of the present remarks has expressed such an attitude in an essay “Obraz człowieka—‘być sobą’ z perspektywy zwierzęcia i człowieka” [The Image of Man: To ‘be oneself’ from the animal and human perspective], in *Filozoficzne i naukowo-przyrodnicze elementy obrazu świata* [Philosophical and Scientific Elements of the Outlook on the World], eds. A. Latawiec, K. Kloskowski and G. Bugajak, no. 2, 2000, 62–76.

sor Ryszard Wójcicki,<sup>5</sup> who defines it as a “cluster” of an individual’s assumptions and convictions on a particular matter, and *directed towards a certain realm of activity*, with particular “knowledges” about the same matter not necessarily fully concordant, for human knowledge in each moment is situational.

### QUO VADIS, EUROPE?

Let us now proceed to the *second matter*. To me, it appears unfeasible to state that Europe has experienced a one-way evolution that has led it from paganism to Christianity, even if a degree of influence from Jewish Diaspora is allowed, as well as some local and temporary Islamic impact. And let me refrain here from making any projections for which no sensible and reliable methodology can be found.

Taking the example of the contemporary break of millennia—a perspective of two millennia served Grzegorzczyk’s analysis—let us then see, whether, when asked: “What meaning has Europe recently found”, we are in a position to answer with full optimism (and I write this as a Christian) that it has been the ‘meaning’ of the Christian outlook of the world, as is the author’s conclusion. And, besides, it needs to be noted that practical consequences of Christian faith also depend on the specific doctrine: There is a huge difference between “Protestant ethics”,<sup>6</sup> with their ideal of *perfection* exhibited by effectiveness, and the Catholic and Orthodox ideal of *perfecting oneself* in one’s sinfulness, which affects the joy of life of a common member of a given church. Neither can one ignore the deep split in Europe, perhaps more of a cultural than a religious nature, between the Latin West and the Byzantine East!

And so, if totalitarian regimes are considered an important aspect of the past century, their roots are found equally in Eastern despotism of the “Third Rome” and in Western absolutism of previous ages, and also in the disrespect for the rights of an individual, so eminently expressed in [nominally] Christian Europe’s aphorism: *Cuius regio eius religio*. Or, take Teutonic practices that Paulus Vladimiri (Polish: Paweł Włodkowic)<sup>7</sup> so vehemently fought at the Council of Constance (1414–18). Have they ever been truly and commonly disapproved of in their nature? Is it not too often that one version of Christianity becomes a pretext for persecuting people who serve another, as, for that matter, has been the case in Northern Ireland?

The above could be classified as expressions of fundamentalism, although I am far from seeking any justification for them. But the gradual drifting away

<sup>5</sup> R. Wójcicki, oral statement.

<sup>6</sup> Max Weber: *Die protestantische Ethik*, München und Hamburg [1904–05].

<sup>7</sup> *Tractatus de potestate papae et imperatoris respectu infidelium*, Constantiae 1415. We may add that our country was to a certain degree in opposition to both the principle *Cuius regio...* (the last of Polish kings from the Jagiełło dynasty said “I am not a king of your conscience”), as well as detested Muscovite despotism.

from Christianity, manifested in many areas since World War II, has been a lot more significant.

### DECLINE OF THE CONTROLLING POWER OF IDEOLOGY?

First of all, a swift and common “decay” of individual Christianity can be observed. It began among free West European nations, and after 1990 reached Poland’s geographical area, in which the decline of political and ideological pressure was treated as permission for “full” liberty. While the notion of “liber-tinism” is a historical one, the phenomenon itself is not. It is in this realm that very frequently religious “knowledge” is treated as one of those “clusters” of a person’s beliefs described by Professor Wójcicki as apparently having no relation to others, particularly ethical ones. For example, honesty is valued in itself, but in a politician it is seen as a lack of competence, or at least a mistake. The law, in human views, and especially in legal practice, appears to be a domain that is absolutely autonomous from morality, while ethics—at least in social practice—seems to have lost its meaning as a determinant of human behavior. It is as if it has ceased to be a part of culture<sup>8</sup>.

Furthermore, also in the domain of pure religious beliefs, the rising wave of liberalism—treated as “the only right” ideology that does not infringe on the rights of a human individual—does not allow us to identify the common fact of selecting only suitable beliefs—a heresy, even though the term itself derives from Gr. *haíresis*, i.e. an “act of choice”. This concerns even the truths of faith, although these are often simply not known to ordinary confessors<sup>9</sup>.

### DOES NEW AGE BRING RETREAT FROM THE CULTURAL HERITAGE?

Above all, the deterioration of individual Christianity concerns morality, and especially the “dissociation” of religious “ideology” from normative ethics. This leads to a large scale secularization reaching even those who are formally believing Christians. This trend is in line with the hedonic pursuit of happiness at any price, already here on Earth. Such an attitude brings about the permissiveness that

<sup>8</sup> I use here a definition of culture based upon a view of Prof. Andrzej Wierciński, in which strong significance has been given to the *transmitted in the course of tradition* (that is, not genetically) *regularities of feeling, thinking and behaviour of members of the society*, in which the basic role is played by the “ideological controlling subsystem, ICS”, which according to A. Wierciński “Antropologiczna definicja kultury” [Anthropological definition of culture]. *Problemy*, no. 8/377 (1977), 27–30; “Antropologiczne ujęcie kultury i ewolucji kulturowej” [Anthropological formulation of culture and cultural evolution], in *Wizje człowieka i społeczeństwa w teoriach i badaniach naukowych* [Visions of Man and Society in Theories and in Scientific Research] ed. S. Nowak, Warszawa 1984, 66–82, and also in: A. Wierciński, *Magia i religia* [Magic and Religion], Warszawa 1994, 71–86, 88–91: includes outlook on life and social institutions linked with it as its carriers.

<sup>9</sup> I have heard from a priest who visits Catholic homes in the Christmas season that Christian (!) candidates for matrimony in Warsaw often cannot recite the “Lord’s prayer”.

characterizes the *counter-cultural movement*. Paradoxically, it is not only spontaneous “grass-root” hedonism, as is not the whole movement, which at one time included American flower children, or hippies. For, as our outstanding anthropologist Andrzej Wierciński notes,<sup>10</sup> “it is the joint action of the ideology of the ‘Left’ (that has been stronger in Europe) and of the ideology of the ‘psychedelic’ New Age (that has been stronger in the USA) that brought counter-culture into life”. And this ideology had its “parents”, American psychology in the first place.

One would be mistaken in believing that a psychologist teaches us how to live. Seneca believed that *philosophia nihil aliud est quam honeste vivendi scientia*. A contemporary psychologist is, however, extremely distant from being a “philosopher”, and does not attempt to suggest any models of behavior, or, even less, socialization. The trend of “rearing” children free of any compulsions is no longer popular, but in that domain, as in psychology, the ideals of so-called humanistic psychology are strong. Abraham H. Maslow<sup>11</sup> was its leading founder, with his hierarchy of human needs [in order of decreasing importance]: physiological needs, followed by safety, belongingness, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Only after one’s primary needs are fulfilled, can an individual move to a higher level in the hierarchy (similar to the old rule: *primum vivere, deinde philosophari*), while someone that reaches self-actualization is capable of fully utilizing his, or her, “potential”.

From those roots, the “Human Potential Movement” emerged,<sup>12</sup> and became popular in the USA in the 1960’s. It includes Gestalt therapy, which emphasizes the “here and now” understood as the presence of feelings, of “body language”, of spontaneity and responsibility for oneself, with a positive view of a man and his ability to achieve happiness. *Nota bene*, it is a theory not so much associated with Gestalt psychology (*Gestaltpsychologie*), as with the increasingly more fashionable “holistic”—that is, emphasizing the wholeness-approach of self-actualization. The father of that therapy was Fritz Perls. Other activists of the *Human Potential Movement* included William Schultz (University of California at Los Angeles), Ralph Metzner and Richard Alpert (Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., USA), Timothy Leary<sup>13</sup> (Washington State University), Carl Rogers<sup>14</sup>, Roberto Assagioli and Jean Houston<sup>15</sup>. Michael Murphy (Stanford Uni-

<sup>10</sup> A. Wierciński, “Dwa modele realizacji ‘Współczesniaka’ ” [Two models of realization of contemporary fool]. *The Peculiarity of Man*, vol. 4 (1999), 427–435.

<sup>11</sup> A. H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Princeton, N.J. 1962; Idem: *Motivation and Personality*, 2d ed., New York 1970.

<sup>12</sup> See G. J. and E. Jud, *Training in the Art of Loving: The Church and the Human Potential Movement*, Philadelphia 1972; Harold C. Lyon, Jr., *It’s me and I’m here! From West Point to Esalen: The struggles of an overachiever to revitalize his life through the Human Potential Movement*, New York 1974.

<sup>13</sup> T. Leary, *Psychedelic Prayers After the Tao Te Ching*, London 1972; Idem, *The Politics of Ecstasy*, Berkeley, CA [1990]; T. Leary et al., *The Psychedelic Experience. A manual based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, New York 1964.

<sup>14</sup> C. Rogers, *A Way of Being*, Boston 1995.

versity)<sup>16</sup> and Richard Price—two “visionaries” (as they are referred to in the web-site information at [www.Esalen.com](http://www.Esalen.com))—have created A Center for Alternative Education at Esalen. It is a “transformational practices forum”, a shelter that restores one to health, a world community of searchers that is meant for conducting research in humanities and sciences, and supports full realization of the human potential.” Murphy and Price have laid the philosophical grounds for Esalen goals and its values. Information on the work of those scientists can be found in the study by Drury.<sup>17</sup> Therapies characteristic of *New Age* philosophy include “Rebirthing”—a set of techniques proposed by Leonard Orr<sup>18</sup> and meant to enable one to relive one’s birth,” and “Holotropic Breath Therapy—a method created by Stanislav Grof,<sup>19</sup> who was one of the luminaries of transpersonal psychology.”<sup>20</sup>

From that movement, the postulate of developing assertiveness in oneself has emerged, that is, the individual’s ability to act in a bold self-confident manner without declining the rights of others.<sup>21</sup> Fight for assertiveness now becomes an element of utilizing one’s right to happiness. No one denies this right. Practice, however, shows a tendency to equate *happiness* with *pleasure*,<sup>22</sup> as psychologists such as D. Swanbrow seem to imply. In her “seven steps to happiness”,<sup>23</sup> one can find appeals such as: (1) Give warmth to others, (2) Do only the work that you like, (3) Be helpful, (5) Evoke energy in yourself, (6) Organize your life, but keep relaxed, and (7) Keep the course. But we also find the following “commandment” (p. 26), (4) Make the pursuit of happiness your main goal. We read: “Good will is not enough, planning is indispensable. Decide, what *makes you happy* and find time for doing that, and you *will be happy*”. In that article, we also find a hint from Edward Diener of University of Illinois, that “one should aim at having his joys frequent and lengthy, but not too intensive” [*sic!*—JAC].

<sup>15</sup> J. Houston, *Life Force: The psycho-historical recovery of the self*, Wheaton, Ill. 1993; Idem, *A passion for the Possible: A guide to realizing your true potential*, Thorndike, Me. 1998; Idem, *Jump Time: Shaping your future in a world of radical change*, New York 2000.

<sup>16</sup> M. Murphy, *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the further evolution of human nature*, Los Angeles 1992; M. Murphy and S. Donovan, *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation: A review of contemporary research with a comprehensive bibliography, 1931–1996*, 2nd ed. by E. Taylor, Sausalito, Calif. 1997.

<sup>17</sup> N. Drury: *Psychologia transpersonalna. Ludzki potencjał* [Transpersonal Psychology: Human Potential], Poznań 1995.

<sup>18</sup> L. Orr and Sondra Ray, *Rebirthing in the New Age*, Millbrae, CA 1977.

<sup>19</sup> S. Grof, *The Adventure of Self-discovery*, Albany 1988; S. Grof, H. L. Cayce, R. C. Johnson, *The Dimensions of Dying and Rebirth: Lectures from the 1976 Easter conference at the Association for Research and Enlightenment, inc.*, Virginia Beach, Va. 1977; C. Grof and S. Grof, *The Stormy Search for the Self: A guide to personal growth through transformational crisis*, Los Angeles 1990.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted from B. Dobroczyński, “Proteuszowe oblicze Wodnika. Co to jest ‘New Age’?” [Protean face of Aquarius. What is “New Age”?], *Znak*, 43 no. 7 / 434 (1991), 71–91.

<sup>21</sup> P. Mansfield, *Jak być asertywnym. Naucz się mówić „nie”* [Orig. title: Why am I afraid to be assertive?], Poznań 1995.

<sup>22</sup> S. Braun, *The Science of Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Mood*, New York 2000.

<sup>23</sup> D. Swanbrow, “Paradoks szczęścia” [The Paradox of Happiness], *Wiedza i Życie*, no. 6, 1990, 25–27.

Such ideologies, which by their nature contest the traditional course of the Christian European civilization in the 1960's, gave grounds, as Wierciński writes in his article, to counter-cultural international and educational organizations. They embody the counter-cultural view of the world and the methods for their realization. "In particular, universities organized at that time in the U.K., France, Germany, Italy and USA, which were called 'free', 'critical', or simply—'anti-universities', aimed at criticizing the system of education and upbringing—starting from family, up to all levels of school education. They proposed abandoning grades in examinations, scientific degrees, and obligatory programs. These were to be replaced with free choice and professional administration. Emphasis was put on 'neo-Marxism', hippie culture, street literature and poetry, on methods of organizing demonstrations and other mass performances, on equality of race and gender, and on anarchist approaches and ways of behavior."

As Fridtjof Capra<sup>24</sup> has emphasized, the contesting acts of the 50's—starting from appeals for peace and love, as in the widely known from street-posters "make love not war"!, and from environmental movements (Gaia), "through new music (so-called acid, or psychedelic rock), and experiments with drugs and exotic techniques of 'broadening the consciousness', up to critics of the Western consumer society, and to discovery by the hippies of 'cosmic religiousness' ". These were all significant moments that enabled *New Age* to emerge as a philosophy of life. And let us add that it proposes the sentimental and "contemplative" "blah-blah" of the *Age of Aquarius* philosophers: hazy mysticism of Gaia ("live" Earth)<sup>25</sup>, with which materialistic pseudo-mysticism lives without conflict<sup>26</sup>.

Music is a strong steering factor for the human psyche. Therefore, the music and songs of the counter-culture became an important factor in connecting the means of behavior with ideology on a mass scale. Wierciński writes "that music, associated with the text of the song, with the particular adornment of its performers, and their behavior (usually mimicking coital movements), was exquisitely

<sup>24</sup> F. Capra, *Uncommon Wisdom. Conversations with remarkable people*, New York 1988.

<sup>25</sup> M. Ryszkiewicz, *Matka Ziemia w przyjaznym Kosmosie: Gaja i zasada antropiczna w dziejach myśli przyrodniczej* [Mother Earth in Friendly Cosmos], Warszawa 1994, pp. 14, 19; cf. B. Dobroczyński, "Proteuszowe oblicze Wodnika. Co to jest 'New Age'?" [Protean Face of Aquarius. What is "New Age"?], *Znak*, 43 no. 7/434, 1991, 71–91; A. Wierciński, "Krytyka krytyki New Age" [A Critique of the Criticism of New Age]. In *Oblicze nowej duchowości* [Face of New Spirituality] ed. M. Gołaszewska, Kraków 1995, pp. 65–83; A. Zamojski, "Psychotechnologia New Age. Transformacja świadomości w Erze Wodnika" [Psycho-technology of New Age. Transformation of Consciousness in the Age of Aquarius] *Miscell. Philosophica*, 2, no. 3, 1998, pp. 157–186.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. H. Hausdorf, *Das Jahrhundert der Rätsel und Phänomene* (Polish ed.: *XX wiek—stulecie zagadek i fenomenów*, Warszawa 2001, chapt. "Rok 1917: Fatima—bliskie spotkanie trzeciego stopnia?" [1917: Fatima—Close Encounter of the Third Degree?], pp. 50–53], chapt. "Rok 1981: Objawienia maryjne w Medjugorie" [1981: Revelations of St. Mary in Medjugorie, pp. 202–203]; A. E. Alford, *Gods of the New Millennium* (Polish ed.: *Bogowie Nowego Tysiąclecia. (Kim byli i kiedy powrócą prawdziwi stwórcy człowieka i ziemskiej cywilizacji)*, 2nd ed. Warszawa 2001.



suiting for steering mass shows and, recently, sub-culture communities of fans of any given band” (1999—cf. footnote 10). This counter-cultural music has been, “from the times of *beat* through various forms of *rock*, *rap*, etc.,” dominated “by truly immense amplifying and a strongly monotonous rhythm of the drums, up to reaching the most up-to-date expression of techno ‘music’”. Such music often drowns out any reflection and thought, as its rhythmic noise accompanied by blinking lights and—last but not least—drugs, put participants into a trance.

### PERMISSIVENESS AND ITS UNEXPECTED RESULTS

Such a *séance* often encourages abuse of the right to happiness. After America, which applies in practice an “octologue” without the 6th and 9th Commandments<sup>27</sup>, and propagates that in its films [which have dominated also Poland’s film market]—the so called having sex has begun to be a sort of entertainment, not related to marriage. Despite the spread of AIDS, promiscuity spreads, with a growing—even among the Polish youth—ostracism of virginity, seen as something that lowers a young person’s social status, while partners clearly say to each other that they do “not want to become *involved*”—presumably *even* in terms of feelings . . . And, as I have already pointed out on a similar forum,<sup>28</sup> it needs to be kept in mind that freeing instincts from the control of the human mind and will would definitely not be a “return to nature”, as Jean Jacques Rousseau’s admirers could conceive, but would be a catastrophe, also in biological terms. Of course, those phenomena have always existed. Recently, however they have become increasingly salient, not only in lay circles, but also among those who claim to be religious.

Permissiveness cuts the roots of human existence and of social order.<sup>29</sup> It also slow-downs the population growth, and if one looks from the angle of preserving ethnic and cultural diversity, Europe’s becoming more and more depopulated of its native inhabitants has to be evaluated as wrong. Not all of us are aware of the scale: Population increase in Christian European countries, as compared to Islamic (but secular) Turkey, where it reached [per 1000 inhabi-

<sup>27</sup> In Calvinist Reformed Church these are Commandments VII i X; see Anonym, *Porównanie wyznania rzymskokatolickiego z ewangelicko-reformowanym* [A Comparison Between the Roman-Catholic and Evangelic-Reformed Denominations], 4th ed., Wilno: Nakł. Wileńskiego Synodu Ewangelicko-Reformowanego, 1937, 60.

<sup>28</sup> J. A. Chmurzyński, “Czy z ‘dewiacją’ trzeba walczyć?”—głos w dyskusji nad zagajaniem prof. A. Grzegorzycyka pt. “Wizja kondycji ludzkiej we współczesnym świecie” podczas posiedzenia Komitetu Nauk Filozoficznych PAN w dniu 18 października 1999 r. [Should we Fight against ‘Deviation’?—a comment to the opening address of Professor A. Grzegorzycyk “Vision of Human Condition in Contemporary Europe” during the session of the Philosophy Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences on 18th October, 1999], *Przegląd Filozoficzny N.S.*, 8, no. 4/32, 1999, 136–141.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. (footnote 4) my already quoted article: “The Image of Man: To ‘be oneself’ from the animal and human perspective”, in *Philosophical and Scientific–Natural Elements of the Outlook on the World*.

tants] in 1990—18,0 persons, and in 1998 similarly high—14,8 persons, as illustrated in the table below:

**Table I.** Demographic changes in selected European countries per 1000 inhabitants

Country Year	Ireland	UK	Sweden	Belgium	The Netherlands	France
1990	6.1	2.8	3.4	1.9	4.6	4.1
1998	6.0	1.5	-0.4	1.0	4.0	3.4

Country Year	Germany	Austria	Czech Republic	Poland	Hungary	Italy
1990	-0.1	1.0	0.1	4.1*	-2.0	0.4
1998	-0.7	0.4	-1.8	0.5**	-4.3	-0.9

Source: “Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2000”, Warsaw 2000:

\* In 1983 still amounted to 9.5.

\*\* 0.0 in 1999; in 1998 Poland’s population reached 38 667 thousand, in 1999—38 654 thousand, and the forecast for 2005 is 38 634 thousand.

We see that only in truly Catholic Ireland, as well as in Holland, and—perhaps due to state care—in France, there has been a fair population growth per 1000 inhabitants, whereas in most other European countries, including Poland, it has been dramatically low, or even negative. This may be related to a decreasing number of young people entering marriages. Among Poland’s 38.6 million nation, the number of marriages concluded in 1999 (219.4 thousand, i.e. ca. 6 per 1000 inhabitants) exceeded merely by . . . 1 200 the number of marriages dissolved due to death (173.3 thousand) and divorces (42 000). No wonder that the demographic change in Poland is no longer characterized by population increase. It is even lower than in Austria or Spain, and is still accompanied by net emigration of several thousand people per year. Due to that deficit, we may be compelled to pave the way for immigrants. If these are Turkish migrants, as have been in Germany, the cultural situation will be likely to change, as they significantly differ from our Muslims, descendants of the “Lithuanian” Tatars—and presently Islamic Poles<sup>30</sup>.

Obviously, in a reasonable time perspective, this will not in a noticeable manner change the character of our Commonwealth’s population. But the problem will grow—together with of all the other, already discussed, cultural trends progressing, which cannot be convincingly described as short-lived.

America more and more explicitly, and Europe close behind it (but not the world of Islam), have been exhibiting the “fashion” of retrieving from grand

<sup>30</sup> Several articles in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 5/2743 (2002) of 3rd February were devoted to this problem.

ideologies, including the Christian ideology. Pagan, or semi-pagan traditions have benefited from that in the West, and have even expanded beyond their original cultural area, with a parallel de-sacralization of Western Europe's cultural heritage. For instance, in Poland, the Americanized "pagan" Halloween, falling on All Saints Day's Eve, has become almost a cultural revelation. Whereas, no one attempts, for instance, to search for the Holy Grail . . .

No wonder that we at the same time observe the fading of the ideal of service, and of the naturally related self-restraint. It has been visible since the 1990's also in our country—in medicine (who would today understand the mentality of Dr. Judym, a hero from the novel *The Homeless* by Stefan Żeromski?), or among teachers (teacher strikes). Even when passing to the realm of art, if we only mean pop art, we are bothered again by moral problems, as we have to do there with a circle of a positive feedback control system.

Neither can one neglect another factor that corrodes the convictions underlying rational control of human voluntary behavior. I mean here the repeatedly quoted views that some gene alleles, or their mutilations, as well as chromosomal mutations, not only incline their "carriers" to fall ill with particular diseases, but are also able to cause moods or behaviors of a negative moral qualification, such as alcoholism, aggressiveness, cruelty, homosexuality, etc. (although in the last case such predispositions do not necessarily preordain homosexual or heterosexual preferences, for postnatal events can override such genetic influence). These views still remain to be better supported experimentally and critically interpreted by specialists on ethics and philosophical anthropology. In the Polish literature of a broader scope I have found only one view of our outstanding anthropologist, Tadeusz Bielicki,<sup>31</sup> that freedom of will means that a man is able to realize what the tendencies of his biological nature are, and not only to control them, but even repress some of these natural tendencies, among them especially to withstand the *maximization of fitness (MF) rule* (i.e., that of handing down a maximum of his genes to the offspring) in the name of values that he consciously assents to be higher.

Creators willingly say that art should, or at least may, reflect the condition of contemporary society and human life. No wonder that—in light of the above situation (and we still ignore the constantly reappearing nationalism, expanding terrorism and other phenomena as kidnapping for ransom, prostitution or illegal adoption, drug trade, etc.)—we can observe a deterioration of representational art, whether exhibited by a fascination with ugliness of the surrounding world, especially of people (as in many paintings by Jerzy Duda-Gracz) or by meaningless

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<sup>31</sup> T. Bielicki, " 'Światopogląd naukowy' i naczelné wartości ludzkiego życia: harmonia czy dysonans?" ["Scientific philosophy" and the leading values of human life: Harmony or dissonance?], in *Wizje człowieka i społeczeństwa w teoriach i badaniach naukowych* [Visions of Man and Society in Theories and in Scientific Research], ed. S. Nowak, Warszawa 1984, 188–214; Idem, "Natura ludzka: jaka jest—i czy jest?" [Human nature: What is it like, or does it exist at all?], *Problemy* no. 9/518, 1989, 2–7.

compositions (titled simply as No's 2314, 2315, 2316, and others). It is probably more difficult to comprehend that this also affects music, even that written with a capital 'm'—which desperately avoids tunes, consonances, the heptatonic major-minor diatonic scale, and with this pleasure becomes lost in noise.

Returning to the text by Andrzej Grzegorzcyk, I have to note that new, expansive ideologies propose to the world things quite different from those he has indicated: The contemporary world, similarly as it was at the time of the New Testament, “does not give us what Christ gives us” (J 14, 27). This statement is even more pungent when we realize that we are now in a quite opposite situation. The world is now two thousand years *after* the coming of Christ and his teaching. And for Jews, who also participate in that mental and moral transformation, it has been almost thirty-six centuries from the time when Moses revealed the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai!

### THE FUTURE: A STILL OPEN CHANCE

The only consolation is to hope that my pessimistic view on the situation results from an erroneous overestimation of those new trends. Keeping in mind that under the 18th century French libertinism one could not expect the future recurrence of the burgher's mentality of the 19th and 20th centuries, one may surmise that a retreat from the counter-culture will emerge.

In closing my remarks, I have to confess that just as Mr. Grzegorzcyk *does not*, neither *can I* propose a rescue program for Europeans from beyond the circle of the theist ideology, i.e., for the non-believing and atheists. It is known from the vicissitudes of the secular ethics of Tadeusz Kotarbiński,<sup>32</sup> with his “reliable patron” (Polish “opiekun spolegliwy”), that such constructs do not have the persuasive strength of a “categorical imperative”. Therefore, I also do not envisage any broad success for my attempts<sup>33</sup> to establish “ecological” ethics that meet the biological requirement of individual homeostasis and the maximization of cultural and ethnical “fitness”. At best, they can be useful as additional non-religious support for religious ethics—possibly helpful for some tepidly believing Judaists and Christians.

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<sup>32</sup> T. Kotarbiński, *Medytacje o życiu godziwym* [Meditations on Fair Life], Warszawa 1966.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. (footnote 4) my already quoted article: “The Image of Man: To ‘be oneself’ from the animal and human perspective”, *op. cit.*; Idem: “Uwagi etologa o rodzinie i wychowaniu”—rozszerzona wypowiedź ustna podczas Konferencji *Edukacja ekologiczna w rodzinie* [Remarks of an ethologist on family and upbringing of children—an extended oral voice during a conference on *Ecological Education in the Family*], *Episteme*, no. 9, 2000, 7–34.