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Tadeusz H. Czeżowski and Henryk M. Elzenberg: The Toruń School of Analytical Axiology

The Origins of the Toruń Centre for Axiological Studies

The establishment of the Toruń philosophical centre on 24 August 1945 constituted a unique instance of the transplantation of the Vilnius and Lviv scholarly traditions to the newly founded Nicolaus Copernicus University.¹ Although Tadeusz Hipolit Czeżowski (born 26 July 1889 in Vienna, died 28 February 1981 in Toruń – an adherent of the philosophical school established in 1895 by Kazimierz Twardowski at the University of Lviv and known as the Lviv–Warsaw School)² and Henryk Józef Maria Elzenberg (born 18 September 1887 in Warsaw, died 6 April 1967

¹ Józef Pawlak, "Tadeusz Czeżowski", *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Filozofia* 13 (234) (1991): 4.

² Anna Jedynak, "Początki szkoły lwowsko-warszawskiej" ("The Beginnings of the Lviv–Warsaw School"), *Galicja. Studia i Materiały* 2 (2016): 168.

in Warsaw – a philosophical outsider³ critical of the “weakness of the programme of logicism”⁴ pursued by the Lviv–Warsaw School) represented different approaches to the practice of philosophy, their many years of harmonious collaboration in Toruń gave rise to a formation that may be described as the “Toruń school of axiologics”.

The model of practising axiology initiated by Elzenberg and Czeżowski was founded not on the dogmatic unity of views that were difficult to reconcile, but on analytical rigour and an ethos of service to scholarship, while preserving the right to represent divergent positions.⁵ Czeżowski, who assumed the Chair of Philosophy I, later renamed the Chair of Logic,⁶ and Elzenberg, who headed the Chair of Philosophy II,⁷ created a space for rigorous reflection on values that extended beyond the scientism and Marxist materialism dominant at the time.

The designation “Toruń school of analytical axiology” is also supported by the personal, institutional, and research continuity of the milieu formed around Czeżowski and Elzenberg. Czeżowski’s direct students in Toruń included his doctoral students Leon Gumański and Bogusław Wolniewicz. The latter was also a student of Elzenberg, as was Stanisław Soldenhoff. Gumański developed above all the logical and methodological aspects of Czeżowski’s philosophy, while also addressing the theory of norms in his works.⁸ Wolniewicz, in turn, subjected Elzenberg’s axiology to an in-depth logical and theoretical analysis, reinterpreting its

³ Waldemar Voisé, “Henryk Elzenberg (w drugą rocznicę śmierci)” (“Henryk Elzenberg [On the Second Anniversary of His Death]”), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 27(4) (1969): 245; Lesław Hostyński, “Henryk Elzenberg w świecie konsumpcji. Dlaczego byłby outsiderem?” (“Henryk Elzenberg in the World of Consumption: Why Would He Be an Outsider?”), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 81(2) (2025): 264–265.

⁴ Ryszard Kleszcz, “Dwie metafizyki: Elzenberg a Szkoła Lwowsko-Warszawska” (“Two Metaphysics: Elzenberg and the Lviv–Warsaw School”), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26(4) (2017): 314; Michał Woroniecki, “Henryk Elzenberg (1887–1967). Zarys biografii i poglądów” (“Henryk Elzenberg [1887–1967]: An Outline of His Biography and Views”), *Karto-Teka Gdańska* 2(7) (2020): 80.

⁵ Irena Bednarz, “Henryk Elzenberg na kartach polskiej literatury filozoficznej” (“Henryk Elzenberg in Polish Philosophical Literature”), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26(4) (2017): 59–60.

⁶ Maciej Nowicki, “Tadeusz Czeżowski”, *Edukacja Filozoficzna* 31 (2000): 125.

⁷ Lesław Hostyński, “Henryka Elzenberga życie ‘pod prąd’” (“Henryk Elzenberg’s Life ‘Against the Current’”), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26(4) (2017): 76.

⁸ Cf. Leon Gumański, “Zręby filozofii Tadeusza Czeżowskiego” (“The Foundations of Tadeusz Czeżowski’s Philosophy”), *Studia Filozoficzne* 8(165) (1979): 9–13; Gumański, “On Deontic Logic”, *Studia Logica* 39(1) (1980): 63–75.

fundamental concepts within the framework of his own metaphysics of situations and philosophy of values.⁹

An important role in preserving the continuity of ethical research in Toruń was also played by Stanisław Soldenhoff, who organised research and education in ethics at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. On his initiative, a university-wide Ethics Seminar began operating there in 1971. Soldenhoff referred young scholars from the Toruń philosophical milieu to Tadeusz Czeżowski, who conducted a *privatissimum* for them between 1972 and 1978. Altogether, nearly 140 meetings were held.¹⁰ Among the holders of doctoral degrees supervised by Stanisław Soldenhoff were Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski, and Ryszard Jadcak.¹¹

From the 1980s onwards, Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski, and Ryszard Jadcak jointly formed a recognisable circle of research in Toruń devoted to the legacy of both founders of the Toruń centre for axiological studies – Czeżowski and Elzenberg. They developed both historical-philosophical and systematic studies of their philosophy, with particular emphasis on axiology, ethics, philosophy of culture, and the tradition of the Lviv–Warsaw School. In subsequent years, they also undertook editorial, conference-organising, and popularising activities connected with Czeżowski and Elzenberg.¹² This generational continu-

⁹ Cf. Bogusław Wolniewicz, “Z aksjologii Elzenberga” (“On Elzenberg’s Axiology”), *Etyka* 25 (1990): 10–15; Wolniewicz, “Aksjomat Elzenberga” (“Elzenberg’s Axiom”), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26(4) (104) (2017): 277–288; Paweł Okołówski, “Myśl Wolniewicza. Zrąb systemu” (“Wolniewicz’s Thought: The Foundations of the System”), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 27(3) (107) (2018): 243, 245, 251–252, 259.

¹⁰ Ryszard Wiśniewski, “Stanisław Soldenhoff jako filozof moralności i współtwórca podstaw toruńskiego środowiska naukowego” (“Stanisław Soldenhoff as a Moral Philosopher and Co-Creator of the Foundations of the Toruń Academic Milieu”), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 75(1) (2019): 144–145; Ryszard Jadcak, “Rys biograficzny” (“Biographical Sketch”) [of Stanisław Soldenhoff], Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, PDF document published 29 January 2019, accessed 21 July 2026, https://uslugi.umk.pl/adminUMK/wiadomosci/files/Stanislaw_Soldenhoff_-_Rys_biograficzny_1548760862.pdf.

¹¹ Wiśniewski, “Stanisław Soldenhoff jako filozof moralności” (“Stanisław Soldenhoff as a Moral Philosopher”): 144.

¹² See Henryk Elzenberg (1887–1967). *Dziedzictwo idei: filozofia – aksjologia – kultura. Materiały z ogólnopolskiej konferencji, Toruń, 15–16 maja 1997 r.* (Henryk Elzenberg [1887–1967]. *The Legacy of Ideas: Philosophy – Axiology – Culture. Proceedings of the National Conference, Toruń, 15–16 May 1997*), ed. Włodzimierz Tyburski (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 1999); Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981). *Dziedzictwo idei: logika – filozofia – etyka* (Tadeusz Czeżowski [1889–1981]. *The*

ity by no means amounted to an epigonic adoption of a uniform doctrine, but rather to the multigenerational preservation of a shared field of problems and standards of analytical rigour, as well as to the continuation of research on the ontological status, cognition, and normative function of values.

The continuity of the Toruń tradition of research on the axiology, ethics, and philosophical anthropology of Czeżowski and Elzenberg is also evident in the work of the next generation of philosophers associated with Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Marcin T. Zdrenka, a student of Włodzimierz Tyburski and Ryszard Wiśniewski, addresses selected issues in Elzenberg's axiology and ethics in his publications.¹³ Piotr Domeracki, in turn, a student of Włodzimierz Tyburski who was also associated for many years with Ryszard Wiśniewski, develops research on Elzenberg's philosophy¹⁴ and Czeżowski's meta-axiology. Marcin T. Zdrenka and Piotr Domeracki also co-organised scholarly projects devoted to Henryk Elzenberg's philosophy. Domeracki was additionally responsible for the programme preparation and organisation of a special scholarly session devoted to the legacy of Elzenberg and Czeżowski. The session was held on 23 November 2023 at the Insti-

Legacy of Ideas: Logic – Philosophy – Ethics), ed. Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2002); Tyburski, *Elzenberg, "Myśli i Ludzie"* ("Thoughts and People") series (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 2006); *Elzenberg – tradycja i współczesność* (Elzenberg – Tradition and the Present Day), ed. Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2009); Jadczak, "Przyczynek do działalności Profesora Tadeusza Czeżowskiego w Uniwersytecie Stefana Batorego w Wilnie" ("A Contribution to the Activities of Professor Tadeusz Czeżowski at Stefan Batory University in Vilnius"), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 48(1) (1991): 7–12; Jadczak, "Uwagi o działalności dydaktycznej Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("Remarks on Tadeusz Czeżowski's Teaching Activities"), *Edukacja Filozoficzna* 26 (1998): 329–342; Jadczak, "Z lubelskich listów Henryka Elzenberga" ("From Henryk Elzenberg's Lublin Letters"), in *Henryk Elzenberg (1887–1967). Dziedzictwo idei* (Henryk Elzenberg [1887–1967]. The Legacy of Ideas), 99–108.

¹³ See, e.g., Marcin T. Zdrenka, "Tylko prawda? (O Elzenbergowskiej niechęci do «psychozy poznania»)" ("Only Truth? [On Elzenberg's Aversion to the 'Psychosis of Cognition']"), in *Postacie prawdy (Forms of Truth)*, vol. 3, ed. Adam Jonkisz (Katowice: University of Silesia Press, 1999), 125–137; Zdrenka, "Uwagi o Elzenbergowskim pojęciu walki. Na marginesie Kłopotu z istnieniem" ("Remarks on Elzenberg's Concept of Struggle: On the Margins of Kłopot z istnieniem [The Trouble with Existence]"), in *Elzenberg – tradycja i współczesność* (Elzenberg – Tradition and the Present Day), 201–210.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Piotr Domeracki, "Aristocratism of the Spirit in Henryk Elzenberg's Philosophy", *Dialogue and Universalism* 19 (8–9) (2009): 121–133.

tute of Philosophy of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń as part of the international conference *Trends in Logic XXIII: Bridges between Logic, Ethics and Social Sciences (BLESS). 70 Years of Studia Logica*. Its academic director was Tomasz Jarmużek, co-editor of this issue and Head of the Department of Logic at the Institute of Philosophy of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The research, teaching, and organisational activities of Zdrenka and Domeracki serve to preserve the continuity of Toruń research on the legacy of Czeżowski and Elzenberg and to transmit their achievements to successive generations of students of philosophy.

Since the purpose of this overview is merely to indicate the institutional and research continuity of the Toruń philosophical centre, I do not provide a detailed bibliography of works by the students and continuators of Czeżowski and Elzenberg. Its reliable preparation and presentation would require a separate study and would extend beyond the scope of the present article.

Analytical Rigour and the Existential Dimension of Axiology

One of the fundamental features of the Toruń school of axiology was its consistent application of the tools of logical, semantic, and methodological analysis to the problems of values, value judgements, and norms – that is, to an area whose cognitive and scientific status remained the subject of fundamental disputes in twentieth-century philosophy. In this respect, Tadeusz Czeżowski pursued the ideal of “scientific philosophy”,¹⁵ explicating the metatheoretical foundations of ethics as an empirical discipline, that is, one based on primary, singular value judgements subject to intersubjective control and developed through generalisations leading to the formulation of criteria of moral evaluation and ethical principles.¹⁶

¹⁵ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Philosophy at the Crossroads”, in Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Knowledge, Science, and Values: A Program for Scientific Philosophy* (Amsterdam–Atlanta: Rodopi [Brill], 2000), 241; Czeżowski, *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych (The Main Principles of the Philosophical Sciences)*, 3rd ed. (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1959); Leon Gumański, “Introduction”, in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Knowledge, Science, and Values*, 8–10; Nowicki, “Tadeusz Czeżowski”, 127; Renata Karpiesiuk, “Spuścizna rękopiśmienna Tadeusza Czeżowskiego” (“Tadeusz Czeżowski’s Manuscript Legacy”), *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Historia* 25(236) (1991): 104.

¹⁶ Czeżowski, “Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne” (“Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms”), *Etyka* 7 (1970): 134, n. 1, 136–139; Czeżowski,

Henryk Elzenberg, by contrast, while maintaining a critical distance from scientific conceptions of philosophy, developed his own project of formal axiology, based on a systematic analysis of the concept of value and a logical reconstruction of the foundations of evaluations and oughts.¹⁷ It was precisely the tension between Czeżowski's and Elzenberg's different metaphilosophical temperaments that contributed to the intellectual distinctiveness of Toruń analytical axiology. Elzenberg's conception of axiology, sometimes situated on the borderline between the philosophy of existence and analytic philosophy, combined an interest in the problems of value, the meaning of life, and human self-formation with an aspiration towards the most rigorous possible analysis of axiological concepts.¹⁸

Elzenberg and Czeżowski shared the conviction that axiology could not be constructed exclusively through conceptual speculation, but had to be rooted in direct axiological experience. Elzenberg associated such experience with the intuitive apprehension of values, whereas Czeżowski associated it with primary value judgements constituting the point of departure for their subsequent generalisations.

The Ontology of Value: Transcendentals versus *Seinsollen*

The fundamental contribution of the Toruń school to international axiology lies in its metaphysical grounding of the concept of value. In this context, Czeżowski proposed an original reinterpretation of the scholastic doctrine of the transcendentals. On his account, value (goodness,

"Etyka jako nauka empiryczna" ("Ethics as an Empirical Science"), in Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), 102.

¹⁷ Henryk Elzenberg, "Nauka i barbarzyństwo" ("Science and Barbarism"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and the Human Being: Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*), ed. Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2005), 234–235; Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem. Aforyzmy w porządku czasu* (*The Trouble with Existence: Aphorisms in the Order of Time*), 1st rev. and expanded ed. (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2002), 390. Cf. Jan Zubelewicz, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), *Etyka* 25 (1990): 87–88.

¹⁸ Paweł Okołowski, "Egzystencjalizm analityczny Henryka Elzenberga" ("Henryk Elzenberg's Analytical Existentialism"), *delibeRatio. Analizy. Filozofia*, 17 December 2023, accessed 20 November 2025, <https://deliberatio.eu/pl/analizy/egzystencjalizm-analityczny-henryka-elzenberga>.

beauty) is not a descriptive property of an object, but a transcendental mode of being (*modus entis*), analogous to existence.¹⁹ Such a solution makes it possible to avoid the “naturalistic fallacy” conceptualised by Moore, while at the same time preserving axiological realism.

Elzenberg, in turn, focused in his writings on the problem of perfective value,²⁰ which he linked by definition with the simple²¹ and primary²² concept of the oughtness of being (*Seinsollen*),²³ assigning to it a “deontological meaning”.²⁴ In this way, he referred indirectly and critically to German material axiology, represented by Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann,²⁵ as well as to twentieth-century British analytic philosophy, including, in particular, direct engagement with the works of George E. Moore, Bertrand Russell,²⁶ Harold Arthur Prichard, Alfred Jules Ayer,

¹⁹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Transcendentalia – przyczynek do ontologii” (“Transcendentals – A Contribution to Ontology”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, Its Trends and Problems*) (Kęty: Wydawnictwo Antyk, 2004), 188–192.

²⁰ Henryk Elzenberg, “Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej. Fragment komunikatu O pojęciach wartości i powinności” (“The Concept of Perfective Value: A Fragment of the Communication ‘On the Concepts of Value and Ought’”), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and the Human Being: Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*), 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2005), 15–19. Cf. Zubelewicz, “Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga” (“The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg’s Formal Axiology”), 90–91.

²¹ Elzenberg, “Wartość i powinność. Tekst żemłosławski” (“Value and Ought: The Żemłosław Text”), *Etyka* 25 (1990): 24, 38.

²² Marcin Drofiszyn, “Formalne związki między powinnością a dobrem. Rozważania na marginesie prac Henryka Elzenberga” (“Formal Relations between Ought and Good: Reflections on the Margins of Henryk Elzenberg’s Works”), *Filozofia Nauki* (*The Philosophy of Science*) 28(4) [112] (2020): 7; Drofiszyn, “Obowiązek oparty na preferencji” (“Obligation Based on Preference”), *Filozofia Nauki* (*The Philosophy of Science*) 30(3) [119] (2022): 101–102, 105.

²³ Elzenberg, “Wartość i powinność. Tekst żemłosławski” (“Value and Ought: The Żemłosław Text”), 38; Elzenberg, “Nauka i barbarzyństwo” (“Science and Barbarism”), 234–235. Cf. Drofiszyn, “Obowiązek oparty na preferencji” (“Obligation Based on Preference”): 16; Drofiszyn, “Formalne związki między powinnością a dobrem” (“Formal Relations between Ought and Good”): 6–7.

²⁴ Henryk Elzenberg, “Wartość i powinność. Tekst żemłosławski” (“Value and Ought: The Żemłosław Text”), 36–39. Cf. Zubelewicz, “Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga” (“The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg’s Formal Axiology”), 98, 100–101.

²⁵ Elzenberg, “Nauka i barbarzyństwo” (“Science and Barbarism”), 235, n. 1.

²⁶ Bednarz, “Henryk Elzenberg na kartach polskiej literatury filozoficznej” (“Henryk Elzenberg in Polish Philosophical Literature”): 58.

and, towards the end of his life, also with Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein's²⁷ *Lecture on Ethics*.²⁸ Ryszard Wiśniewski – an outstanding Toruń continuator of Elzenberg's philosophical legacy, alongside its foremost continuator, Włodzimierz Tyburski, and, to some extent, Stanisław Soldenhoff – characterises Elzenberg's philosophical encounters with British analytic philosophy, especially in the field of metaethics, as follows:

Twentieth-century British moral philosophy became closer to Elzenberg because of the ethical intuitionism initiated by G. E. Moore and his critical reading – and translation into Polish – of H. A. Prichard's theory of obligation. A certain distance is nevertheless evident throughout. Elzenberg does not so much learn from the British philosophers as enter into an indirect discourse with them, taking up the same issues and grappling with similar problems, while nevertheless following, in principle, his own path.²⁹

In one of the most important programmatic texts of the system of general axiology constructed by Elzenberg, although unfortunately left

²⁷ Ryszard Wiśniewski, "Henryk Elzenberg wobec brytyjskiej metaetyki" ("Henryk Elzenberg and British Metaethics"), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 54(4) (1997): 630–632; Kleszcz, "Dwie metafizologie: Elzenberg a Szkoła Lwowsko-Warszawska" ("Two Metaphilosophies: Elzenberg and the Lviv-Warsaw School"): 296–297. Cf. Elzenberg, "Konstrukcja pojęcia wartości" ("The Construction of the Concept of Value"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne (Axiological Writings)*, ed. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2002), 84–85; Elzenberg, "O tzw. maksymalizacji dobra jako zasadzie obowiązku" ("On the So-Called Maximisation of Good as a Principle of Obligation"), *Studia Filozoficzne* 12(253) (1986): 31–33; Elzenberg, "Kilka uwag aksjologiczno-etycznych w związku z fragmentem rozprawy Pricharda" ("Several Axiological and Ethical Remarks in Connection with a Fragment of Prichard's Treatise"), in Henryk Elzenberg, *Z historii filozofii (From the History of Philosophy)*, *Pisma (Writings)*, vol. 3, sel., ed., and introd. Michał Woroniecki (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1995), 398–403; Elzenberg, "Mowa i myśl. Dyskusja z Ayerem" ("Speech and Thought: A Discussion with Ayer"), in Henryk Elzenberg, *Z historii filozofii (From the History of Philosophy)*, *Pisma (Writings)*, vol. 3, sel., ed., and introd. Michał Woroniecki (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1995), 464–474; Elzenberg, "Uwagi na temat Wittgensteina" ("Remarks on Wittgenstein"), in Henryk Elzenberg, *Z historii filozofii (From the History of Philosophy)*, *Pisma (Writings)*, vol. 3, sel., ed., and introd. Michał Woroniecki (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1995), 475–479.

²⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lecture on Ethics*, ed. with commentary by Edoardo Zamuner, Ermelina Valentina Di Lascio, David K. Levy (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014).

²⁹ Wiśniewski, "Henryk Elzenberg wobec brytyjskiej metaetyki" ("Henryk Elzenberg and British Metaethics"): 630.

unfinished,³⁰ *Wartość i powinność* (*Value and Ought*), written in 1939 but published only posthumously in 1990,³¹ Elzenberg formulated a view representative of his own understanding of axiology: "To approve of an object is to think that it is as it ought to be. This is the essential characteristic of value judgements: an object that is valuable in the perfective sense is an object that is as it ought to be".³²

The Cognition of Value and the Problem of Its Rationalisation

The common denominator of the two founders of Toruń axiology was their attempt to provide a rational explanation of the cognition of value without reducing it to purely subjective experiences.³³ Czeżowski linked the possibility of fully fledged axiological experience with the adoption, by a particular person engaged in evaluation, of an "evaluative attitude"

³⁰ Jan Zubelewicz, "Ewolucja aksjologii Elzenberga w świetle jego tekstów. Analiza filologiczno-filozoficzna" ("The Evolution of Elzenberg's Axiology in the Light of His Texts: A Philological-Philosophical Analysis"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26 4(104) (2017): 373–374; Hostyński, "Filozofia wartości Henryka Elzenberga na tle filozofii polskiej XX-lecia międzywojennego" ("Henryk Elzenberg's Philosophy of Value against the Background of Polish Philosophy of the Interwar Period"), *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin – Polonia* 24(4), Sectio 1 (2004): 62.

³¹ Zubelewicz, "Ewolucja aksjologii Elzenberga w świetle jego tekstów. Analiza filologiczno-filozoficzna" ("The Evolution of Elzenberg's Axiology in the Light of His Texts: A Philological-Philosophical Analysis"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26 4(104) (2017): 383.

³² Elzenberg, "Wartość i powinność. Tekst żemłosławski" ("Value and Ought: The Żemłosław Text"), 26. Cf. Bogusław Wolniewicz, "Myśl Elzenberga" ("Elzenberg's Thought"), *Studia Filozoficzne* 12 (1986): 62. Cf. Elzenberg, "Zagadnienia związane z pojęciem wartości. Wykłady 1949" ("Issues Connected with the Concept of Value: Lectures of 1949"), "Wykład XXI, 10 VI" ("Lecture XXI, 10 June"), ed. Andrzej Lorczyk, in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne (Axiological Writings)*, ed. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2002), 302; Zubelewicz, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), 98.

³³ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Etyka jako nauka empiryczna" ("Ethics as an Empirical Science"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości (Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value)*, ed. Paweł J. Smoczyński (Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich–Polish Academy of Sciences Press, 1989), 102.

(moral or aesthetic).³⁴ Just as an act of attention gives the representation of an object perceived through the senses or introspectively the motivational force required for the formation of a perceptual judgement, so the adoption of an evaluative attitude makes the representation of the object being evaluated a sufficient "motive for evaluating its value".³⁵

Elzenberg's epistemological position may be described as moderate irrationalism,³⁶ provided that the term is understood not as a rejection of the value of rational cognition, but as a rejection of the thesis that it is the only form of cognition. Elzenberg maintained that conceptual-discursive cognition – which employs concepts and reasoning and finds expression in judgements – does not exhaust all the ways in which reality may be cognitively accessible to the human being.³⁷ Elzenberg applied this thesis above all to the cognition of value and to objects that he classified as belonging to meta-empiria, that is, objects situated beyond the limits of sensory experience.³⁸ Value, and perfective value in particular –

³⁴ Czeżowski, "Strach i lęk (przyczynek do klasyfikacji uczuć)" ("Fear and Anxiety [A Contribution to the Classification of Feelings]"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości (Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value)*, ed. Paweł J. Smoczyński (Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich–Polish Academy of Sciences Press, 1989), 231; Czeżowski, "Transcendentalia – przyczynek do ontologii" ("Transcendentals – A Contribution to Ontology"), 191; Czeżowski, "Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne" ("Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms"), *Etyka* 7 (1970): 136.

³⁵ Czeżowski, "Strach i lęk (przyczynek do klasyfikacji uczuć)" ("Fear and Anxiety [A Contribution to the Classification of Feelings]"), 231–214; Wiśniewski, "O możliwościach recepcji etyki empirycznej Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("On the Possibilities of the Reception of Tadeusz Czeżowski's Empirical Ethics"), *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Filozofia* 13(234) (1991): 11.

³⁶ Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem (The Trouble with Existence)*, 169–170, 284, 306. Cf. Kleszcz, "Dwie metafizyki: Elzenberg a Szkoła Lwowsko-Warszawska" ("Two Metaphysics: Elzenberg and the Lviv–Warsaw School"): 303–306.

³⁷ Kleszcz, "Dwie metafizyki: Elzenberg a Szkoła Lwowsko-Warszawska" ("Two Metaphysics: Elzenberg and the Lviv–Warsaw School"): 305–306; Janusz Skarbek, "Henryk Elzenberg (1887–1967). W dwudziestą piątą rocznicę śmierci" ("Henryk Elzenberg [1887–1967]: On the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of His Death"), *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* 37(3) (1992): 7.

³⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, "Odpowiedź na kwestionariusz w sprawie przeżyć ludzkich związanych z przyrodą" ("Reply to a Questionnaire on Human Experiences Connected with Nature"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Z filozofii kultury (From the Philosophy of Culture)*, sel., ed., and introd. Michał Woroniecki (Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 1991), 261; Elzenberg, "Do religii i mistyki" ("On Religion and Mysticism"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Z filozofii kultury (From the Philosophy of Culture)*, sel., ed., and introd. Michał Woroniecki (Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 1991), note dated 11 November 1937, sec. 3,

that is, value in the strict sense of the term, understood synonymously as nobility, dignity, or perfection – may be an object of direct, intuitive cognition; the content of such a cognitive act, however, cannot be translated without remainder into the language of concepts or adequately expressed in a finite system of propositions.³⁹

The “symbolic judgements” formulated on the basis of such cognition are neither its straightforward equivalent nor an exhaustive description of the object cognised. They constitute an indirect, linguistic-conceptual articulation of content that was originally apprehended in a non-discursive manner. These judgements constitute a discursive articulation of content previously apprehended in direct cognition – intuitive cognition, that is, cognition requiring no mediation by reasoning, inference, or the definitional construction of concepts – of an axiological and meta-empirical character. They neither define their object nor apprehend it exhaustively, but constitute an approximate articulation of intuitively apprehended cognitive content whose full expression exceeds the capacities of conceptual language.⁴⁰

This approach enabled both Czeżowski and Elzenberg to justify the cognitive character of value judgements and, at the same time, to treat them as statements capable of being qualified in terms of truth and falsity. Although they differed in their explanations of the sources of axiological cognition – Czeżowski emphasised the role of axiological experience constituted by the evaluative attitude, whereas Elzenberg

327–329; Elzenberg, “Wartość i powinność. Tekst żemłosławski” (“Value and Ought: The Żemłosław Text”), 42–44.

³⁹ Elzenberg, “Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej” (“The Concept of Perfective Value”), 17; Elzenberg, “Wartość i powinność. Tekst żemłosławski” (“Value and Ought: The Żemłosław Text”), 22–23; Elzenberg, “Zagadnienia związane z pojęciem wartości. Wykłady 1949” (“Issues Connected with the Concept of Value: Lectures of 1949”), “Wykład XXI, 10 VI” (“Lecture XXI, 10 June”), 302.

⁴⁰ Elzenberg, “Odpowiedź na kwestionariusz w sprawie przeżyć ludzkich związanych z przyrodą” (“Reply to a Questionnaire on Human Experiences Connected with Nature”), 261; Elzenberg, “Do religii i mistyki” (“On Religion and Mysticism”), 326, 330–331; Henryk Elzenberg, “Estetyczne uroki ekspresji” (“The Aesthetic Charms of Expression”), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma estetyczne (Aesthetic Writings)*, ed. and introd. Lesław Hostyński (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 1999), 218; Henryk Elzenberg, “Symbolika” (“Symbolism”), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma estetyczne (Aesthetic Writings)*, ed. and introd. Lesław Hostyński (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 1999), 239–240; Elzenberg, “Symbolika. Interpretacja pozornej duchowości” (“Symbolism: An Interpretation of Apparent Spirituality”), in Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma estetyczne (Aesthetic Writings)*, ed. and introd. Lesław Hostyński (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 1999), 243–244.

stressed the significance of the direct, intuitive cognition of value – both rejected the reduction of value judgements to expressions of emotional states, preferences, or acts of approval or disapproval. Consequently, value judgements were not, for them, merely expressions of subjective attitudes, but retained an objective reference, were open to assessment in terms of their truth, and could be rationally justified, analysed, and subjected to criticism. In this sense, the position represented by both founders of the Toruń school of axiology stood in clear opposition to emotivist and, more broadly, non-cognitivist interpretations of the language of evaluation.

The Normative Dimension of Axiology

From their reflections on the nature and modes of cognition of value, situated respectively within axiological ontology and epistemology, the founders of the Toruń school of axiology proceeded to analyse the normative foundations of human conduct.

In Czeżowski's conception, this transition was connected above all with an attempt to determine the structure of moral norms and the manner in which they are justified. Czeżowski distinguished two basic types of such norms: axiological norms and deontic norms.⁴¹ The former have a teleological structure. They determine the oughtness of human action by reference to the good that ought to be realised through that action. The basis for formulating such norms is provided by criteria of good. These are obtained by generalising primary, singular elementary evaluations into generic evaluations. Such evaluations refer to individual objects or events. They take the form: "this is good" or "this is not good".⁴² Axiological (teleological) norms are formulated on the basis of moral evaluations that indicate particular goods as ends of conduct.⁴³

Deontic norms, in turn, which Czeżowski also described as formal, take the concept of obligation, rather than the concept of good – as is the case with axiological norms – as primary. Within this approach, moral conduct is defined by its conformity with a norm. By acting in accord-

⁴¹ Czeżowski, "Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne" ("Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms"), 133.

⁴² Czeżowski, "Dwojakie normy" ("Two Kinds of Norms"), *Etyka* 1 (1966): 148–149.

⁴³ Czeżowski, "Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne" ("Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms"), 133–134.

ance with the obligation determined by the norm, the subject realises moral good.⁴⁴

This distinction did not mean, however, that Czeżowski regarded ethics based on axiological norms and ethics based on deontic norms as mutually exclusive or autonomous normative models. On the contrary, he maintained that a complete system of norms should encompass both types, since axiological and deontic norms complement one another.⁴⁵ Moreover, he held that in ethical systems in which norms of only one type explicitly occur, "norms of the other type are contained implicitly in the supreme norm".⁴⁶

The normative character of Elzenberg's axiology follows above all from the manner in which he understands the concept central to it, namely perfective value, distinguishing it from utilitarian values and linking it closely with the concept of ought.⁴⁷ Utilitarian values remain relative to the needs, desires, or aspirations of a particular subject and, as such, do not by themselves justify any ought.⁴⁸ As such, they therefore cannot provide a sufficient basis for unconditional moral ought.⁴⁹ Perfective value, by contrast, is non-utilitarian in character and, in Elzenberg's thought, remains closely connected with ought understood in the deontological sense. Its basic characterisation is expressed by the formula according to which an object is perfectly valuable if it is as it ought to be. More precisely, what is at issue here is the ought-to-be-such-and-such (*Soseinsollen*), that is, the requirement that a given object should possess a particular property or set of properties. This is not yet an ought to act (*Tunsollen*) or an obligation (*Pflicht*) assigned to a particular agent. An object is valuable to the extent to which it possesses the property or set of properties that it ought to possess. Value is not, in this

⁴⁴ Ibidem, 134.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, 135.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej" ("The Concept of Perfective Value"), 15–18; Elzenberg, "Wartość i powinność. Tekst żemłosławski" ("Value and Ought: The Żemłosław Text"), 23–24, 26. Cf. Zubelewicz, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), 88–91, 95.

⁴⁸ Zubelewicz, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), 89–90, 95.

⁴⁹ Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej" ("The Concept of Perfective Value"), 15–16, 18; Ulrich Schrade, "Aksjologia formalna Henryka Elzenberga" ("Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), *Studia Filozoficzne* 12(253) (1986): 85–87.

respect, a separate quality of the object, but a state of affairs consisting in at least a partial correspondence between what the object actually is and what it ought to be.⁵⁰

The ought that an object should be such and such (*Soseinsollen*) constitutes the point of departure for the ought of an action (*Tunsollen*), but is not in itself sufficient for an obligation of a particular subject to arise. If an object is not as it ought to be, it follows only that it ought to become so, not yet that someone ought to make it so. An ought referring to a particular agent is not yet equivalent to that agent's commitment or obligation. Elzenberg stipulates that, whereas ought may also be predicated of things, commitment and obligation may pertain exclusively to a rational agent. As can therefore be seen, perfective value, in Elzenberg's understanding, provides a reason for the judgement that a particular state of affairs ought to be realised.⁵¹ Normativity in Elzenberg's theory of value is not secondary in character, but constitutes an integral component of the concept of perfective value.

Logos, Ethos, and Method: A Synthetic Overview of Tadeusz Czeżowski's Published Oeuvre

Tadeusz Czeżowski's written oeuvre comprises more than 140 publications.⁵² His philosophy was not, however, presented in the form of a sin-

⁵⁰ Elzenberg, "Wartość i powinność. Tekst żemłosławski" ("Value and Ought: The Żemłosław Text"), 23–26, 29–33, 36–39; Henryk Elzenberg, "Zagadnienie obowiązku w aksjologii formalnej" ("The Problem of Obligation in Formal Axiology"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne (Axiological Writings)*, ed. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2002), 103–108. Cf. Zubelewicz, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), 98–99; Marcin Drofiszyn, "Obowiązek oparty na preferencji" ("Obligation Based on Preference"), 102–104.

⁵¹ Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej" ("The Concept of Perfective Value"), 17–18; Elzenberg, "Konstrukcja pojęcia wartości" ("The Construction of the Concept of Value"), 93–94; Schrade, "Aksjologia formalna Henryka Elzenberga" ("Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), 89–91.

⁵² Gumański, "W służbie nauki i społeczeństwa" ("In the Service of Science and Society"), *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* 22(1) (1977): 13; Nowicki, "Tadeusz Czeżowski", 135. For detailed bibliographical listings, see Wiesław Mincer, "Bibliografia publikacji profesora Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("A Bibliography of the Publications of Professor Tadeusz Czeżowski"), *Ruch Filozoficz-*

gle systematic synthesis; rather, it took shape and was gradually developed in successive monographs, textbooks, and treatises, some of which were subsequently collected in volumes of his own writings.

The early stage of Czeżowski's philosophical work is marked above all by the following publications: *Teoria klas* (*Theory of Classes*, 1918), his doctoral dissertation, prepared under the supervision of Kazimierz Twardowski and defended in 1914, but published in 1918;⁵³ *Klasyczna nauka o sądzie i wniosku w świetle logiki współczesnej* (*The Classical Theory of Judgement and Inference in the Light of Contemporary Logic*, 1927);⁵⁴ *Jak powstało zagadnienie przyczynowości. Zarys jego rozwoju w filozofii starożytnej* (*How the Problem of Causality Arose: An Outline of Its Development in Ancient Philosophy*, 1933);⁵⁵ and *Pozytywizm i idealizm w pojmowaniu nauki* (*Positivism and Idealism in the Conception of Science*, 1936).⁵⁶ These works anticipate three key areas of his research interests: logic and conceptual analysis, the methodology of the sciences, and ontology.

The somewhat later work entitled *Propedeutyka filozofii* (*Propaedeutics of Philosophy*, 1938)⁵⁷ collects and systematises basic information concerning the principal branches of philosophy, serving as a textbook for secondary-school education. Its post-war revised and expanded edition was published under the title *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych* (*The Main*

ny 39(2–4) (1981): 37–48; Waław Janikowski, "Bibliografia prac Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("A Bibliography of Tadeusz Czeżowski's Works"), in: *Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981). Dziedzictwo idei: logika – filozofia – etyka* (*Tadeusz Czeżowski [1889–1981]: The Legacy of Ideas: Logic – Philosophy – Ethics*), ed. Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2002), 21–34.

⁵³ Czeżowski, *Teoria klas* (*Theory of Classes*), "Archiwum Naukowe" ("Scientific Archive"), section I, vol. 9, no. 2 (Lviv: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa dla Popierania Nauki Polskiej, 1918), 81–124.

⁵⁴ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Klasyczna nauka o sądzie i wniosku w świetle logiki współczesnej* (*The Classical Theory of Judgement and Inference in the Light of Contemporary Logic*) (Vilnius: Skład Główny w Księgarni Józefa Zawadzkiego, 1927).

⁵⁵ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Jak powstało zagadnienie przyczynowości. Zarys jego rozwoju w filozofii starożytnej* (*How the Problem of Causality Arose: An Outline of Its Development in Ancient Philosophy*) (Vilnius: Wydawnictwo Wileńskiego Towarzystwa Filozoficznego, 1933).

⁵⁶ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pozytywizm i idealizm w pojmowaniu nauki* (*Positivism and Idealism in the Conception of Science*) (Warsaw: Kasa im. Mianowskiego – Instytut Popierania Nauki, 1936).

⁵⁷ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Propedeutyka filozofii. Podręcznik dla II klasy wszystkich wydziałów w liceach ogólnokształcących* (*Propaedeutics of Philosophy: A Textbook for the Second Year of All Divisions of General Secondary Schools*) (Lviv: published by S. Jakubowski, 1938).

Principles of the Philosophical Sciences, 1946; 3rd ed., 1959).⁵⁸ This textbook encompasses the fundamental problems of epistemology, logic, ontology, axiology, and ethics, presented by means of concepts and methods characteristic of the tradition of the Lviv–Warsaw School. Academic teaching needs were served, in turn, by *Logika. Podręcznik dla studiujących nauki filozoficzne* (*Logic: A Textbook for Students of the Philosophical Sciences*, 1949; 2nd rev. ed., 1968),⁵⁹ which contains a systematic exposition of the foundations of formal logic and the general methodology of the sciences.

A distinct place in Czeżowski's oeuvre is occupied by the work entitled *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, Its Directions and Problems*, 1948).⁶⁰ Conceived primarily as an academic introduction to metaphysics, the book combines a historical survey of its principal directions with a systematic ordering of the fundamental problems of metaphysics. Czeżowski presents metaphysics as a discipline capable of satisfying the requirements of scientific knowledge, provided that its propositions are clearly formulated, properly justified, and developed by means of methods subject to logical control. In the first part of the work, Czeżowski discusses inductive, intuitionistic, and axiomatic metaphysics. In the second part, he analyses the concepts of being, existence, and reality, general propositions concerning being, and ways of classifying entities. The second, revised and expanded edition of the book was published in 2004.⁶¹

The fullest picture of Czeżowski's mature philosophy is provided by two separate collections of treatises: *Odczyty filozoficzne* (*Philosophical Lectures*, 1958; 2nd rev. and expanded ed., 1969)⁶² and *Filozofia na rozdrożu*.

⁵⁸ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych* (*The Main Principles of the Philosophical Sciences*), 3rd ed. (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1959).

⁵⁹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Logika. Podręcznik dla studiujących nauki filozoficzne* (*Logic: A Textbook for Students of the Philosophical Sciences*), 2nd rev. ed. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1968).

⁶⁰ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, Its Directions and Problems*) (Toruń: published by Księgarnia Naukowa T.Szczęsny i S-ka, 1948).

⁶¹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, Its Directions and Problems*), 2nd rev. and expanded ed., introd. by Jan Woleński (Kęty: Wydawnictwo Antyk, 2004).

⁶² Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Odczyty filozoficzne* (*Philosophical Lectures*) (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, 1958), "Prace Wydziału Filologiczno-Filozoficznego" ("Publications of the Faculty of Philology and Philosophy"), vol. 7, no. 1; 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, 1969), "Prace Wydziału Filologiczno-Filozoficznego" ("Publications of the

Analizy metodologiczne (*Philosophy at the Crossroads: Methodological Analyses*, 1965; 2nd ed., 2009).⁶³ *Odczyty filozoficzne* (*Philosophical Lectures*) contains studies in the theory of science, logic, semantics, ontology, and ethics, as well as texts devoted to Kazimierz Twardowski, the problems of the university, and the deontology of the academic scholar. *Filozofia na rozdrożu* (*Philosophy at the Crossroads*) comprises primarily logical and methodological treatises, while also including important axiological and ethical texts, among them: *Czym są wartości?* (*What Are Values?*), *Konflikty w etyce* (*Conflicts in Ethics*), *Jak budować logikę dóbr?* (*How to Construct a Logic of Goods?*), *Paradoks wolności* (*The Paradox of Freedom*), and *Sens i wartość życia* (*The Meaning and Value of Life*).

Czeżowski developed his axiological and metaethical programme in treatises and articles published from 1919 to the 1970s. The most important of these include: *O formalnym pojęciu wartości* (*On the Formal Concept of Value*, 1919), *O przedmiocie aksjologii* (*On the Object of Axiology*, 1936), *Etyka jako nauka empiryczna* (*Ethics as an Empirical Science*, 1949), *Jak budować logikę dóbr?* (*How to Construct a Logic of Goods?*, 1960), *Czym są wartości? Wprowadzenie do dyskusji* (*What Are Values? An Introduction to the Discussion*, 1965), *Dwojakie normy* (*Two Kinds of Norms*, 1966), *Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne* (*Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms*, 1970), and *Struktura etyki niezależnej* (*The Structure of Independent Ethics*, 1973). A special place within this programme was occupied by the problem of the ontological status of value, considered by Czeżowski particularly in the following works: *Etyka jako nauka empiryczna* (*Ethics as an Empirical Science*), *Klasyfikacja rozumowań i jej konsekwencje w teorii nauki* (*The Classification of Reasonings and Its Consequences for the Theory of Science*), *Czym są wartości? Wprowadzenie do dyskusji* (*What Are Values? An Introduction to the Discussion*), and *Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne* (*Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms*). Czeżowski presented a late, systematising exposition of his position on this matter in the treatise *Transcendentalia – przyczynek do ontologii* (*Transcendentals – A Contribution to Ontology*, 1977).

These works make it possible to trace the development of Czeżowski's formal theory of value, his project of empirical ethics, and his conception of two kinds of moral norms: axiological and deontic. A considerable

Faculty of Philology and Philosophy"), vol. 20, no. 5; publishing production: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Poznań Branch.

⁶³ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Filozofia na rozdrożu. Analizy metodologiczne* (*Philosophy at the Crossroads: Methodological Analyses*) (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965); 2nd ed. (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2009).

proportion of his axiological and ethical treatises was collected posthumously in the volume *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*, 1989), edited by Paweł J. Smoczyński.⁶⁴

Czeżowski's Most Important Foreign-Language Publications: Original Works and Translations

Czeżowski's oeuvre entered international scholarly circulation primarily through the publication of individual treatises and selections of writings rather than through complete translations of his most important monographs. A distinction should be drawn here between translations of works originally published in Polish and texts that Czeżowski wrote and published in foreign languages.

Czeżowski also published works in German and French. In German, he published *Die polnische Philosophie der Gegenwart* (1929);⁶⁵ in French, *Quelques problèmes anciens sous la forme moderne* (1948).⁶⁶ In 1951, a French translation of his treatise *De la vérification dans les sciences empiriques* (*Analyse logique*), translated from Polish by Georges Goriely, was also published.⁶⁷ Stanisław Wojnicki subsequently translated this treatise into English under the title *On Testability in Empirical Sciences*. The translation was included in the anthology *Twenty-Five Years of Logical Methodology in Poland* (1977), edited by Marian Przełęcki and Ryszard Wójcicki.⁶⁸

Of particular importance to the international reception of Czeżowski's programme of empirical ethics was the English version of his treatise

⁶⁴ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), ed. Paweł J. Smoczyński (Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1989).

⁶⁵ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Die polnische Philosophie der Gegenwart", *Slavische Rundschau* 1 (1929): 438–443.

⁶⁶ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Quelques problèmes anciens sous la forme moderne", *Studia Philosophica. Commentarii Societatis Philosophicae Polonorum* 3 (1939–1946), published 1948: 101–113.

⁶⁷ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "De la vérification dans les sciences empiriques (*Analyse logique*)", trans. Georges Goriely, *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 5, no. 17–18 (3–4) (1951): 347–366.

⁶⁸ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "On Testability in Empirical Sciences", trans. Stanisław Wojnicki, in *Twenty-Five Years of Logical Methodology in Poland*, ed. Marian Przełęcki, Ryszard Wójcicki, Synthese Library, vol. 87 (Dordrecht–Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company; Warsaw: PWN–Polish Scientific Publishers, 1977), 93–109.

Etyka jako nauka empiryczna (*Ethics as an Empirical Science*), published in 1953 under the title *Ethics as an Empirical Science in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. It was translated by A. M. Galon; the original Polish version of the treatise appeared in 1949 in the periodical *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny*.⁶⁹ The following treatises, among others, were also published in English: *On Certainty in Empirical Sciences*, *On Certain Peculiarities of Singular Propositions*, *On Individuals and Existence*, *Truth in Science*, *Definitions in Science*, *The Meaning and Value of Life*, and *The Problem of Induction*. Two English translations of Czeżowski's semiotic studies, namely *Token-Reflexive Words Versus Proper Names* and *Connotation and Denotation*, translated by Olgierd Wojtasiewicz, appeared in the anthology *Semiotics in Poland 1894–1969*, published in 1979 under the editorship of Jerzy Pelc.⁷⁰

The most extensive English-language selection of Tadeusz Czeżowski's writings is the volume *Knowledge, Science, and Values: A Program for Scientific Philosophy*, published by Rodopi in 2000 and edited by Leon Gumański.⁷¹ It comprises twenty-eight of Czeżowski's treatises concerning logic, methodology and the theory of science, axiology and ethics, ontology, epistemology, and questions of worldview. The volume presents a retrospective, thematically organised selection of Czeżowski's treatises from different periods of his intellectual work.

Several of Tadeusz Czeżowski's axiological and ethical treatises were also translated into Russian. The anthology *Философия и логика Львовско-Варшавской школы*, published in Moscow in 1999, included six of his texts: *O formalnym pojęciu wartości* (*On the Formal Concept of Value*), the treatise *Jak budować logikę dóbr?* (*How to Build the Logic of Goods?*) and its author's summary, *Etyka jako nauka empiryczna* (*Ethics as an Empirical Science*), *Uwagi o etyce jako nauce empirycznej* (*Remarks on Ethics as an Empirical Science*), and *Etyka a psychologia i logika* (*Ethics, Psychology, and Logic*). All the translations were prepared by Elena Nikolajewna Szulga.⁷²

⁶⁹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Ethics as an Empirical Science", trans. A. M. Galon, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 14(2) (1953): 163–171.

⁷⁰ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Token-Reflexive Words Versus Proper Names", in *Semiotics in Poland 1894–1969*, sel., ed., and introd. Jerzy Pelc, trans. Olgierd Wojtasiewicz, Synthese Library, vol. 119 (PWN–Polish Scientific Publishers, Warsaw–D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht–Boston, 1979), 65–72; Czeżowski, "Connotation and Denotation", in *Semiotics in Poland 1894–1969*, 73–80.

⁷¹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Knowledge, Science, and Values: A Program for Scientific Philosophy*, ed. Leon Gumański, Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, vol. 68 (Amsterdam–Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000).

⁷² Tadeusz Czeżowski, "О формальном понятии ценности"; "Как строить логику блага? (1)"; "Как строить логику блага? (2)"; "Этика как эмпирическая

Perfection, Asceticism, and Culture: A Synthetic Overview of Henryk Elzenberg's Published Oeuvre

A synthetic overview of Henryk Elzenberg's published oeuvre requires a distinction between several layers of his legacy: books and treatises published by the philosopher himself; dispersed journal studies; manuscript lectures and successive redactions of the systematic exposition of axiology that Elzenberg was preparing, based on the concepts of perfective value and ought; and, finally, posthumous thematic editions prepared by Michał Woroniecki, Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, and Agnieszka Nogal, combining previously published writings with archival materials. These volumes were devoted, respectively, to the philosophy of culture, the history of philosophy, aesthetics, ethics, and axiology.⁷³ This distinction is not merely bibliographical in significance. During his lifetime, Elzenberg published relatively few book-length works. A considerable proportion of the materials that today provide the basis for reconstructing his axiology, ethics, and aesthetics – including lectures, notes, and unfinished redactions of treatises – was made available only posthumously.⁷⁴

наука"; "Замечания об этике как эмпирической науке"; "Этика, психология и логика", trans. Elena Nikolaiewna Szulga, in *Философия и логика Львовско-Варшавской школы*, compiled by Władimir Aleksandrowicz Smirnow and Władimir Leonidowicz Wasiukow, responsible ed. Elena Nikolaiewna Szulga (Moscow: Российская политическая энциклопедия (РОССПЭН), 1999).

⁷³ Henryk Elzenberg, *Z filozofii kultury* (*From the Philosophy of Culture*), sel., ed., and introd. Michał Woroniecki (Cracow: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 1991); Henryk Elzenberg, *Z historii filozofii* (*From the History of Philosophy*), sel., ed., and introd. Michał Woroniecki (Cracow: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 1995); Elzenberg, *Pisma estetyczne* (*Aesthetic Writings*), ed. and introd. Lesław Hostyński (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1999); Elzenberg, *Pisma etyczne* (*Ethical Writings*), ed. and introd. Lesław Hostyński (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2001); Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne* (*Axiological Writings*), ed. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal, introd. Lesław Hostyński (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002).

⁷⁴ The most comprehensive listing of Henryk Elzenberg's publications and the secondary literature devoted to him is provided by Jan Zubelewicz and Ewa Jasińska-Zubelewicz, *Bibliografia Henryka Józefa Marii Elzenberga* (*A Bibliography of Henryk Józef Maria Elzenberg*) (Warsaw–Łomianki: Spółka Wydawnicza Heliodor, 2012). The distinction between the authorial corpus of Elzenberg's work and the broader opus of Elzenberg's entire surviving legacy, also encompassing inedita, dispersed writings, and manuscripts, is presented by Łukasz Kowalik in the article "Struktura twórczości Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Structure

The early period of Elzenberg's scholarly activity is marked by three independent monographs anticipating the principal directions of his later research interests. In his French-language doctoral dissertation *Le sentiment religieux chez Leconte de Lisle* (1909), Elzenberg examined religious issues in the work of Leconte de Lisle.⁷⁵ As Łukasz Kowalik observes, the dissertation also contains important indications that enable a better understanding of Elzenberg's attitude towards religion and the pessimistic features of his worldview.⁷⁶

Whereas Elzenberg's doctoral dissertation combined the interpretation of literary works with philosophical and religious problems, in *Podstawy metafizyki Leibniza* (*The Foundations of Leibniz's Metaphysics*, 1917),⁷⁷ published eight years later, Elzenberg turned to the history of philosophy, undertaking a source-based reconstruction of the assumptions and internal structure of Leibniz's metaphysical system.

His habilitation dissertation *Marek Aureljusz. Z historii i psychologii etyki* (*Marcus Aurelius: From the History and Psychology of Ethics*), published in 1922, combined a reconstruction of Marcus Aurelius's ethical views with a psychological analysis of his personality, especially the sources and forms of his moral self-discipline.⁷⁸

of Henryk Elzenberg's Oeuvre"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26 4(104) (2017): 99–114 (see esp. 100–105). For critical remarks concerning the manner in which the posthumous editions of Elzenberg's legacy were prepared, see Robert Zaborowski, "Dramat filozofa. Henryk Elzenberg w rękach wydawców" ("The Philosopher's Drama: Henryk Elzenberg in the Hands of His Editors"), pt. 1, *Przegląd Artystyczno-Literacki* 4 (2000): 82–92; Zaborowski, "Dramat filozofa. Henryk Elzenberg w rękach wydawców" ("The Philosopher's Drama: Henryk Elzenberg in the Hands of His Editors"), pt. 2, *Przegląd Artystyczno-Literacki* 12 (2000): 34–50; Zaborowski, "Dramat filozofa. Henryk Elzenberg w rękach wydawców" ("The Philosopher's Drama: Henryk Elzenberg in the Hands of His Editors"), pt. 3, *Przegląd Artystyczno-Literacki* 1–2 (2001): 91–110.

⁷⁵ Henryk Elzenberg [on the title page: Henri Elsenberg], *Le sentiment religieux chez Leconte de Lisle* (Paris: Henri Jouve, éditeur, 1909).

⁷⁶ Kowalik, "Struktura twórczości Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Structure of Henryk Elzenberg's Oeuvre"), 104.

⁷⁷ Henryk Elzenberg, "Podstawy metafizyki Leibniza" ("The Foundations of Leibniz's Metaphysics"), *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny*, ser. 2, vol. 35 (= vol. 60 of the general series) (Cracow: published by the Akademia Umiejętności, 1917), 50–117.

⁷⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, *Marek Aureljusz. Z historii i psychologii etyki* (*Marcus Aurelius: From the History and Psychology of Ethics*) (Lviv–Warsaw: published by Księgarnia Polska Bernarda Połonieckiego, 1922) (*Prace Filozoficzne Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego*, no. 4; *Biblioteka Filozoficzna*, ser. 3, ed. Władysław

These three monographs anticipated the principal directions of Elzenberg's later reflection: the problems of religion and culture, historical-philosophical research, and the ethics of self-perfection, renunciation, and work upon oneself.

During the interwar period, Elzenberg developed the most important components of his own axiological programme – which encompassed a general theory of value, ethics, and aesthetics – primarily in treatises and communications published in journals, collected volumes, and conference proceedings. In *Etyka wyrzeczenia. Czem jest i jak bywa uzasadniana* (*The Ethics of Renunciation: What It Is and How It Is Justified*, 1925), Elzenberg defined the concepts of renunciation and the ethics of renunciation, distinguished between external and internal renunciation, and systematised the logical reasons justifying the injunction to renounce.⁷⁹

In the 1933 treatise *O różnicy między 'pięknem' a 'dobrem'* (*On the Difference between 'Beauty' and 'Good'*), Elzenberg considered both concepts named in the title within the framework of a general theory of value, arguing that, with regard to ultimate value, the difference between them is not objective but subjective in character. According to Elzenberg, the terms "beautiful" and "good" have the same objective content: they designate a valuable object, that is, an object that is as it ought to be. They differ, however, in the subjective manner in which value is apprehended.⁸⁰

In the communication *O pojęciach wartości i powinności* (*On the Concepts of Value and Ought*), published in 1935 and constituting the author's own translation and partial reworking of the unpublished French original *Les idées de valeur et d'obligation* (*The Ideas of Value and Obligation*), Elzenberg attempted to analyse the concept of perfective value by means of the concept of ought.⁸¹

Heinrich, vol. 1). Elzenberg obtained his habilitation in 1921, while his habilitation dissertation was published in 1922.

⁷⁹ Henryk Elzenberg, "Etyka wyrzeczenia. Czem jest i jak bywa uzasadniana" ("The Ethics of Renunciation: What It Is and How It Is Justified"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 28(1–2) (1925): 59–81.

⁸⁰ Henryk Elzenberg, "O różnicy między 'pięknem' a 'dobrem'" ("On the Difference between 'Beauty' and 'Good'"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 36(4) (1933): 363–376. Cf. "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), 97–98.

⁸¹ Henryk Elzenberg, "O pojęciach wartości i powinności" ("On the Concepts of Value and Ought"), *Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Towarzystwa Naukowego*

In the 1936 article *Estetyka jako dyscyplina wartościująca* (*Aesthetics as an Evaluative Discipline*), in which he polemicised with Stanisław Ossowski, Elzenberg defended the cognitive character of aesthetic evaluation and the legitimacy of aesthetics as a discipline that makes judgements concerning aesthetic value-generating properties.⁸²

The communication *Le phénomène esthétique de la coloration affective* (*The Aesthetic Phenomenon of Emotional Colouring*), presented by Elzenberg in the following year (1937), concerned the problem of “emotional colouring”.⁸³ As Stefania Skwarczyńska observes, “Elzenberg tentatively proposes a theoretical solution to *Zabarwienie uczuciowe jako zjawisko estetyczne* (*Emotional Colouring as an Aesthetic Phenomenon*) different from M. Scheler’s fairly widely accepted solution”.⁸⁴ Elzenberg conceived it as a pure, subjectless emotional quality inherent in the object itself and reducible neither to the expression of the creator’s actual experiences, nor to feelings aroused in the recipient, nor to the animation of the object. In the same year, Elzenberg presented a Polish-language treatment of the issues addressed in this communication in the treatise *Zabarwienie uczuciowe jako zjawisko estetyczne* (*Emotional Colouring as an Aesthetic Phenomenon*).⁸⁵

Warszawskiego. Wydział II Nauk Historycznych, Społecznych i Filozoficznych 27(1/6) (1934), published 1935. Cf. Zubelewicz, “Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga” (“The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg’s Formal Axiology”), 90, 98.

⁸² Henryk Elzenberg, “Estetyka jako dyscyplina wartościująca” (“Aesthetics as an Evaluative Discipline”), *Pion* 4(10) (127) (1936): 1–2.

⁸³ Henryk Elzenberg, “Le phénomène esthétique de la coloration affective” (“The Aesthetic Phenomenon of Emotional Colouring”), in *Deuxième Congrès international d’esthétique et de science de l’art. Paris 1937* (*Second International Congress of Aesthetics and the Science of Art: Paris 1937*), vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1937), 221–225.

⁸⁴ Stefania Skwarczyńska, “Prace ofiarowane Kazimierzowi Wóycickiemu, Wilno 1937: [recenzja]” (“Works Presented to Kazimierz Wóycicki, Vilnius 1937: [Review]”), *Pamiętnik Literacki: czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce literatury polskiej* 35(1/4) (1938): 288, 287–289.

⁸⁵ Henryk Elzenberg, “Zabarwienie uczuciowe jako zjawisko estetyczne” (“Emotional Colouring as an Aesthetic Phenomenon”), in *Prace ofiarowane Kazimierzowi Wóycickiemu* (*Works Presented to Kazimierz Wóycicki*), “Z Zagadnień Poetyki” (“Problems of Poetics”) series, no. 6 (Vilnius 1937), 483–491. According to Krzysztof Gućzalski, Elzenberg’s conception of “emotional colouring” anticipated Anglo-American accounts of expressiveness as an emotional quality belonging to the sensory object itself – in particular, to a work of art – and reducible neither to the creator’s actual experiences nor to feelings aroused in the recipient. See Krzysztof Gućzalski, “Henryk Elzenberg as a Forerunner of

Although Elzenberg's works appeared in various venues and assumed heterogeneous generic forms, they are united by a clear continuity of problems. They mark successive stages in the formation of Elzenberg's axiological programme, whose fundamental concepts and distinctions the philosopher repeatedly revised, clarified, and developed.⁸⁶

After the Second World War, Elzenberg continued working on a systematic account of axiology, primarily in lectures delivered at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń during the academic years 1946/1947–1949/1950. The surviving materials from the courses *Podstawowe pojęcia aksjologii I* (*Fundamental Concepts of Axiology I*, 1946–1949),⁸⁷ *Zagadnienia związane z pojęciem wartości* (*Issues Connected with the Concept of Value*, 1949),⁸⁸ and *Epistemologia wartości* (*The Epistemology of Value*, 1949–1950)⁸⁹ reveal the scope of this research project, which Elzenberg was nevertheless unable to develop into a completed and definitively closed system. This circumstance has important consequences for the interpretation of his legacy. The lectures, notes, and successive redactions of manuscript materials published posthumously should not be treated as components of a uniform and definitively established system. Rather, they document successive phases in the formation of Elzenberg's axiological conception, which he repeatedly revised and clarified, striving for the greatest possible precision of definition and rigour of justification. In the preface to *Wartość i człowiek* (*Value and the Human Being*), Elzenberg wrote of "a certain body of views that is fairly coherent and, to some extent, even organised into a system". He stipulated, however, that he had neither

Anglo-American Concepts of Expression", *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 49(2) (2012): 192–204.

⁸⁶ Zubelewicz, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfective Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), 96, 100.

⁸⁷ Henryk Elzenberg, "Podstawowe pojęcia aksjologii I. Wykłady toruńskie 1946–1949" ("Fundamental Concepts of Axiology I: Toruń Lectures, 1946–1949"), ed. Andrzej Lorczyk, in Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne* (*Axiological Writings*), ed. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 197–257.

⁸⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, "Zagadnienia związane z pojęciem wartości. Wykłady 1949" ("Issues Connected with the Concept of Value: Lectures of 1949"), ed. Andrzej Lorczyk, in Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne* (*Axiological Writings*), 259–303.

⁸⁹ Henryk Elzenberg, "Epistemologia wartości. Wykłady 1949–1950" ("The Epistemology of Value: Lectures of 1949–1950"), ed. Agnieszka Nogal, in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne* (*Axiological Writings*), 307–350.

brought this system to a state that would satisfy him nor published it even in summary form.⁹⁰

A special place in Elzenberg's philosophical oeuvre is occupied by *Kłopot z istnieniem. Aforyzmy w porządku czasu* (*The Trouble with Existence: Aphorisms in the Order of Time*).⁹¹ Elzenberg published the first fragments of this philosophical intimate diary⁹² in 1961 in the monthly *Znak*. Its book edition appeared two years later.⁹³ The first edition of *Kłopot z istnieniem* (*The Trouble with Existence*), published in 1963, comprised 1,239 chronologically arranged entries written between 1907 and 1963, whereas the second, revised and expanded edition of 1994⁹⁴ comprised 1,271 entries. Elzenberg made his own selection and subsequently revised them, retaining their chronological arrangement in order to present his reflection as a process developing over time and, at the same time, to attenuate the dogmatic import of the individual aphorisms.⁹⁵ *Kłopot z istnieniem* (*The Trouble with Existence*) combines practical and experiential ethical

⁹⁰ Henryk Elzenberg, "Wstęp" ("Preface"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek* (*Value and the Human Being*), 12.

⁹¹ Katarzyna Nadana-Sokołowska, *Problem religii w polskich dziennikach intymnych*. Stanisław Brzozowski, Karol Ludwik Koniński, Henryk Elzenberg (*The Problem of Religion in Polish Intimate Diaries: Stanisław Brzozowski, Karol Ludwik Koniński, Henryk Elzenberg*) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Badań Literackich PAN, 2012), 225–227.

⁹² Włodzimierz Tyburski, "'Człowiek, który myślał inaczej'. O osobowości twórczej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Man Who Thought Differently: On Henryk Elzenberg's Creative Personality"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26(4) (104) (2017): 94–96; Nadana-Sokołowska, *Problem religii w polskich dziennikach intymnych* (*The Problem of Religion in Polish Intimate Diaries*), 225–227, 247–252.

⁹³ Henryk Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem. Aforyzmy w porządku czasu* (*The Trouble with Existence: Aphorisms in the Order of Time*) (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1963). Cf. Nadana-Sokołowska, *Problem religii w polskich dziennikach intymnych* (*The Problem of Religion in Polish Intimate Diaries*), 225.

⁹⁴ Henryk Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem. Aforyzmy w porządku czasu* (*The Trouble with Existence: Aphorisms in the Order of Time*), scholarly ed. by Michał Woroniecki, 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 1994).

⁹⁵ Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem* (*The Trouble with Existence*) (1963), 11–14. Cf. Andrzej Zawadzki, "Filozoficzny dziennik intymny: de Biran, Amiel, Elzenberg" ("The Philosophical Intimate Diary: de Biran, Amiel, Elzenberg"), *Teksty Drugie* 1–2 (1999): 68, n. 10. Katarzyna Kantner, "'Aforyzmy w porządku czasu spisane'. Poetyka immanentna i sformułowana w Kłopotcie z istnieniem Henryka Elzenberga" ("Aphorisms Written Down in the Order of Time: Immanent and Formulated Poetics in Henryk Elzenberg's *Kłopot z istnieniem* [*The Trouble with Existence*]"), *Tekstualia* 2(37) (2014): 82, 92; Magdalena Środa, "Czytajac Elzenberga" ("Reading Elzenberg"), *Edukacja Filozoficzna* 13 (1992): 193–194.

reflection with work on oneself, historical experience, and reflection on religion, literature, art, and culture.⁹⁶ It constitutes a carefully conceived, though programmatically fragmentary, philosophical composition. It is by no means merely a biographical document or a chronicle of the author's personal experiences.⁹⁷

The most comprehensive presentation of Elzenberg's mature oeuvre published during his lifetime consisted of two volumes issued in 1966: *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and the Human Being: Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*)⁹⁸ and *Próby kontaktu. Eseje i studia krytyczne* (*Attempts at Contact: Essays and Critical Studies*).⁹⁹ The former brings together treatises of a distinctly theoretical orientation, characterised by Elzenberg's characteristic conceptual and argumentative rigour. It includes, among others, works devoted to perfective value, the relationship between beauty and good, the normative character of aesthetics, the ethics of renunciation, the ideal of salvation, and the relationship between science and barbarism.

Próby kontaktu. Eseje i studia krytyczne (*Attempts at Contact: Essays and Critical Studies*) comprises texts written in a freer, essayistic form. These include literary studies and critical sketches concerning, among others,

⁹⁶ Kantner, "Aforyzmy w porządku czasu spisane" ("Aphorisms Written Down in the Order of Time"), 82–85 and 95–98; Kantner, "Kłopot z istnieniem Henryka Elzenberga a tradycja polskiej intymistyki modernistycznej (Brzozowski, Koniński, Kamińska)" ("Henryk Elzenberg's *Kłopot z istnieniem* [*The Trouble with Existence*] and the Tradition of Polish Modernist Intimate Writing [Brzozowski, Koniński, Kamińska]"), *Ruch Literacki* 54(2) (317) (2013): 182, 184–185.

⁹⁷ Środa, "Czytając Elzenberga" ("Reading Elzenberg"): 192.

⁹⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and the Human Being: Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*) (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, 1966), "Prace Wydziału Filologiczno-Filozoficznego" ("Publications of the Faculty of Philology and Philosophy"), vol. 18, no. 1. In 2005, through the efforts of Włodzimierz Tyburski and Ryszard Wiśniewski, the second, revised and expanded edition of this work was published by Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika in Toruń. See Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and the Human Being: Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*), ed. and introd. by Włodzimierz Tyburski and Ryszard Wiśniewski, 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2005). The third edition of this book appeared in 2012. See Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and the Human Being: Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*), 3rd ed. (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2012).

⁹⁹ Henryk Elzenberg, *Próby kontaktu. Eseje i studia krytyczne* (*Attempts at Contact: Essays and Critical Studies*) (Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy "Znak", 1966).

Stefan Żeromski, Wacław Berent, Rabindranath Tagore, and Michel de Montaigne, as well as reflections on the philosophy of Lucretius, the idea of *ahimsa*, and the attitude and activity of Mahatma Gandhi.

The two works form a distinctive diptych. *Wartość i człowiek* (*Value and the Human Being*) reveals the theoretical core of Elzenberg's axiology, whereas *Próby kontaktu* (*Attempts at Contact*) shows the application of its criteria to the interpretation of literature, the history of ideas, and cultural attitudes.

After Elzenberg's death in Warsaw on 6 April 1967, the source base for research on his philosophy gradually expanded. An important stage in this process was the publication of previously unpublished texts by Elzenberg in the 1986 issue of *Studia Filozoficzne* devoted to him,¹⁰⁰ followed by further manuscript materials in volume 25 of *Etyka* in 1990.¹⁰¹ The latter journal published the text *Wartość i powinność* (*Value and Ought*), written in Żemłosław and comprising two chapters: *Analiza pojęcia wartości* (*An Analysis of the Concept of Value*) and *Pojęcie powinności* (*The Concept of Ought*). A fragment belonging to the same body of manuscripts and devoted to negative value was omitted because it had previously been published in *Studia Filozoficzne*.¹⁰²

Elzenberg's *Żemłosław* text constitutes one of the most important surviving formulations of his mature conception of perfective value and its relationship to the concept of ought as a normative category. The publication of these materials significantly broadened the source base for research on Elzenberg's axiology. It also demonstrated that his position

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Studia Filozoficzne* 12(253) (1986), "Blok tekstów poświęcony Henrykowi Elzenbergowi w setną rocznicę urodzin" ("A Collection of Texts Devoted to Henryk Elzenberg on the Centenary of His Birth"), scholarly ed. Bogusław Wolniewicz: 3–165.

¹⁰¹ *Etyka* 25 (1990), Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Warsaw-Poznań). The Elzenberg section, comprising texts by Elzenberg himself (70 pages in total) and texts devoted to his philosophy – more specifically, to his axiology, the idea of the nation, the concept of perfective value, and the classification of humanisms (57 pages in total) – covers pages 7–138. The works by Elzenberg published there included: *Wartość i powinność* (*Value and Ought*) (17–4), *Ewentualny odczyt o kulturze* (*A Possible Lecture on Culture*) (47–49), *Cztery listy do Mieczysława Wallisa* (*Four Letters to Mieczysław Wallis*) (51–59), *Naród i wojna* (*The Nation and War*) (67–86), *Podwójna motywacja czynów (postępowania) jako potrzeba moralna* (*The Dual Motivation of Actions [Conduct] as a Moral Need*) (103–106), and *Dobro* (*Good*) (107–111).

¹⁰² Henryk Elzenberg, "Wartość ujemna" ("Negative Value"), ed. Ulrich Schrader, Bogusław Wolniewicz, *Studia Filozoficzne* 12(253) (1986): 23–28.

developed in stages and that the individual phases of this development were reflected in successive redactions of the surviving texts.

Perfection, asceticism, and culture define three complementary axes for interpreting Elzenberg's oeuvre: the axiological, the ethical-anthropological, and the cultural. Perfection refers both to the conception of perfective value and to the idea of the moral perfection of the human being.¹⁰³ Asceticism refers to the ethical programme of human formation;¹⁰⁴ culture, in turn, refers to reflection on the cultural forms

¹⁰³ Cf. Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Henryk Elzenberg jako teoretyk etyki" ("Henryk Elzenberg as a Theorist of Ethics"), *Etyka* 4 (1969): 92–93, 99–102; Ulrich Schrader, "Henryk Józef Maria Elzenberg", *Edukacja Filozoficzna* 25 (1998): 171–175; Tyburski, "Etyka perfekcjonizmu Henryka Elzenberga" ("Henryk Elzenberg's Ethics of Perfectionism"), *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne. Filozofia* 12(228) (1991): 44, 48–53; Środa, "Meliorysta i soteryk. O autocentryzmie etycznym Henryka Elzenberga" ("A Meliorist and a Soteriologist: On Henryk Elzenberg's Ethical Autocentrism"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26(4) (104) (2017): 211–213; Joanna Zegzuła-Nowak, "Postawa 'homo ethicus' jako ideał etyczny w koncepcji filozoficznej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Attitude of 'Homo Ethicus' as an Ethical Ideal in Henryk Elzenberg's Philosophical Conception"), *Annales. Etyka w Życiu Gospodarczym* 12(1) (2009): 62–67.

¹⁰⁴ Henryk Elzenberg, "Etyka wyrzeczenia. Czym jest i jak bywa uzasadniana" ("The Ethics of Renunciation: What It Is and How It Is Justified"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii (Value and the Human Being: Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy)*, 2nd rev. and expanded ed., ed. and introd. by Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2005), 145–174. Cf. Antoni Płoszczyński, *Asceza i człowiek. Studium antropologii filozoficznej Henryka Elzenberga (Asceticism and the Human Being: A Study in Henryk Elzenberg's Philosophical Anthropology)* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2021); Katarzyna Łukaszewska, "Powrót do ascezy. Rekapitulacja etycznego znaczenia w kontekście poglądów Henryka Elzenberga" ("A Return to Asceticism: A Recapitulation of Its Ethical Significance in the Context of Henryk Elzenberg's Views"), in *Antropologiczne i przyrodnicze aspekty konsumpcji nadmiaru i umiaru (Anthropological and Natural-Scientific Aspects of the Consumption of Excess and Moderation)*, ed. Ryszard F. Sadowski, Agata Kosieradzka-Federczyk, Agnieszka Klimska (Warsaw: Krajowa Szkoła Administracji Publicznej, 2021), 72–84; Zegzuła-Nowak, "Postawa 'homo ethicus' jako ideał etyczny" ("The Attitude of 'Homo Ethicus' as an Ethical Ideal"): 61–68; Zegzuła-Nowak, "Człowiek w ujęciu perfekcjonistycznej myśli etycznej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Human Being in Henryk Elzenberg's Perfectionist Ethical Thought"), *Humanum. Międzynarodowe Studia Społeczno-Humanistyczne* 2(2) (2008): 47–64; Łukasz Kowalik, "Henryk Elzenberg a istota stoicyzmu" ("Henryk Elzenberg and the Essence of Stoicism"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26(4) (104) (2017): 440–441, 451–455; Elżbieta Cieciera, "Na drogach człowieczeństwa – filozofia Henryka Elzenberga" ("On the Paths of Humanity: The Philosophy of Henryk Elzenberg"), *Folia Philosophica* 32 (2014): 268–269, 285–286.

through which perfective value is realised.¹⁰⁵ Elzenberg's philosophical oeuvre cannot adequately be understood either as a closed and uniformly elaborated system or as an accidental constellation of treatises, sketches, and aphorisms. It constitutes a historically developing, internally differentiated corpus centred on axiological problems and reflection. Source criticism does not invalidate the thesis of its coherence, but makes it possible to reconstruct the process of its gradual constitution – through successive redactions, conceptual revisions, shifts of emphasis, and the persistence of fundamental intuitions – over the course of several decades.

Elzenberg's Most Important Foreign-Language Publications: Original Works and Translations

Henryk Elzenberg's foreign-language oeuvre is not extensive, but it includes works important to several major areas of his philosophy. A significant place among them is occupied by Elzenberg's previously mentioned French-language doctoral dissertation, *Le sentiment religieux chez Leconte de Lisle*, published in Paris in 1909 under the name Henri Elsenberg. Elzenberg's original foreign-language publications also include a German-language summary of the treatise *Podstawy metafizyki Leibniza*

¹⁰⁵ Elzenberg, *Z filozofii kultury* (*From the Philosophy of Culture*); Henryk Elzenberg, "Ewentualny odczyt o kulturze" ("A Possible Lecture on Culture"), *Etyka* 25 (1990): 47–49; Henryk Elzenberg, "Motywacja etyczna (wartość w religii i kulturze)" ("Ethical Motivation [Value in Religion and Culture]"), *Studia Filozoficzne* 12(253) (1986): 13–28. Cf. Tyburski, *Elzenberg* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 2006), 148–155; Zubelewicz, "Elzenbergowskie ujęcie procesu tworzenia kultury" ("Elzenberg's Account of the Process of Creating Culture"), *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 30(1) (1986): 83–97; Zubelewicz, "Filozofia kultury a historiozofia: Henryk Elzenberg" ("Philosophy of Culture and Philosophy of History: Henryk Elzenberg"), *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 31(4) (259) (1987): 113–116; Krzysztof Łukasiewicz, "Kultura jako wartość i system wartości w ujęciu Henryka Elzenberga" ("Culture as a Value and a System of Values in Henryk Elzenberg's Account"), in *Kultura i wartości. Materiały z konferencji naukowej* (*Culture and Values: Proceedings of a Scholarly Conference*), ed. Stanisław Pietraszko (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1991), 81–88 (*Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, no. 965; *Prace Kulturoznawcze* [Cultural Studies], vol. 2); Mirosław Tyl, *Pesymizm, konserwatyzm, wartości. O filozofii Henryka Elzenberga* (*Pessimism, Conservatism, Values: On Henryk Elzenberg's Philosophy*) (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Naukowe "Śląsk", 2001); Anna Kasperek, "Aksjologiczna koncepcja kultury Henryka Elzenberga" ("Henryk Elzenberg's Axiological Conception of Culture"), *Perspektywy Kultury* 5(2) (2011): 123–132.

(*The Foundations of Leibniz's Metaphysics*), published in 1917 under the title *Die Grundlagen der Leibnizschen Metaphysik*,¹⁰⁶ as well as French-language communications in axiology, aesthetics, and the history of philosophy, most notably: *Les idées de valeur et d'obligation* (1935), *Le phénomène esthétique de la coloration affective* (1937), and *Obligation et commandement* (1937). Some of them took the form of authorial summaries or conference presentations of conceptions that Elzenberg subsequently developed in Polish-language publications. These publications attest to the limited but distinct presence of Elzenberg's work in international philosophical circulation. At the same time, they demonstrate the particular importance of French-language philosophical culture in the formation of his intellectual outlook.

The subsequent reception of Elzenberg's work outside Poland developed mainly through translations. Among the few English translations of Elzenberg's works in formal axiology is the treatise *Wartość ujemna* (*Negative Values*), published under the title *Negative Values* in the volume *Logic and Ethics* (1991).¹⁰⁷ Three of Elzenberg's aesthetic treatises have also appeared in English translation: *O różnicy między dobrem a pięknem* (*On the Difference between Goodness and Beauty*),¹⁰⁸ *Zabarwienie uczuciowe jako zjawisko estetyczne* (*Emotional Colouring as an Aesthetic Phenomenon*),¹⁰⁹ and *Ekspresja pozaestetyczna i estetyczna* (*Non-aesthetic and Aesthetic Expression*).¹¹⁰

Relatively recently, in 2020, an English translation of Elzenberg's early sketch from 1912, entitled *Miłość* (*Love*), was published.¹¹¹ In 2025, in

¹⁰⁶ Henryk Elzenberg, "Die Grundlagen der Leibnizschen Metaphysik", *Bulletin International de l'Académie des Sciences de Cracovie. Classe de Philologie, Classe d'Histoire et de Philosophie* 8–10 (1916), no. 8–10, Cracovie, published 1917: 106–113.

¹⁰⁷ Elzenberg, "Negative Values", prepared on the basis of unpublished manuscripts by Ulryk Schrade and Bogusław Wolniewicz, trans. Peter Geach and Bogusław Wolniewicz, in *Logic and Ethics*, ed. Peter Geach, with the editorial collaboration of Jacek Hołówka, *Nijhoff International Philosophy Series*, vol. 41 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 21–31.

¹⁰⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, "On the Difference Between Beauty and Goodness [1933]", trans. Zygmunt Nierada, *Organon* 44 (2012): 5–15.

¹⁰⁹ Henryk Elzenberg, "Emotional Colouring as an Aesthetic Phenomenon", trans. John Comber in consultation with Krzysztof Gućzalski, *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 49(2) (2012): 212–216.

¹¹⁰ Henryk Elzenberg, "Non-aesthetic and Aesthetic Expression", trans. John Comber in consultation with Krzysztof Gućzalski, *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 49(2) (2012): 217–231.

¹¹¹ Henryk Elzenberg, "Love", translated from Polish by Hanna Lubowicz, *Karto-Teka Gdańska* 2(7) (2020): 112–124. This is an English translation of

turn, an English translation of Elzenberg's essay *Lukrecjusz i religia materializmu* (*Lucretius and the Religion of Materialism*) appeared on the English-language platform *Antigone*.¹¹² The text was originally published in Polish in 1927 in *Przegląd Współczesny*.¹¹³ It is the first translation of this treatise into a foreign language.

Of Elzenberg's Polish-language books, only *Kłopot z istnieniem* (*The Trouble with Existence*) has so far appeared in separate foreign-language editions: the German *Kummer mit dem Sein* in 2004, translated by Sven Sellmer,¹¹⁴ and the French *Le souci d'exister* in 2021, translated by Bernard Marchadier.¹¹⁵

In 2009, an English-language thematic issue devoted to Elzenberg's philosophy was published in the journal *Dialogue and Universalism*, edited by Włodzimierz Tyburski. It brought together studies concerning his axiology, ethics, and philosophy of culture, but did not include translations of Elzenberg's own works.¹¹⁶

This overview shows that the foreign-language reception of Elzenberg's work remains selective. His philosophical aphoristic writings and aesthetics are relatively the most fully represented in translation, while his formal axiology is represented to a lesser extent. The fundamental corpus of Elzenberg's ethical and axiological writings remains largely unavailable in translation into the languages dominant in international

Elzenberg's Polish-language manuscript, dated 3 December 1912, from the collection held in the Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences, ref. no. III-181, folder 19 (44).

¹¹² Henryk Elzenberg, "Lucretius and the Religion of Materialism", trans. and ed. Mateusz Stróżyński, *Antigone: An Open Forum for Classics* (22 June 2025), accessed 12 January 2026, <https://antigonejournal.com/2025/06/lucretius-and-the-religion-of-materialism/>.

¹¹³ Henryk Elzenberg, "Lukrecjusz i religia materjalizmu" ("Lucretius and the Religion of Materialism"), *Przegląd Współczesny* 6(20) (1927): 200–214. Cf. Jerzy Kopania, "Henryk Elzenberg i tragizm religijnego materializmu" ("Henryk Elzenberg and the Tragic Nature of Religious Materialism"), *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny* 43(3) (2015): 53–79.

¹¹⁴ Henryk Elzenberg, *Kummer mit dem Sein. Tagebuch eines Philosophen. Aphorismen und Gedanken aus den Jahren 1907 bis 1963. Aus dem Polnischen von Sven Sellmer unter Verwendung einiger von Karl Dedecius übertragener Aphorismen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004), series: "Denken und Wissen. Eine polnische Bibliothek".

¹¹⁵ Henryk Elzenberg, *Le souci d'exister. Aphorismes dans l'ordre du temps. Traduit du polonais, préfacé et annoté par Bernard Marchadier* (Montmorillon: Vagabonde, 2021).

¹¹⁶ "Henryk Elzenberg – Axiology, Ethics and the Philosophy of Culture", ed. Włodzimierz Tyburski, *Dialogue and Universalism* 19(8–9) (2009).

scholarly circulation. Despite numerous translation initiatives, Elzenberg has yet to receive an English-language collected volume comparable in scope to the Polish editions; consequently, the international reception of his philosophy continues to rest on a limited selection of his texts.

The present issue of *Ruch Filozoficzny* makes available English translations of selected works by Tadeusz Czeżowski and Henryk Elzenberg, prepared directly from the Polish originals. The majority of these texts have not previously been translated into foreign languages and have therefore remained outside broader international scholarly circulation. The works were selected by Piotr Domeracki, while the translations were prepared by Anna Wójtowicz. Piotr Domeracki also carried out a thorough substantive and terminological verification of the translations and exercised scholarly supervision over the final form of the English versions of the texts. The publication thus at least partially fills the translation gap in the international reception of the work of both representatives of the Toruń school of axiology, facilitating access to their writings for English-speaking readers.

From the Logic of Value to the Meaning of Life: Recent Reconstructions, Formalizations, and Interpretations

The secondary studies included in the present issue of *Ruch Filozoficzny* are not confined to a historical-philosophical discussion of Czeżowski's and Elzenberg's views. Their authors reconstruct the assumptions underlying the conceptions under analysis, subject the proposed solutions to logical and ontological analysis, formalize selected relations, and consider the consequences of these conceptions for the theory of norms, philosophical anthropology, and the problem of the meaning of life. The arrangement of the studies corresponds to the tripartite structure of the issue: it proceeds from meta-axiology, the logic and ontology of value, through the methodology of ethics and the theory of ought, to existential axiology and philosophical anthropology.

Piotr Domeracki's study opening the first part, entitled *Metaphysical Problems in the Meta-axiology of Tadeusz Hipolit Czeżowski (1889–1981)*, reconstructs Tadeusz Czeżowski's meta-axiology as an original synthesis of Brentanism, the metaphysical theory of the transcendentals, antinaturalism, and axiological realism. The subjects of Domeracki's analysis include the ontological status of value, the understanding of goodness and beauty as transcendental modes of being, the propositional struc-

ture of value judgements, the problem of the iteration of the axiological functor, and the relationship between the cognition of value and the project of empirical ethics. The study thus seeks to reveal the metaphysical assumptions of a conception which, owing to Czeżowski's characteristic ideal of scientific philosophy, is presented primarily from a logical and methodological perspective.

In the article entitled *Logico-Ontological Remarks on Henryk Elzenberg's Theory of Value*, Marek Magdziak conducts an original logico-ontological analysis whose point of departure is Elzenberg's formula according to which a valuable object is as it ought to be. Magdziak analyses the status of this formula and the relations between different varieties of perfective value, while also introducing the concept of intrinsic value. He proposes abandoning a subject-predicate interpretation of ought in favour of treating the expression "it ought to be the case that" as a modality referring directly to a situation or state of affairs considered as an integral whole. The instrument of this analysis is a multimodal logical calculus, which also makes it possible to compare Elzenberg's account of value as that which is as it ought to be with a conception closer to Czeżowski's position, linking value with the fact that it is good that a particular state of affairs obtains.

The second group of studies opens with Marek Lechniak's article entitled *From Feelings to Norms. T. Czeżowski's Conception of Norms in the Context of a Brentanist Classification of Mental Phenomena*, which situates Czeżowski's theory of evaluations and norms within the context of the Brentanist classification of mental phenomena. The author shows how the distinction between presentations, beliefs, feelings, and strivings determines the psychological and epistemological foundations of empirical ethics. Of fundamental importance here is the analogy between cognitive attention, which conditions the formation of perceptual judgements, and the evaluative attitude, through which an object is apprehended as valuable. Primary singular evaluations, subjected to generalization and intersubjective control, provide the basis for the formulation of teleological norms, while the system of these norms is supplemented by a priori ethical principles. Lechniak thus explains how, in Czeżowski's conception, the transition is made from affective-evaluative experience to normative judgements without reducing ethics to the psychology of feelings.

In the article entitled *Elzenberg and Issues Discussed about Obligation*, Marcin Drofiszyn constructs a system of deontic logic, designated as system HE, intended to correspond to the assumptions of the theory

of ought and obligation developed by Henryk Elzenberg within formal axiology. The author presents this system both syntactically, by specifying its language, axioms, and rules of inference, and semantically, by characterizing the class of models in which the formulae of the system are satisfied. He also reconstructs the path leading from the ought that a particular state of affairs should obtain (*Seinsollen*), through the ought that it should be realized by a particular subject (*Tunsollen*), to an obligation incumbent upon a particular agent at a particular time. The formal system HE constructed by Drofiszyn makes it possible formally to distinguish the ought that a given state of affairs should obtain from the ought, addressed to a particular subject, that the subject should realize it, and the latter, in turn, from the temporally individualized obligation to act. In the second part of the article, Drofiszyn employs the theses of system HE to indicate possible solutions to three currently debated problems concerning moral obligation: the scope of the Kantian principle "ought implies can", the possibility of irresolvable conflicts of oughts or obligations within a consistent ethical theory, and the status of supererogatory acts. The analyses conducted show that Elzenberg's distinction between ought and obligation, as formalized by Drofiszyn, may serve not only to provide a systematic account of Elzenberg's conception, but also to analyse contemporary disputes in the theory of moral obligation and to indicate possible ways of resolving them.

In the article entitled *Henryk Elzenberg – Stacker of Tables of Values*, Lesław Hostyński presents a synthetic reconstruction of Elzenberg's project of a system of the philosophy of value. Hostyński identifies three fundamental pillars of Elzenberg's system of the philosophy of value: the distinction between utilitarian and perfective value, the definitional connection between perfective value and ought, and the distinction between the ought of being and the ought of action. The author also discusses the relationship between ethical and aesthetic value, which Elzenberg treated as distinct aspects of perfective value, compares his understanding of utilitarian value with Alexius Meinong's position, and points to the significance of inspirations derived from the philosophy of Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, and Nicolai Hartmann. Hostyński's article also reveals the difficulties involved in reconstructing a system that Elzenberg did not succeed in completing and whose fundamental theses and their justifications survive mainly in manuscript sketches and scattered notes.

The third part, devoted to existential axiology and axiological anthropology, opens with Włodzimierz Tyburski's article entitled *The Meaning*

of *Life as Interpreted by Henryk Elzenberg and Tadeusz Czeżowski*, which contains a comparative discussion of the two philosophers' conceptions of the meaning of life. With regard to Czeżowski, the author distinguishes three dimensions of the concept of the meaning of life: the internal dimension, consisting in the harmonious, coherent, and non-contradictory ordering of the aims of action; the social dimension, realized by transcending individual aims, participating in collective life, and undertaking tasks of social and cultural value; and the philosophical dimension, in which the life of the individual is related to human life and the world conceived as a whole. In Elzenberg's conception, by contrast, the meaning of human life is closely connected with objective value. It cannot be arbitrarily bestowed upon life by an act of will, because it is derivative in relation to value. It is objective value that confers meaning upon human existence. The comparison of Czeżowski's and Elzenberg's conceptions of the meaning of life brings out their shared axiological orientation without obscuring the differences in the manner in which the two philosophers understood value, the human being, and the task of philosophy itself.

The work on the present issue was marked by the death of the author of this article, Professor Włodzimierz Bernard Tyburski, who died on 16 February 2026 at the age of eighty-two. To honour the memory of this outstanding Elzenberg scholar, the editors decided to dedicate the entire issue to him.

In the article entitled *The Axiological Concept of the Meaning of Life in Henryk Elzenberg's Philosophy*, Antoni Płoszczyńiec conducts a detailed reconstruction of Elzenberg's conception of the meaning of life, drawing both on texts published during the philosopher's lifetime and on materials published posthumously or still preserved in manuscript. Płoszczyńiec's considerations take account of the chronology of Elzenberg's successive statements and combine his formal axiology with philosophical anthropology. The former makes it possible to determine what axiological meaning is, while the latter makes it possible to determine whether, in what manner, and by virtue of what a particular form of human existence may be meaningful. Płoszczyńiec examines the relationship between axiological meaning and teleological meaning and advances a reconstructive hypothesis according to which all the forms of meaning considered by Elzenberg may ultimately be reduced to the meaning of existence. Existence has immanent meaning when the existing object is itself valuable, whereas transcendent meaning belongs to it by virtue of its relation to something valuable that exists beyond it and, together with it, forms a particular whole.

Concluding this group of studies, Paweł Okołówski's article entitled *Henryk Elzenberg's Analytical Existentialism* presents a distinctive interpretation of Elzenberg's philosophy as analytical existentialism, polemical towards readings which, by emphasizing the literary qualities of his writings, diminish the systematic, rational, and argumentative character of his philosophy. The designation "analytical existentialism" indicates the combination of the existential problems addressed by Elzenberg with an analytical method of practising philosophy, manifested in linguistic rigour, conceptual precision, and the logical ordering of argument. In Okołówski's interpretation, Elzenberg's philosophy takes the form of a system whose scope is determined principally by axiology and anthropology and whose foundations are constituted by two axioms: axiological absolutism and anthropological pessimism. The author also situates Elzenberg's thought within the tradition of Platonic realism, presenting it against the background of a polemic with a contemporary, anthropocentric, and simplified variety of naturalism.

The source texts and studies collected in the present issue show that the designation "Toruń school of analytical axiology" does not imply a doctrinal unity between Czeżowski's and Elzenberg's positions, but rather a community of problems and method, defined by the conviction that values are objective and cognizable and by the aspiration to explain rationally the foundations of axiological judgements, oughts, and norms. The divergence between Czeżowski's path – which led through logic, a reinterpretation of the theory of the transcendentals, and the project of empirical ethics – and Elzenberg's path – which centred on perfective value, ought, and the existential dimension of axiology – creates an internal tension that accounts for the intellectual distinctiveness and enduring relevance of the problems addressed by the intellectual formation they initiated. The tripartite structure of the issue makes it possible to demonstrate the coherence of the problems addressed by the Toruń school of analytical axiology without effacing the fundamental differences between its founders. The publication of English translations of works by both philosophers, together with the accompanying interpretative studies, is intended to broaden the international reception of Czeżowski's and Elzenberg's oeuvre and to lay the foundations for further research on the significance of that oeuvre for contemporary value theory, ethics, and philosophical anthropology.

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Summary

The article reconstructs the origins, distinctive character, and continuity of the Toruń centre for axiological studies formed after 1945 around Tadeusz Czeżowski and Henryk Elzenberg. It also justifies the designation "Toruń School of Analytical Axiology", understood not as the name of a unified doctrine but as referring to a shared field of problems, methods, and institutional practices. This common ground was defined by the conviction that values are objective and cognizable, by the aspiration to provide a rational account of the foundations of value judgements, oughts, and norms, and by a commitment to analytical rigour. The article presents the principal similarities and differences between the two philosophers' conceptions of the ontology and epistemology of value, the theory of norms, and the normative foundations of ethics. It also discusses the development of their published work, its posthumous editions, the most important translations, and its presence in international scholarly circulation. Particular attention is given to the personal and intellectual continuity of the Toruń axiological tradition and to its successive continuators. The final part characterizes the source texts and interpretative studies collected in the present issue of *Ruch Filozoficzny*. The publication of English translations of works by Czeżowski and Elzenberg, accompanied by contemporary scholarly studies, is intended to broaden the international reception of their philosophy and to provide a basis for further research on its significance for contemporary value theory, ethics, and philosophical anthropology.

Keywords: Tadeusz Czeżowski, Henryk Elzenberg, Toruń School of Analytical Axiology, theory of value, meta-axiology, formal axiology, axiological realism, empirical ethics, perfective value, ought

RUCH FILOZOFICZNY

**PART I:
META-AXIOLOGY,
THE LOGIC OF VALUES,
AND THE ONTOLOGY OF VALUES**

SOURCE TEXTS



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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On certainty in empirical sciences

“Eigentliche Wissenschaft kann nur diejenige genannt werden, deren Gewissheit apodictisch ist” (“That only can be called science proper whose certainty is apodictic”) is this statement by Kant (*Metaph. Anfangsgründe der Naturwiss.*, 1786, Vorrede, S. V.) valid from today’s perspective? Half a century earlier, Hume had already stated that judgements about facts are not certain, and that those judgements which are certain do not concern facts, but rather the relationships between ideas. Kant, on the other hand, followed in the footsteps of Plato and Descartes – just as Descartes believed that the *a priori* propositions of mathematics also constitute the laws of nature, and to defend this position he created his Copernican conception of the world of experience. The course of scientific development took the path indicated by Hume against Kant. It turned out that *a priori* propositions cannot be applied without reservation in the empirical world, as they concern the meanings of terms, not objects or facts; natural laws and hypotheses are not certain and can be refuted by experience.

The role of such uncertain elements of science presents numerous difficulties for methodologists. They are commonly assigned a supporting role in scientific theories. They are said to be a tool for organizing and recording observational statements, or that they should be understood as guidelines for predicting unknown facts. However, this understanding does not take into account the fact that they are essential components of scientific theories, linked by logical relationships into a whole with other elements of these theories.

In order to define the position of these uncertain elements within a theory, it is essential to consider how they are introduced into the theory, i.e. how they are justified. This is done using methods of probabilistic reasoning. A typical method of this kind is to verify scientific laws and hypotheses by means of observational statements, which we will refer to as verification premises. This method of verification allows us to compare the degrees of probability of the verified statement in terms of different verification premises, or the degrees of probability of different statements in terms of the same premises. Verification methods make it possible to choose from a range of possible laws or hypotheses those whose degree of probability is greatest in terms of given verification premises. There is no verification method that would allow the probability of a certain statement to be determined absolutely, i.e. without referring to circumstantial premises, as the implication of the probability 'if p , then probably q to the degree of u ' differs from the material implication 'if p , then q ', in that it does not allow the use of the cut rule and the conclusion that q is probable to some degree, as is the case in ordinary reasoning by *modus ponens*. In probabilistic reasoning, the cut rule is used only between individual probability relations that are linked by a material implication; suppose that the probability relation 'if p , then q is probable to degree u ' (a) implies 'if p_1 , then q_1 is probable to degree u_1 ' (b) – if (a) is true, then we have the right, as in any inference, to also conclude (b).

The premises for testing laws and hypotheses in empirical sciences are observational statements. They also require testing, where the premises are other observational statements. If, in a given case, an observational statement used as a premise for verification proves to be false, the degree of probability of the statement being verified on the basis of this premise becomes indeterminate.

Theories of empirical sciences are structured around scientific laws, hypotheses, and observational statements (other components of theories can be omitted in these considerations). The elements of a theory are not individual laws, hypotheses, or observational statements, but systems of statements linked together in probabilistic implications, consisting of a statement being tested and the premises for testing it. This is because, as mentioned above, methods of probabilistic reasoning only allow us to establish probabilistic relationships (implications), rather than individual probable statements. Let us express this differently, distinguishing between independent and dependent statements within the theory. Independent statements are those that can be preceded by an assertion sign, i.e. those that we consider to be theory propositions –

dependent statements in theory, on the other hand, are statements that do not appear in it as propositions, but only as elements of functions of truth (implications, alternatives, etc.) or implications of probability. In empirical theories, it is not individual laws, hypotheses, or observational statements that are independent, but only the probability relations that connect them.

Laws and hypotheses are matched to observational statements in such a way that they explain them and allow us to predict the results of subsequent observations; they are, in fact, reasons for observational statements. Every probability relation between the premise p and the law or hypothesis q , which we express in the form of a probabilistic implication 'if p , then q is probable to a degree u ', can be reversed into a material implication 'if q , then p '. Therefore, an empirical theory can be presented either as a system of probabilistic implications between observational statements and laws or hypotheses, or as a system of material implications, which have laws and hypotheses in their antecedents and observational statements in their consequents; we use the latter method when we wish to present the theory in the form of a deductive system.

If a new observation refutes a law or hypothesis, all implications containing that law or hypothesis remain true as implications with a false antecedent; all previously established probability relationships between observational statements as premises for verification and a given law or hypothesis also remain in force, although the conjunction of the new (negative) observation with the previous observations reduces its probability to zero. In other words, statements asserting the degree of probability of a law or hypothesis based on specific premises do not become false, even though the law or hypothesis is refuted by the new observation. In this sense, therefore, they can be considered certain, and a theory composed of statements of this kind satisfies Kant's postulate mentioned at the introduction to these considerations.

But why do such statements not remain within the realm of scientific theory, but are replaced by others containing laws or hypotheses that are as highly probable? When considering this question, it must first be noted that this is not always the case. Clearly false hypotheses are preserved in various theories as conscious fictions if they satisfy certain needs of scientific practice. However, they bring with them a fundamental limitation, namely that, as false, they cannot be further generalized, since every reason for such a false hypothesis would again have to be false. Thus, even if it is preserved as a fiction, it remains, in a sense, on the sidelines and does not become a starting point for further development of the theory. We can ignore this case in further considerations, as

it will not affect the course of our arguments. There is no doubt that scientific theories change and that the postulate of certainty – even though it is preserved in a sense – cannot guarantee them the stability that is usually considered a consequence of certainty.

Laws and hypotheses, which are dependent elements of theory, are not subject to the postulate of certainty, but are nevertheless selected according to the postulate of maximum probability; laws and hypotheses that are most probable on the basis of given verification premises best fulfil their respective tasks, because they explain and allow for the most accurate predictions. Each theory, when considered statically in a specific era of development of knowledge, is a system of probabilistic implications that contain the laws and hypotheses that are most probable due to the resource of observational statements as premises for verification, i.e. based on the extent of experience characterizing that era. The changeability of theories stems from the changeability of the scope of experience, which is constantly expanding and providing new premises for testing laws and hypotheses. These premises give rise to new probabilistic implications, in which laws and hypotheses are assigned changed probabilities. Implications from the previous era of development are superseded by implications from the new era, as they are based on richer empirical material. The volatility of theories is governed by the law of actualization. Theories of the empirical sciences must be rejuvenated in line with the constant enrichment of the world of experience, revealing ever new areas of reality.



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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On the object of axiology

Axiological sentences fall into three types:

- a) In sentences of the first type, we judge some individual thing to be good, e.g. 'this individual deed is a good deed'. Only in sentences of this type is the adjective 'good' used in its usual sense.
- b) In sentences of the second type, we judge a certain type of thing or a general thing to be good, e.g. 'pleasure is good'.

This sentence is equivalent to the sentence 'everything that is pleasant is good'. In sentences of this type, the adjective 'good' is used incorrectly, because things that are pleasant are good in the proper sense, not pleasure as an abstract object.

The term 'good' in the incorrect sense is used instead of 'criterion of good'.

- c) In sentences of the third type, we judge a fact or state of affairs to be 'good'. Thus, in these sentences, the predicate is 'goodness', and the subject is the statement of fact, e.g. 'it is a good thing that S is P'. 'A good thing' here is not identical to the term 'goodness' as an *abstractum* from 'good', nor is it a name for the general category of 'goods', i.e. objects that are good in the proper sense.

We define the relationship between the terms 'goodness' and 'good' in both meanings in such a way that an individual object is good always and only if it has a feature that constitutes a criterion of goodness, and a certain feature constitutes a criterion of goodness always and only if – when an object has this feature – it is good [because] it has it.

By analogy with the modal sentence 'it is necessary that S is P', the sentence 'it is a good thing that S is P' means that the fact stated in the

sentence 'S is P' is 'good'. Goodness is therefore not the subject of representation, but of judgement: in this respect it is a concept analogous to existence, necessity, and possibility. Goodness cannot be represented, just as existence cannot be represented; like existence, goodness can only be stated. However, the criteria of goodness are representable. Goodness is therefore different from any criteria of goodness given by ethical systems. Goodness is neither pleasure nor moderation, although it may be good that some of my experiences are pleasant or that someone acts with moderation.

Axiology makes statements about goods and goodness, criteria of goodness, or finally, goodness itself. However, we may say that goodness is the only subject of axiological research into relationships through which the concept of goodness and the criteria of goodness boil down to the concept of goodness.

Discussion

W. Steinberg pointed out that in the considerations of Brentano, Moore, and the author, goodness encompasses both fundamental judgements (moral and legal) as well as utilitarian and aesthetic judgements. Is such a broad concept of goodness scientifically valuable?

S. Frydman. Given the equivalence of the three axiological statements highlighted by the author, statements I and III can be reduced to statement II. For instance, if something is pleasant, then it is good. Therefore, if someone proves that only what is pleasant is good, the term 'good' can be eliminated. The author's considerations aimed to prove that the analysis of axiological statements necessarily implies that goodness is something specific, that it is the subject of a statement rather than a judgement. However, from the above remark, it can be seen that the lecturer's thesis does not necessarily imply that good is something specific. Thus, the consequences of the paper are contradictory.

H. Hefftnanowa inquires whether evaluative statements fall within the bounds of two-valued logic. Answer: they do not, because they are neither true nor false. However, they also do not provide a basis for multi-valued logic.

M. Fritzhand. 1. It is incorrect to use the words 'valuable' and 'good' interchangeably. This leads, for example in Moore's case, to clearly false conclusions. 2. The referent's statement is not true if we understand 'pleasure' as a simple quality.

Z. Łubieński. If we use the word 'good' in a meaning different from the word 'pleasant', will it not ultimately be a word devoid of content? After all, we do have examples of the use of words devoid of content, as in scholasticism, which uses terms such as 'spirit', 'God' and 'person'.



Henryk Elzenberg

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The end of aestheticism?*

In recent times, mainly through discussions with formalists, I have come to realize something: if beauty turned out to be based on formal structure, I would not consider it a value.

This goes very deep, also in terms of emotions: the thought that formalists might be right is, for me, the ruin of beauty as an ideal: I could no longer love beauty, it would be one of the greatest disappointments in this life full of disappointments.

What does this mean in theory? It appears that I “know” which objects are valuable; I know this on the basis of a certain intuition concerning a certain characteristic that I have conceived (or rather, that guides my mind), a “quality” (which is, incidentally, very complex and whose approximate description is to be the subject of substantive axiology). (The content of this characteristic is not *explicite* exhausted for me, but this does not interfere with its recognition.) If an object now possesses this characteristic, it is valuable; if not, it is not.

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And now: how do we determine that it possesses it? The answer is: we must do so by means of a separate judgement. We must recognize the feature in the object – we must analyse it in terms of its specificity.

* Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, ref. no. 111–181, file 63 (82). It is a 4-page manuscript dated between May 14 and May 18, 1943.

On the other hand, we judge the beauty of an object “without understanding” – based on our perception of it as concrete and individual. We experience an aesthetic ‘impression’ and on this basis we conclude: “this object is beautiful”.

It could be that, based on experience, we would know for certain that judgements of beauty, based on impression, and judgements of value, based on analysis of characteristics, always coincide, i.e. that objects that are “appealing” would always also be “valuable”. However, this is not the case, and even if it were true in all known cases, there would still be a *de iure* possibility that this would not always be the case; judgements about beauty and judgements about value would remain two different judgements based on two different intuitions: the perception of an object with regard to beauty, and the intuition of quality with regard to value.

This means that when using the common expression “beauty”, it does not guarantee “value”; an object can be “beautiful” without being “valuable”, and “valuable” without being beautiful. In other words, beauty is not value, it is not a type of value; it is only its unreliable and uncertain signal.¹

(N.b. For what I am saying to be significant, it must concern a competent aesthetic judgement, i.e., one that has been made in compliance with all the required conditions. Indeed, even a competent judgement can be assumed not to be confirmed by a judgement concerning, *strictly speaking*, the presence of a value-creating feature in the object. In terms of the value of the object, the latter judgement is the final instance, against which no direct “impression” of beauty, no “aesthetic intuition” concerning the object *non valet*. I repeat: I am talking about *de iure* relationships, because it may indeed be the case that the value-creating feature cannot be analysed and that we will be left with the uncertainty and approximation of the “competent judgement” (about the object).

Now, assuming that the above comments are correct, we have two possibilities.

Option one: we call “beauty” a property of an object, perceived by sight, based on the fact of its “likability” (n.b. when the above conditions are met). In that case, I must agree that something beautiful may not

¹ A side note: “If we consider beauty to be a value, then a judgement about beauty made on the basis of viewing an object can always be refuted by a conjunction of judgements about: 1) the value-creating feature; 2) its presence or absence in a given object. The latter conjunction of judgements is absolutely the final authority on the value of an object”.

be valuable, i.e. that beauty is not a kind of value. Therefore, with this understanding, I would completely abandon my previous position.

Option two: I would call “beautiful” only an object that has a value-creating feature found in it and which, moreover, appears in perception (beauty would therefore be a value-perceptibility, or more precisely, the fact of being perceived). With this understanding, we agree that an object that makes a full aesthetic impression, even under the required conditions, is not beautiful. Here again, we break with the concept of beauty as a certain visual property of objects.

This is what a first hasty sketch of this theoretical situation would look like. Now, let us consider further comments.

2

The whole issue stems simply from the introduction of the concept of “value-creating characteristics” (i.e., “superior value” characteristics). Once such a feature is accepted, it is clear that only its presence or absence determines the value of an object. And if this presence or absence can be determined, then all “impressions” or “intuitions” of the beauty of an object must give way to such a determination.

However, there is still another possibility: the presence or absence of a feature cannot be determined (directly?). In that case, the situation would be as follows: from the impression of beauty, we infer the probable presence of a feature, and this probability increases with the more perfect fulfilment of the conditions of “competence”. But part of such a concept would be to recognize the view that the presence of the feature cannot be determined. Would the feature itself be *ineffebilis*, or would only the fact of its presence in a given object be undeterminable? (The feature would be *irrecognosceibilis*.) The first possibility is opposed by all my previous thinking about these things. The second would be quite inexplicable: why would something, even approximately known, be unrecognizable?

Let us now consider that, for axiology, the focus shifts entirely to the domain of judgements about characteristics. What is important above all is that a certain characteristic is “value-forming”, “necessary”, and “superior in value”. A “competent value judgement” primarily concerns a characteristic; if such a judgement is possible, all other “judgements” of individual objects fade into insignificance.

4

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All this, it seems, is not the “end of aestheticism” within the limits in which “aestheticism” was ever discussed in my case before. Super- (or “hyper-”) value takes on a practical-ethical form (“super-good”) as an object of desire, and an aesthetic form as an object of contemplation, and since the main way of experiencing value and living it remains contemplation, then communing with value continues to be mainly communing with beauty (“super-beauty”) – an aesthetic experience. The role of the aesthetic experience of objects is reduced only where we do not explicitly perceive their value-forming characteristics in these objects: for here we can always suspect that we are succumbing to an aesthetic illusion. Besides, the value-forming feature was once abstracted from a series of aesthetic experiences of objects, and in this first phase, the experience of objects was extremely important; it lost this role later, but not only now, rather at the moment when the value-forming feature was made explicit. Except that I did not realize this last state of affairs immediately.

Nb. the value-forming feature can be contemplated 1) in its concept; 2) on objects, and this will always be commonplace and absolutely necessary.²

² A side note to point 4: “It is simple that (but this will always be the case for me) the highest object of ‘worship’ for me is not ‘beauty’ *in abstracto*, but rather a value-forming feature. So if we called this feature ‘symbolism’, I would be more of a ‘symbolist’ than an aesthete, if ‘expressiveness’ more of an ‘expressionist’, etc.”



Henryk Elzenberg

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The construction of the concept of value*

A. Departure point (philosophy of values) Question: what should I do?

I. Departure point of the philosophy of values

The philosophy of values undoubtedly has its origins in purely intellectual and theoretical interests. The concept of 'value' (as used in axiology, as opposed to economics) is a superordinate concept for at least two concepts that are well known and commonly used: "good" and "beauty"; hence, the study of matters related to value stems in part from a natural desire to unify knowledge, to seek a common ground for ethics and aesthetics. But this is not the main starting point. The main starting point is not theoretical or cognitive; it is, I believe, unquestionably practical.¹

* Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, ref. no. III-181, file 16 (originally, file 16 was labeled by Elzenberg with the following information: "Value and duty. [formal axiology]. Part one: The concept of value and duty. Materials and drafts predating 1939"). The text is 50 pages long. It is not dated. It was probably written in 1934. The author added the following note: "Later edition (Skolimowska). Incomplete; many things will be added from the earlier version".

¹ Side note: "This starting point cannot be a fixed one, for the simple reason that these two concepts may not be necessary. Ethics has often managed fine without the concept of 'good'. We must therefore first demonstrate that it is nec-

Admitting to practical intent is not, generally speaking, in the spirit of modern ethical thought; and if moralists (even the most serious ones) renounce it, what can be said about general axiology, whose connection with practice is notoriously more loose. Intellectuals and anti-intellectuals agree – for various reasons – against such a practical understanding of the tasks of ethics or axiology. (Anti-intellectuals consider it sheer madness for anyone to seek guidance for life in purely intellectual speculation. Intellectuals are quick to consider it negative (derogatory) to subordinate speculative effort to some unworthy practical goals; they also seek all kinds of arguments to demonstrate the lack of connection between these fields [and imperceptibly, in this area, I am moving towards supporting the position of anti-intellectuals]. I do not think they are right, and that this prejudice is anything other than prejudice. It is here – and certainly not for the last time in the course of these arguments – that the author must admit that the ancient world was more correct in matters of axiology than modern philosophers. The ancients believed in the practical effectiveness of inquiries into value and boldly – regardless of greater or lesser intellectualism – put this motif at the forefront. I will not mention the Stoics and Epicureans, but even Aristotle (who was surely an intellectual!) did not seem to think that it was beneath him to subordinate inquiry to practical purposes. “These inquiries”, he says, “are not undertaken for purely theoretical purposes, like many others, for we do not investigate in order to become good; there would be no need for it”.² “In order to become good”: this is how the Greek philosopher puts it in his own language and terminology. We – perhaps more in line with the prevailing (possibly) approach to ethics in modern times – will set ourselves the same task, but rather in terms of: while practicing axiology, I seek answers to the questions: “What ought I to do?” Or: “How ought I to behave?”

essary, and this can only be done by starting with the practical question: “What should I do?”

² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, (II, 2) 1103. The above passage in translation by Daniela Gromska: “Since these considerations have – in contrast to all others – a non-theoretical purpose (for we are considering courage not in order to understand what it is, but in order to become courageous, because otherwise we would derive no benefit from these considerations), therefore, we must consider issues related to action, namely, how it should be done; for, as has already been mentioned, it also determines the direction of our permanent dispositions. That one should act in accordance with right judgement is a common view, which we accept as a premise” (Aristotle, *Complete Works*, vol. 5, Warsaw 1996, p. 105) [editor’s note].

So when I ask, “What ought I to do?” I am obviously not asking axiology to give me a casuistic answer on how I should behave in my specific individual life situation or in all possible circumstances of life. I do not expect axiology – axiology itself – to take me by the hand *hic et nunc* or to provide me with a catalogue of all the possible duties that may await me. I expect one thing from it: to indicate certain [very] general rules of conduct that are binding on me, rational principles within which other factors, not revealed by axiological speculation, would determine the choice of conduct. That is one thing.

Secondly, clarification is needed (the word “I”). I am not only an individual, but also part of a series of communities – such as the nation (humanity), the community of rational beings in whose lives I participate and for whose behaviour I am *pour ma part* responsible. So I want to know not only what I should do, but what those wholes of which I am a part should do: my question is not solely a question of personal ethics, but falls within the scope of normative (practical) philosophy of culture, as a discipline concerning (the duties of societies). Add to this that I am also indirectly interested in how individuals whose behaviour I can influence should behave: for only then will I know how to influence them.

Thirdly, let us note the term ‘behave’ rather than ‘act’. By choosing this expression, I want to emphasize that it is not only about how I should act – and, consequently, what I should want – but also how I should behave where this behaviour takes place entirely within my psyche: and not primarily how I should feel (and, in a sense, think). There is no reason why I should assume *a priori* that only my actions are important, and not what takes place entirely within my psyche.

[This last issue is linked to a further, more complicated one. Alongside the fundamental question, ‘What ought I to do?’, there is a second, partly independent question: ‘Towards what should I feel positive emotions?’ (‘love’, ‘respect’, ‘praise’) More on this later.]

Let us move on to the objections.

Posing the question ‘What ought I to do?’ is without a premise. The premise is that I ought to do something [and that the question of duty makes sense, is a meaningful question]. Secondly, I assume that I do not know at this moment what I should do.³ Two fundamental objections are raised against these two premises. First: you should not do anything

³ A note in the margin: “The philosophy of values as a practical discipline can be combated primarily by questioning either of these two assumptions”.

(because the question of duty does not make sense at all).⁴ Second: you know perfectly well what you ought to do, and you do not need to ask axiology about it.

Let us examine the first objection.⁵

II. Refuting the objection: that the question 'What ought I to do?' is irrelevant

Kant raised the question 'What ought I to do?' in all its clarity and was met with, *inter alia*, the following accusation by Schopenhauer:⁶ According to Schopenhauer, Kant assumes 'that man somehow, of his own accord, comes up with the idea of investigating and inquiring (*erkundigen*) into the law governing his will, to which this will would have to submit and yield (*fügen*)'. According to Schopenhauer, this is never the case.

Let us immediately clarify this state of affairs. When I ask 'what ought I to do?', this does not mean that my freedom (awareness of freedom) *de iure* is the current and actual state of affairs, and that I would look around for a law that could restrict that freedom. The state of affairs is such that I assume that my freedom is already limited *de iure* at this moment, and I do not know how and by what. But why do I assume that it is limited? Because I have a sense of duty.⁷

[An explanation here]

Therefore, contrary to Schopenhauer, I agree and fully endorse the following description of the state of affairs by French social moralist Daniel Parodi⁸: "The only pure and intrinsic duty that is imposed a pri-

⁴ This objection should be distinguished from the positions of those who agree that the question is valid, but after examining the matter in detail, they dismiss it: you ought nothing, you are free (anarchism as a substantive doctrine: Stirner!).

⁵ A note in the margin: "The concept of duty exists, but it does not apply to anything".

⁶ *Grundlage der Moral*, §6, *Sämtliche Werke*, Insel Verlag III 532/3.

⁷ A note in the margin: "The fact that I should is, to me, as fundamental and self-evident as the fact that I am".

⁸ This most likely does not refer to Daniel Dominique Parodi, author of, *inter alia*, *Le problème moral et la pensée contemporaine*, Paris 1909. "Pure reason cannot hope, Parodi maintains, to find within itself the very substance of morality; it is given to man by society or instinct, and reason must criticize these givens. In doing so, it introduces its own disinterested goals and creates the essence of morality itself". Cit. after: E. Gilson, T. Langan, A. A. Maurer, *History of Contemporary Philosophy*, Warsaw 1977, p. 687a.

ori on a conscientious person is to fulfil all the conditions that enable us to reveal our specific duties. The only absolute duty is to (sincerely) want to fulfil one's duty".

However, opponents have an answer to this: the concept of duty is illusory. If the word 'ought to' can be replaced with a phrase that merely states a certain state of affairs, then sentences about duty become simply descriptive sentences – and there is no specific subject of thought to which the word 'ought to' corresponds. The closest thing is to replace it with psychological descriptive phrases – and that is what I am discussing here. [Sentences containing the word 'duty' can be replaced with sentences describing empirical facts. But that is the next level.] For now, it is claimed that there is no 'duty', but only the psychological fact of a 'sense of duty'; however, the fact that I have a sense of duty does not mean that I ought to⁹. My freedom *de iure* is therefore effectively unlimited. And here these psychologists logically come to the same conclusion as ethical anarchists (the latter through substantive research and the determination that duty does not apply to any behaviour). You are free, there are no constraints. Therefore, act according to your own *sic volo* – capricious and changeable moment by moment, or organized once and for all for life – but always deeply arbitrary. There is no reason to seek some law for the will.

There are numerous variants of the psychological theory of the word 'should' in relation to a rational subject, i.e. the psychological theory of duty (replacing duty with a 'sense of duty').¹⁰ Here are some of them.

'I should this or that' means: I am inclined to do this or that for fear of bad consequences if I do otherwise. Variants include the expressions: 'I should do this and that', meaning 'I am prepared to do this and that for fear of unspecified negative consequences that are anticipated if I were to do otherwise'. 'Unspecified' here means: 'it is not known what; where, from whom or from what it comes, and how it is causally related to the action'. [This fear itself can also be called a sense of duty. Or, finally,

⁹ A note in the margin: "It is true. There is a sense of duty as a psychological fact. For me, this sense is a sense of something I call 'duty', and the complement of 'duty' plays the same role here as 'colours' in expressing the 'seeing of colours'. We are talking here about an object called 'duty'. For this type of psychologists, however, the 'sense of duty' is only a special kind of feeling, and the complement of 'duty' plays a rather adjectival role, just like the complement of 'taste' in the expression 'taste sensation' i.e. a special kind of sensation. They deny that there is any subject of representation or presentation here, which could be called 'duty' or 'obligation'".

¹⁰ A note in the margin: "Holzapfel, Znamierowski".

‘a sense of duty is a readiness to act in such and such a way by virtue of a habit formed under the influence of the threat of bad consequences in the event of acting otherwise – and continuing even when the threat of bad consequences has ceased’ (The last two variants are substantiations of the original, very primitive thesis.).

Against these theories, the following two arguments can be put forward:

- a) The meaning of the word ‘should’ would change depending on the person and the time in which it was used; – alternatively, in the second interpretation: we would have no meaning for the word ‘should’ in the second and third person, and in the past tense. For ‘you should’ certainly does not mean ‘you are ready (willing) to do something for fear of bad consequences if you do otherwise’. ‘I should have’ certainly does not mean ‘I was ready’, etc. Only ‘you should’ could be interpreted as ‘I want you to...’, and ‘I should have’ rather as ‘I regret that I did not’. The same can be said of any theory according to which ‘I should’ means ‘I am experiencing this or that’; it does not explain ‘you should’, ‘he should’ or ‘I should have’. In the second interpretation (where we talk about the fact of a sense of duty) and where the word ‘should’ has no proper ‘meaning’ but only some way ‘expresses’ my sense of duty – the words ‘you should’ and ‘he should have’ also remain unexplained; they mean nothing, and if they express anything, it is certainly something other than ‘I should’. If one were to state what they mean or express, the mystery of duality would remain to be explained. This mystery disappears with the natural – and only natural – assumption that ‘I should’ means something non-psychological and the same in all persons and tenses.¹¹
- b) One of the most important laws of the philosophy of values is as follows: does ‘duty’ apply only to persons or also to things? Kant claimed that it applies only to persons, arguing that there can be no imperative with regard to things. This should be reversed: duty undoubtedly applies to things, and therefore duty is certainly not an imperative.

¹¹ A note in the margin: “If Peter says ‘I should not’ and Paul says ‘you should’ and they argue intellectually about the true state of affairs (and not just as two roles, about what is to be done – ‘I do not want to’, ‘I command you to’), then of course they both understand some common meaning. Such an intellectual dispute is possible and common. Every command is a hostile act; but ‘you should’ can be a friendly act”.

‘Tea should be hot’ is undoubtedly a meaningful statement. It is not a substitute for the statement: ‘The cook should serve hot tea’. On the contrary: it is obvious that first the tea should be hot, and then the cook should serve it hot. First comes the duty of the tea, and only then, as a consequence, the duty of the cook.

Thus, if duty applies to things, it cannot mean either a mental or a biological experience.

III. Refutation of the objection: that the duty is ready (and known) in the form of specific (and known to me) commands

The second assumption contained in the question ‘what should I do?’ was that I do not know what I should do. To this I object: yes, you do know. This objection can take two fundamental forms. The first: ‘you know because you have been told’. This assumes that someone before me has asked this question and knows the certain and definitive answer; all you have to do is ask that person, as an authority. In response, I state that, to the contrary: the dispute over these matters among those who claim to know is enormous, and the judgement remains with me. I can use the answers I find in my quest, but I cannot accept any of them on faith.¹²

The second form is more important and concerns the connection between what I ought to do and the existence of certain rules imposed on me by someone else. Again, it takes two forms. First, one can argue that ‘I ought to’ means ‘it is commanded’ by someone in some way. And one can argue that I should because it is commanded by someone and in some way.¹³

Well, first of all. Of course, there are many rules imposed on me from outside by the prevailing ethics of the society in which I live, by law and by custom. [...] But these are only external commands, which – until I confirm them internally – I obey only for the sake of peace and quiet.

¹² A note in the margin: “I do not rule out authority in axiology as a secondary and subordinate act”.

¹³ A note in the margin: “There is a third form: when you consult your ‘conscience’ directly. Here, I simply state that I do not know. My conscience advises me two things that [...] cannot be seen; some more clearly than others; besides, I am not sure where the voice of my conscience begins and ends, and where the voice of passion begins. If axiology had no other purpose than to extract and organize the content of my knowledge through conscience, it would be a great undertaking. No: my conscience definitely needs to be enlightened”.

It is necessary to give these commands normative power, adding to this fact one of the two theories mentioned.

Definitional theory: 'I should' means 'I am commanded'. Clearly contrary to the understanding of those who use both terms sincerely and without prejudice, their distinction has unfortunately been introduced by some theorists with the vague, unclear and ambiguous concept of 'norm'. This term, truly cursed, seems – although considered by many to be of the purest intention – to have been invented solely to blur the naturally understood difference between command and duty. One of the arguments against the 'transitional' theory is invalid, 'you should' is invalid, because 'you should' clearly means 'you are commanded', I should have – 'I was commanded', etc. The latter remains valid: if the duty applies to things, then 'I ought to' cannot mean 'I am commanded to'. But suppose that there is some special additional meaning in relation to persons. Then the following objection remains: – Commands can be contradictory (coming from different commanders or even from the same commander at different times). In that case, it would be so that 'I should' and 'I should not' at the same time, in the accepted definition of duty, would not be a logical contradiction, but it would leave me in complete ignorance as to how to proceed, that is, it would deprive me of complete ignorance as to how to proceed, thus depriving me of the practical meaning of duty. Therefore, 'I should' cannot simply mean 'I am commanded to'.

However, an opponent can refute this argument by responding that 'I should' does not simply mean 'I am commanded to', but 'I am commanded to by someone privileged' [who is additionally assumed not to issue two contradictory commands, although this is not a logical necessity]. Such a person could be God, and the theory then takes on a theological form: 'I ought to' means 'I am commanded by God'. Of the non-theological forms, the most ambitious is the sociological theory: 'I ought to' would mean 'I am commanded by society'.

The deciding counterargument to this concept is that duty also applies to things, and therefore where there is no conscious recipient of the command, there can be no command. Furthermore, it is permissible, and indeed a perfectly good method, to state briefly that by 'I should' I do not mean 'I am commanded'. Therefore, the second theory is common, according to which the word 'should' retains its separate meaning, and it is only claimed that I should do certain things because they are commanded to me. Of course, this may also refer to a privileged commander who does not issue two contradictory *ad hoc* orders, and does not issue two contradictory permanent (long-term) orders (regulations).

According to this theory, my duties are also defined by someone else's orders, and are therefore predetermined.

Contrary to this concept, it is quite clear that no order or regulation creates an obligation in itself, but only against the background of a certain set of relationships that creates the obligation to obey the orders of a given commander; however, this obligation to obey his orders is not, logically, the result of his order, but must precede any order he gives. However, this simple state of affairs is sometimes masked by the fact that (and this is linked to the issue of the privileged commander) the commander is so far superior to me that obeying his orders is an obvious duty in itself. This is the theological view. However, it is also the sociological view of Durkheim and his school. Durkheim repeatedly refers to the alleged overwhelming 'superiority' of society over the individual, which supposedly creates a duty to obey. It is not too much of a stretch to pose the following dilemma: either this superiority is a superiority of power (force), in which case the short answer is that there is no apparent connection between force and the duty to obey, and that not obeying force simply because it is force is the first condition for fulfilling any duty.¹⁴ Or this superiority consists in the fact that the commander knows better than I what I should do [or is better, or is himself in the service of higher values]. In all these cases, however, the reason for a possible duty is not the command, but something else that is subject to my control and assessment; – and I come back to the right of my own judgement.¹⁵

And so the question 'What ought I to do?' remains open (for thought).¹⁶

¹⁴ A note in the margin: "We submit to conscious power (human authority, the state) in the same way that we submit to unconscious power (fire, from which we flee; rain, from which we hide): to avoid harm or destruction. I obey authority just as I hide from the rain: to avoid getting wet".

¹⁵ A note in the margin: "But sociologists do not present it in such a way that society is an intellectual authority that 'knows what I should do'. It is supposed to be 'better' than me, and therefore its will would create a duty".

¹⁶ A note in the margin: "The question 'what ought I to do?' is a sensible question and there is no ready answer to it".

B. Paths to understanding value

I. The first path to understanding value: value as the justification for my duty (obligation)¹⁷

[N.b. – Regarding terminology. The word ‘*obowiązek*’ (obligation) is burdened with numerous connotations; however, I see no other Polish equivalent. ‘Duty’ is something much more general. Here, I understand it as the German *das ich soll* or *Verpflichtung* [...], *die Pflicht* and *das Sollen*. The French *obligation*. Or perhaps ‘commitment’.]

There seem to be three types of answers to the question ‘what should I do’, with increasing rationalization:

- a) The first type of answer would be to list a series of loose obligations, forming an unconnected multitude.¹⁸
- b) The second: to give one or more core duties that constitute the reason for the rest (from which the rest is derived), but which themselves remain without reason; [they are related and boil down to a few or one, then it is necessary to determine and formulate those few or one (as Kant did)].
- c) The third: they are related and flow from a source other than duty (duty is the result of something that is not duty); then one must look for that something.

The first concept is unacceptable. We think in order to bring some order and unification to the chaos of information: here we leave chaos in *crudo*. (Yes, in heteronomous ethics, e.g. à la Durkheim, this would make sense: because there, unity is in the person of the commander. Here, however, unity must be internal). There are so many different commands, and each one without any reason! The result is an excess of chaotic irrationality. However, someone, such as Prichard in *Duty and Interest*, might say that the reason for a given action, the reason why I should do it, is directly that it is such and such. For example, this action is a repayment of a favour; therefore, I should perform it. Between the properties of the action, such as those mentioned above, and the duty to perform it, there should be [...] a natural, convincing connection, which is the reason for my duty [...].

¹⁷ A note in the margin: “Theories of duty that exempt us from searching for values!”

¹⁸ A note in the margin: “Our duties have no reason or connection between them and must be determined by simple empirical calculation”.

This is precisely what utilitarians have consistently combated as bad intuitionism. Firstly, I cannot see any direct relationship between, for example, the fact that a certain act is a repayment of a favour and the necessity¹⁹ of performing it. Secondly, the intuitions of individual people vary greatly in this regard.

If different people's intuitions about a basic duty differ, confrontation and discussion are possible; here, however, we have chaos.

The second concept is sometimes attributed, not entirely correctly, to Kant. All relationships are to stem from the categorical imperative (one, although it has two secondary forms in addition to the main one); however, the categorical imperative itself is to be an imperative without reason. This interpretation is based, *inter alia*, on the famous *sic volo, sic iubeo* and is, as far as we can judge, superficial,²⁰ which is of no consequence to us.

Well, although such a lack of reason offends our intellectual needs, we would have to come to terms with it, especially since we will inevitably encounter such a lack of reason sooner or later. But if there is a possibility of pushing the boundary further and deriving a fundamental duty from something deeper than duty, then we should opt for the latter concept as it provides deeper and broader clarification.

This leaves us with the third concept. In Kant himself, according to a probably more accurate and profound interpretation, we find one form of this concept. Namely, according to this interpretation, the reason why I should do something is the universality of this duty, or more precisely, the fact that I can desire it always and everywhere. But what is the reason why something can be desired always and everywhere? Is it only consistency, as a correct deduction of specific duties from the categorical imperative would seem to indicate? Probably not. But that 'which can be desired always and everywhere' is an expression of pure will independent of nature, not subject to natural motivation, and identical with pure practical reason. As a result: 'I ought to' because I want to (meaning, that I want to?) impersonally, without motives, as a rational being. ('I ought to' here does not mean 'I want to rationally', but clearly the awareness of the pressure of our will on our emotional and sensual being.) This whole concept must be discussed later; here we need only note that the reference to universality is not definitive in it and that 'duty' has been interpreted in a way that removes its specificity [...].

¹⁹ An uncertain lesson [editor's note]

²⁰ Elzenberg's footnote: 'Its vigorous refutation in Delbos, *La philosophie* [...] *de Kant*, 2nd ed., 1926, p. 354 note'.

What remains, then, is only another variation of the third concept, the one that most closely corresponds to common sense: basing the duty of an action on what we call the value of either the action itself or what is achieved by the action [...].

The reason for my 'I should', or rather part of that reason, must be some quality of *des Gesollten*. That quality is value. And indeed, when we refer to value in justifying a duty, it satisfies us. This is the first aspect of what we call 'value' and value (that which) provides the reason for den *Gesollten*. Duty is justified by value; the concept of value is formed as the concept of something that is the source of duty; *aliter* the 'value' of axiologists contains normativity in its very concept.

To quote Laird again: '[...] we all believe that we should seek the best we can achieve precisely because it is the best. Thus, to use technical language, we believe in some ultimate synthetic relationship between value, or excellence, on the one hand, and what we ought to do... on the other'.²¹

[I am unsure whether to add the following comments here or under the section on duty: We naturally believe that value is always the source of duty. Namely: 'If something is valuable, then someone should do something. They should do something in relation to things that have the same value-giving characteristic as that thing. From the fact that a certain characteristic is value-giving, follows that someone should do something. More generally: from the fact that the value of something depends on certain conditions, follows that those conditions should be fulfilled.]

Thus, from the concept of duty emerges the concept of value. However, caution is advised: what Laird and I are writing is merely a statement of the psychological fact that invoking value satisfies common sense. However, rationally speaking, this satisfaction cannot be considered such a direct justification, because when we say, 'this is valuable', we may be saying something we do not understand. How and why does it follow that 'this should be fulfilled'? How does *Gesolltwerden* follow from value? This needs to be demonstrated. Otherwise, 'value' will be an empty word and will explain nothing (it is a verbal explanation, a pseudo-explanation).²²

²¹ J. Laird, *The Idea of Value*, Cambridge 1929.

²² A note in the margin: "The 'justification' for duty remains per ignotum or at least per ineffabile for now. Of course, the word 'value' contains some meaning that I sense, but which remains unspoken for now: the point is to extract it".

Let us note in particular that it is not at all clear how duty follows from value. The naive response would be: it is valuable, so it should be realised. But even the most cursory examination shows that not everything that is valuable should be realised by me, and that the relationship between the value of something and one's duty is much looser.

It appears, then, that the concept of value will only be useful to us to the extent that we are able to:

1) analyse it; 2) demonstrate the relationship between the value of something and my duty.

For now, we know about value only that it does indeed give satisfaction and that it should be interpreted in such a way as to justify this fact rationally, so that it becomes understandable that duty stems from value.

II. The second path to understanding value as a property of an object that creates an obligation to value that object

With awe and fear, I now embark on this path to clarify the concept of value, to discuss another aspect of it: the issues here are unclear and emotional, but they must be discussed.

In addition to the general question, 'What ought I to do?', it is appropriate to identify another question as one of the starting points (of the philosophy of value), although it is difficult to say whether it is part of the former or an additional question, namely: What ought I to respect, love, honour, etc.²³

Alongside the assumptions inherent in the first question, the following assumptions are contained here: I should or must worship something. I only don't know what. There was also an analogous assumption: you must behave in a certain way (as long as you exist).

Now I suppose that worshipping, respecting and loving are either the same necessity or an unquestionable duty [...].

It is not a necessity, because one may very well worship, love, or respect nothing at all. So it can only be a duty. A privileged duty, for, as it turns out, it is the only unquestionable one. To the first question (what ought I to do), one answer is given in any case, and it is the point of departure for a second question that arises almost simultaneously: ought I to love, worship, respect something – to what ought I to relate emotionally in a positive way? (It appears that the duty to seek one's duty is not

²³ A note in the margin: "If that question is a fundamental ethical question, then at first glance it seems to have some religious connotations".

the only a priori duty!) Where does this privilege and a priori certainty of this kind of duty come from?

This can only be explained by the presence of values in my mind. Because if, on the one hand, there is this synthetic connection between what is valuable and what I should 'do', then the same connection exists between value and duty, love, worship, respect: whatever is valuable should be loved.²⁴

[Nb.: Perhaps there is no object that possesses a property that creates a duty to respect it. But if an object possesses property X – namely, value – then I should respect it. (The property X itself – that is, value – makes every object that possesses it an object that should be respected.)]

The duty to respect value applies to every being capable of recognizing value.

What I am presenting is one marker of value. However, I reject the view of certain neo-Kantians, according to whom this is the definition of value: 'that which should be the object of such and such experiences is valuable'. This is not even part of the definition of value. (For if there were no beings to relate to it, value would remain value.)

The recognition of the indispensability of 'reverence' is therefore a fact. It is only a matter of ensuring that it is justified in individual cases, i.e. that it is directed only towards things that are truly valuable.

Value is not only the source of norms for action, but also the direct object of feelings. The concept of value is necessary in order to be able to experience these feelings in the first place, and the determination of value is necessary in order to direct them towards the right objects. It is Brentano's *richtige Liebe*.

(I must avoid the term 'approval' here, which I use in an intellectual sense: 'recognizing that it is as it should be')

Based on our intuition regarding the term 'value', we realise that the concept of value obtained in one way and the concept of value obtained in another are one and the same.

From the two chapters above, it follows that the definition of value must be such that it implies two consequences:

- a) that value creates obligations in general (or possibly the obligation to realise it, as this is unclear);
- b) that value creates an obligation to have a positive emotional attitude towards it.

²⁴ A note in the margin: "What is valuable should be the subject of such and such experiences".

These consequences will result from the definition of value only to the extent that it is itself formulated in terms of duty.

C. Analysis of the concept of value

Can the concept of value be defined, analysed or only (according to Nelson) 'more precisely specified'?

First of all, we find ourselves faced with the objection that the concept of value cannot be defined, analysed or precisely specified.

Preliminary explanations: what I mean by these things.

To define value is to replace this term with several other terms, so that the rule is fully equivalent and the terms used in the definition are in some sense clearer (more understandable) than the term "value".

'To define more precisely' means to specify any characteristic that all valuable objects possess. 'To analyse' is a common term for both.

Moore argues against the possibility of definition. Contrary to his view, it must be demonstrated that definition is possible:

- a) not in naturalistic terms;
- b) but by actually applying the concept of 'valuable'.

I. Is value a duty of being?

Let me begin with a small confession from my intellectual biography. For years, I have been carrying around this thought (hypothesis) that value can either be defined directly, simply as a 'duty to be', or, at least without making it a definition, that everything of value should be.

I also carefully collected, in the course of my reading, passages where various authors, in a more elaborate or casual manner, expressed this view (with or without the awareness of expressing a specific view) or some very similar view. The collection of these passages is quite large. It includes Sidgwick, Moore, Meinong, Simmel, Rashdall, Laird, Plato, Aristotle, Cudworth, and Rickert.²⁵

²⁵ Elzenberg's footnote: "Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th ed., p. 4 (cited in Laird M.W.R 41); Moore, *Principia Ethica*, translated by Znamierowski, pp. V, 16, 17; H. Rashdall, *Thesis of Good and Evil*, Laird, *The Idea of Value*, 124; Meinong, *Über emotionale Präsentation*, 118; Simmel, *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, 2nd ed., p. 47. I would like to emphasize that this also concerns related views; for instance, one speaks of good, rather than of general value, or of what 'should be realised' (Simmel), rather than what simply should be".

More extensively and with full awareness it is presented in the Ethics of Nicolaus Hartmann and, finally, as a central and fundamental view on the essence of value in several articles by the American philosopher W.M. Urban (author of *Valuation* from 1909²⁶) in the Journal of Philosophy from 1916 and 1917 (especially the first article). In this way, the doctrine has its consistency, and I would not be terribly isolated if I tried to defend it. Note, indeed, that such a definition of value corresponds to the conditions. It is convincing that if something 'should be', then a being 'capable' of understanding and executing it should bring it into being: so that the justification of duty by value then becomes clear and loses its seemingly verbal character (it can no longer be accused of verbalism). It is perhaps less obvious, but also understandable in a way, that if something should be, then it deserves a positive emotional response (respect, esteem, honour) and cannot be treated as just anything in this respect. The term would therefore serve its purpose: it would bring order to our view of value and duty. Nevertheless, after careful consideration, it seems to me that it encounters insurmountable difficulties. I will briefly outline a few of them.

First of all, this does not seem to be entirely consistent with our direct intuition. Would it really convince us that every valuable thing should be?²⁷ The sense of 'duty to be' is quite naturally connected with the concept of good, but is it so naturally connected with the common concept of beauty? Would we be inclined to say that every beautiful thing should be? After all, most of the moralists mentioned above had in mind goodness rather than any value, including beauty, and sometimes treated 'value' and 'goodness' as synonyms. On the other hand, would we be inclined to say that 'there ought to be' things with a very low degree of worthiness?²⁸ I am not talking about the secondary 'duty to

²⁶ Wilbur Marshall Urban (1873–1952), author of *Valuation: Its Nature and Laws* [editor's note].

²⁷ A note in the margin: "First of all, a small methodological remark. In order to judge whether something should be, one should present oneself with a not too complete [picture] and only then ask: should this or that be? (...) Because if we have in mind the world we know and against its background we consider the 'duty of being' of something, it may often seem to us that this or that should be in it; meanwhile, this duty proves to be a derivative, mixed with the existence of some other thing, rather than a final one".

²⁸ A note in the margin: "This may be a separate point: the issue of low degrees of value. Should everything, even if only minimally valuable, exist? In practice, of course, there would be a limitation on the obligation to non-coexist with other valuable things. Namely: 'every valuable thing should exist, unless

be' (in Hartmann), which of two incompatible things belongs only to the more valuable one, but even about the primary one: can we care about something of very little value existing rather than not existing? And from here it is only a stone's throw to an objection that may not be strong, but which reaches deepest. Is it really possible to compare non-existence with existence in terms of value?²⁹ To claim that something should be valuable rather than not be anything? Non-existence eludes measurement in terms of value; there is no common measure of value for something and for 'nothing', and it is impossible to reasonably decide which should be desired: the most valuable of worlds or non-existence.³⁰

Second objection. If two things are exactly the same, and one of them is valuable and should be so, then the other should also be valuable and should be so. Hence the conclusion that, to the extent possible, there should be as many instances of one and the same valuable thing as possible, differing only in *solo numera* (If a greater number of instances of one and the same thing is possible, then they should all be).³¹

These examples could be multiplied ad infinitum.³² The ideal becomes a world quantitatively 'loaded with value'. Truth: there are people who, through a lack of reflection, understand it this way; they understand the cultural work of humanity as the accumulation of cultural goods [...]. The ideal is to 'cram' as many valuable things as possible into existence (a rather frightening quantitative understanding of culture). It stands to reason that by simply multiplying the number of valuable objects, the world approaches perfection. But we soon come to our senses when this

it prevents the existence of another, more valuable thing'. But the question of whether a given thing 'should be' must be asked in terms of a perfect world, where such alternatives caused by incompatibility do not occur".

²⁹ A note in the margin: "Non-existence is not subject to judgement; therefore, the value of non-existence cannot be compared to the value of anything".

³⁰ A note in the margin: "It sounds pessimistic, but it seems to be only an expression of intellectual criticism of the arguments discussed".

³¹ A note in the margin: "Even if we imagine [...] all-perfection, like God, we cannot claim that it should exist, because it makes no sense to claim that non-existence would be less perfect than it. (This, however, is doubtful.) And if perfection should exist? It is because it is perfection, and so it should result from perfection (value), and is not synonymous with it. The question of which alternative to choose when faced with the choice between a world that is as good as possible (perfect) or no world at all must remain unanswered. There are no reasons for this opposition".

³² A note in the margin: "If two things differ only slightly, by some minor detail, and both are valuable, then both should also exist [...]".

‘accumulation’ becomes so great that, in despair, we are ready to ask the first Huns³³ we come across to kindly clear it away.

Thirdly (this questionable argument is an extension of T.H. Green’s³⁴ well-known objection to hedonism³⁵). One can conceive of an infinite number of valuable things; all of them should exist. However, not all of them can be realised. An infinite number of things that should be will never be. Only a fraction, insignificant in comparison to infinity, will ever be realised.³⁶ Given this, one might ask: does it matter whether the insignificant fraction realised is slightly smaller or slightly larger? And if so, do we, as thinking and acting beings, have a duty to multiply? In other words, with this understanding of value, it makes sense to question whether it creates a duty, an obligation for us.

That is doubtful, though: one could argue that increasing the amount of valuable things makes sense, even though the ultimate goal is always just as distant.

Fourthly, value has degrees, therefore duty must also have degrees: one thing should be more important than another. There are only two possible outcomes.

Either one claims that the value of a simple thing has no degrees and that the alleged degrees of value of complex things consist solely in one or another balance of positive and negative values of simple elements, that duty can have degrees. Both are contrary to intuition. This would imply more generally that value cannot be a duty, that the *genus proximum* for value cannot be a duty. This non-existence of degrees in duty, and existence in value, leads to the following difficulty. A means can be valuable as a means to some end that is valuable. However, it may itself be worthless or counter-valuable. This does not contain a contradiction, because one is a value, absolute, and the other derivative, since value has degrees, so the definitive value of this means can be derived as the

³³ Un uncertain lesson [editor’s note]

³⁴ Thomas Hill Green (1836–1882), author of, e.g. *Introductions to Hume’s Treatise of Human Nature*, *Prolegomena to Ethics*.

³⁵ A note in the margin: “Green’s argument that the maximum of pleasure is not an object of desire. Here, I would say the same about the maximum of value-creating things”.

³⁶ A note in the margin: “Many valuable things will not exist at all, many will not exist forever. If we now define the quantum of value as the sum of all existing valuable things and the sum of the time it took to create them, this quantum will always be negligible compared to what it should be. Therefore, it does not seem to make sense to strive to make the quantum as large as possible”.

arithmetic mean of the two.³⁷ Meanwhile, there is an insurmountable difficulty with the duty of being, given the lack of degrees: the means 'should be' because it is a means to an end that should be, but at the same time it may happen that the same means, in itself, should not be. This creates a contradiction because the expression 'should be' means the same thing in both cases.

(Possibly also argument c, about components and parts.)

What remains of this concept is probably this: the countervalue should not be.

Conclusion: there is no obligation to be; obligation can put pressure on an already existing reality;³⁸ it does not put pressure on non-existence. Value does not desire existence. However, existence may desire (crave) value: (which is a vivid formula for the definition of value, on which we will dwell).

An inherent difficulty arises when one rejects the obligation to be. The existence or non-existence of something valuable is therefore indifferent in itself. From this, it would seem to follow that the destruction of something valuable is not evil (something that should not be). Moral consciousness says otherwise (the condemnation of Socrates, the destruction of the cathedral in Reims).

The answer. No good thing 'should be' for its own sake. However, many good things 'should be' as elements of already existing wholes, which become better thanks to their presence. The destruction of a valuable element is a change for the worse in the whole and is therefore evil.³⁹ Anyhow, the element and the whole: here we have only the main case.

If a thing was necessary or useful to make another thing valuable or more valuable, then its destruction is evil. But why do we care about elements for the sake of the whole? (What are wholes needed for?) So that the whole is as it should be. And that is the definition of value.

II. The third path to understanding value as superior to goodness and beauty. Valuable = as it should be

So if the 'duty to be' fails, we must search further; and we must continue to search for a definition that would explain value in terms of duty. (But, as it transpired recently, one that would not make value a *species* of duty.)

³⁷ A note in the margin: "? ?".

³⁸ A note in the margin: "Nothing should be".

³⁹ A note in the margin: "For the same reason their disappearance is bad".

And here we should recall another point of departure, a purely intellectual one, which we mentioned at the beginning as incidental. Incidental as a stimulus, it may prove important and decisive when it comes to outcomes. Namely, it concerns [...] the search for a superordinate concept for the two commonly used concepts of 'good' and 'beautiful'. (The philosophy of values appears here as a product⁴⁰ of the 'striving for the unification of science, in this case ethics and aesthetics')

Thus, we have the terms 'good' and "beautiful" in our language and we make statements (judgements) such as: 'this is good', 'this is beautiful'. The same applies to the terms: bad, ugly.

These sentences are somehow opposed to statements that simply state facts and constitute a separate group: they are evaluative sentences (judgements). In particular, when I say, 'This is good', 'This is beautiful', I express my approval of a given thing, I approve of it; and when I say, 'This is bad', 'This is ugly', I express my disapproval of a thing, I disapprove of it.

When we say, 'this is beautiful', just as when we say, 'this is good', our judgement contains approval. This is something that distinguishes these judgements (and possibly also judgements about holiness and some others) from all the rest. The common feature of judgements about good and beautiful, bad and ugly is approval or disapproval. What is valuable is what deserves approval (n.b. unconditional).

In both cases, these are different types of approval, but they are approvals and nothing more than approvals – and one is not more of an approval than the other. When I say, 'this is good', I no longer need to ask, 'is it beautiful?' to know whether I approve of it and to what degree, because I have already approved of it. And vice versa: when I say, 'this is beautiful', I no longer need to ask, 'is it good?' to know whether I approve of it, because I have already approved of it.

Is the second phrase equivalent to the first, does it replace and define it?

In the first case, we have the following situation: 'Every valuable thing is as it should be' on the basis that 'all things should be valuable'. Value here is just the characteristic that an object should possess, and the answer to the question 'what object is as it should be' is 'a valuable object'.⁴¹

⁴⁰ An uncertain lesson [editor's note].

⁴¹ A note in the margin: "Value and duty are independent concepts, and there is no definition of value. According to this concept, we do not want to say that valuable means having some characteristic c (other than value) that

The sentence 'A is as it should be' is, in this interpretation, a conclusion based on the premises: a) all objects should be valuable; b) A is valuable.⁴²

In conditional form: 'If A is valuable, then A is as it should be'.

(N.b. A note on the logic of sentences with the word 'should': 'All things should be valuable'. From this it undoubtedly follows that 'all valuable things are as they should be'. But I cannot for the life of me provide formal proof that the second is a consequence of the first!)

- a) Every child should be well-behaved.
- b) Every well-behaved child is as it should be.

The conclusion is unquestionable, but how can it be proved?

In general:

Every A should be B.

Every A that is B is as it should be.

Thus, by stating that 'this thing is valuable', I am not saying that 'this thing is as it should be', but only providing a premise from which (when choosing a generally understood premise, I acknowledge that all objects should be valuable) that statement is immediately inferred (in a particularly self-evident way, since it is the only conclusion that can be drawn from these two premises). Therefore, in casual speech, it is permissible to say that when one states 'A is valuable', one is also stating that it is as it should be.

This concept is hard to accept because it fails to fulfil its explanatory function.

- a) When I ask: why should all objects have qualities of value, the answer can only be because value exists. This is the ultimum. The term 'value' remains undefined and is treated as indefinable, so it is still a case of proving a point *per ignotum*: we have introduced the word 'value' as an explanation of why objects should be this way and not another, just as we previously had the word 'value' as an explanation of why something is my duty. We have made very little progress (a little in general, not in explanation), the explanation remains verbal and mysterious.

it should have. A given object should never be such and such (c, c', c', etc.) (where c would denote a characteristic other than value). An object should only be valuable. [...]".

⁴² A note in the margin: "And it should be valuable; And it is valuable; so A is as it should be. We have: a) an axiom; b) a factual judgement; c) a conclusion. Task c is a conclusion from an explicit judgement derived from an implicit assumption".

- b) Is having a value quality related to having some other 'natural' quality? If we say 'no', then it means that two objects that do not share any common qualities can both be valuable. Is that possible? If we say 'yes', then we have some characteristic on which the possession of value depends, some characteristic with which value is connected. However, this connection remains a complete mystery.⁴³ Could it be that value is not a characteristic of an object, but a characteristic of a characteristic? We find ourselves in a quandary here.

As such, this concept does not provide intellectual satisfaction. So let us try a second concept.

It will be an analytical concept. In two variants. One purely analytical: by saying that every valuable thing is as it should be, we will understand that every valuable thing can, among other things, be rightly said to have some quality *c* other than the value it should have. However, many other things can be said about it that cannot be inferred from this.

The second is a definitional one: by saying that 'every valuable thing is as it should be' we mean that each has some quality *c* other than the value it should have, and we mean either only that (i.e. that 'valuable' means 'as it should be') or, above all, that all other possible valid predicates can be derived from this predicate.⁴⁴

Well, the most favourable outcome will be if we are permitted to assume that our analytical term is a meaningful definition. It is very difficult to be certain of this, as aptly pointed out in this context⁴⁵ by L. Nelson,⁴⁶ and we should be careful to avoid the illusion that we have already given a definition when we have only discovered one of the 'attributes' that define the concept [...]. A certain check on whether we have given a definition will be found in this: we have two other "attributes" of value: 1) justification of duty, 2) the right to a positive emotional response; if these two impressions flow from the present one, we may

⁴³ A note in the margin: "The sentence, for example, 'rational order is beautiful' means here that where there is rational order, there is also a quality of beauty associated with it in some mysterious and inexplicable way".

⁴⁴ A note in the margin: "In this concept, the statement "A is valuable" means "A is as it should be"; A is *x* and A is *y*, etc. are predicates that are either unknown or known from elsewhere, but not by deduction from the predicate "is as it should be". By stating in this interpretation that "A is valuable", I am also stating (literally and without reservation) that "A is as it should be".

⁴⁵ An uncertain lesson [editor's note].

⁴⁶ Elzenberg's footnote: "Leonard Nelson, *Etische Methodenlehre*, p. 15".

assume that we have found an essential definition. (A definition is, after all, always tentative and is tested in the fires of scrutiny.)

According to this concept, we want to say that 'if A should be c and A is c, then A is valuable', where the characteristic c is some characteristic other than value.

The sentence about value is the equivalent of the following sentences:

- a) A should be c.
- b) A is c.

Value is defined by these two things: we call something 'valuable' if it should be c and that which is c.

(*Aliter*: In this interpretation, the word 'valuable' means 'as it should be', 'having the quality it should have'. This quality is something other than value itself.)

We must therefore distinguish between: 1) the quality c that an object should have; 2) the fact that the object has it.

Sensu stricto – the value of an object is only the fact that it possesses quality c. (This is the result of the definition: 'valuable' = 'as it should be', 'possessing the quality it should possess'. Value is therefore not a quality, but the possession of a certain quality [...].)

On the other hand, there is a quality which, when possessed by an object, determines its value. We can call this quality 'value-giving' (*werigehend*) or perhaps 'value-forming'. (Things are *wertvoll*, qualities are *werigehend*. One could also speak of a necessary quality – *gesollt*?) It is a property whose realisation is the ultimate goal. It is not a value, nor does it have value, but it is something supreme, from which value itself derives. It is, if one may call it that, the only 'thing' that 'exists' (is) for its own sake. Only of it can one say that it 'should be', but conditionally, insofar as something exists. (It is a natural characteristic that can be identified.)

The meaning of the term 'value' can be extended to refer to the value-giving characteristic itself. Through certain loose applications, one could refer to the value-giving characteristic itself as 'value' (of objects), and call the fact of possessing this characteristic 'valuability' (*das Wertvollsein*) or something similar. This characteristic can, in loose terms, be called 'valuable'.

The relationship between the value-giving characteristic and value is roughly the same as that between purposefulness and sphericity in a ball⁴⁷. A ball is purposefully made when it is spherical, but its sphe-

⁴⁷ A note in the margin: "The sentence 'rational order is beautiful' means here that a thing should be 'rationally ordered', understood as 'ordered, therefore beautiful' or simply that a thing should be ordered".

ricity is not its purposefulness, nor is its purposefulness its sphericity. Similarly, a stanza is valuable when it is harmonious (we assume in both cases that these are the only conditions of purposefulness or value), but this does not mean that its value is its harmony or its harmony its value. Value is the fact that the stanza has harmony.

A critical examination of this concept. Its criticism. (First of all, the definitional concept and the non-definitional concept are not one more true than the other. One may simply be more convenient and more useful than the other. In the sense that it allows for a more coherent structure of our judgements on matters of value. I assume here that our concept does not copy some objective state of affairs, but that our thinking about these things is something constructive.)

Now, one objection may be that we do not, in the end, obtain an answer to the question: 'why should something be this way or that way', and hence the question 'why ought we to do this or that' may be regarded as merely displaced. But we have seen that in a non-definitional interpretation, the answer 'because it is valuable' would remain a purely verbal answer. It is reasonable to assume that no answer is better than a verbal answer. At the same time, however, it is not irrelevant whether the reason given is that I should do it, or that it should be this way or that way. Although duty is not a command, it is subjectively felt as pressure analogous to a command, and not giving a reason for it is a return to *sic volo*. Here, however, we are dealing with a statement that the state of affairs is as we say it is, and in many cases we have to be satisfied with that.

However, this is counterbalanced by enormous advantages:

- a) the concept of value is explained;
- b) instead of a natural quality, mysteriously linked to the quality of value, we have a value-giving quality – this connection becomes logical, clear, and transparent; we no longer need to ask how the quality of value is 'linked' to quality c, because value consists precisely in possessing this quality.

Therefore, it is worth pausing at this concept. There are further benefits.

From this definition of value, two further characteristics follow quite naturally.

1. It is the source of duty: for if things can be such and such, then under the right conditions, thinking and acting beings have a duty to make them such and such.⁴⁸
2. It is quite natural that if something is as it should be, it deserves a positive emotional response, [...]

In this context, various questions arise:

- a) Could it be that destruction and extinction are not evil after all?⁴⁹
- b) What is the object of worship: value, a valuable object, or a value-giving quality? Certainly not value, which is only a fact. Either the object or the value-giving quality.
- c) It may be true that about some $A \neq$ it can be true that it should be a, b... and n. If A is now a and not b, is A valuable?

I would say that it is valuable in part. It is perfectly valuable when it has all the characteristics it should have to a complete degree. If it has all the necessary characteristics, but only to a certain degree, then it is valuable to a certain degree (not 'in part').

The *pretium* value and the *dignitas* value

This is how we have given the concept of value a clear meaning, such that someone's duties can then be derived from this concept (details of this derivation will follow later). The duty to seek one's duty thus becomes the duty to evaluate.

⁴⁸ A note in the margin: "It must be assumed that 'what is as it should be should be felt positively'. However, this judgement does not seem direct or obvious. Could holiness be defined as 'a quatenus value that should be revered'?"

⁴⁹ A note in the margin: "In theory, the destruction or extinction of a perfectly good and beautiful world is not evil. This is somewhat counterintuitive. If there were only one valuable thing in the world and it did not affect the value of others, would its destruction not be evil? One can try a definition similar to Joseph's: a particular thing cannot have value unless the whole to which it belongs has value. So the value of even one thing testifies to the value of the world. Perhaps we need to distinguish between value in general and perfect value, i.e. the ideal. Value should not 'be', while the ideal 'should'. And yet, what is partially valuable cannot be transformed into the ideal, so the destruction of something partially valuable indirectly becomes evil. And is the destruction of Socrates evil only because Socrates was part of the whole?"

Now is the time to preempt a certain misunderstanding that the term 'value' might cause.

There are people who claim that 'valuable' means something like 'being the object of desire' or 'being able to satisfy desires'⁵⁰ (from Ehrenfels to Pery) – in the latter case, value would be like the 'satiety'⁵¹ of objects. For example, 'knowledge of many languages is of great value to a scholar'. 'Value' in the sense of desirability is a value for someone in the sense of the word 'for' as in the above sentence. [...] One can also speak here of 'economic value' in a sense in which 'economic value' in the narrower sense would be a special case.

The value we have arrived at here was sometimes, rather unfortunately, referred to as perfection (which naturally has a different meaning: the highest degree), and is also referred to as dignity, respectability, exquisiteness, excellence (Laird), *Würde*, *decorum*, *egregium*, *honestum*, *καλον*.

Dignitas in Seneca is contrasted with *pretium*, *Würde* (dignity) in Meinong. I would briefly contrast the value of *dignitas* with the value of *pretium*. Economic value would then be a variation of the value of *pretium* and would not belong to axiology.

The following are therefore radically excluded: the point of view of needs, utility and the point of view of value (*dignitas*). [...].

⁵⁰ A note in the margin: "or needs".

⁵¹ A note in the margin: "the ability to satisfy needs".



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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How to build the logic of goods? (2)

The ultimate premises of all evaluative judgements are individual assessments such as 'this is valuable' (beautiful, good, etc.). If, at the same time, it is stated that 'this is such and such', where 'such and such' is a descriptive predicate, then a basis is created for the generalisation 'such and such things are valuable'. The term 'such and such' becomes a criterion of value, and individual objects that satisfy the criterion of value fall within the scope of goods. Sentences that establish criteria of value, like all results of generalisations, are not certain and are subject to change with the growth of axiological experience.

Goods are the objects of human aspirations, and different people choose different goods as their goals. Thus, goods become relative, becoming good for someone. At the same time, the scope of goods is expanded by another type of relativisation, namely, things that are in various relationships to the goods that are the primary goals of aspiration become secondary goods for someone. As a result, double-relativised judgements of goods arise in the form of 'such and such a thing is good for someone for due to something'. The sentence 'x is good due to y for z' is written as $D(x, y, z)$, where 'D' is a symbol of a value-creating relationship between good x, parameter y and evaluating subject z. In expression $D(x, y, z)$, the parameter y becomes identical to the good x if it is valuable in the original sense of the word, that is, not because of something else, but for its own sake. Goods of this kind are called absolute goods for their subject.

We define the equality of two goods x_1 and x_2 for a given subject by the equivalence of value-creating relations $D_1(x_1, y, z)$ and $D_2(x_2, y, z)$

in the set of parameters y , namely 'good x_1 is equal to good x_2 due to y parameters for subject z ' is equivalent to 'for every y , always and only if x_1 is a good due to y for z , then x_2 is also a good due to the same y for z '. In a similar way, the majority or minority relationship between goods is defined by the implication relationship: 'good x_1 is greater than good x_2 , and x_2 is less than x_1 , due to parameters y for subject z ' is equivalent to 'for every y , if and only if x_1 is a good due to y for z , then x_2 is also due to the same y for z '. Similarly, the relationship between the greater and lesser goods is defined by the relationship of implication: 'Good x_1 is greater than good x_2 , and x_2 is less than x_1 due to parameters y for subject z ' is equivalent to 'for every y , if x_2 is good for z due to y , then x_1 is also good for z due to the same y , but not vice versa.' In every case, a greater good can replace a lesser good, but not vice versa; this kind of displacement of lesser goods by greater ones seems to be characteristic of goods, in contrast to quantity, where a similar substitution of greater for lesser cannot occur. It is an everyday phenomenon in the realm of goods, after all, the inferior is abandoned for the superior.

Two different absolute goods are not comparable in terms of magnitude, as it is impossible to create a set of parameters such that the expressions defining their value-creating relationships imply one direction or the other. If we sometimes make such a comparison, then such a judgment concerns not the goods themselves, but their significance within a cultural complex, since absolute goods can be related in another aspect to parameters by which it is possible to compare them with other goods.

Goods that are incomparable across a certain range of parameters become comparable when that range is narrowed. Depending on how this is done, one or the other good will be considered greater, or both will be assigned equal value. Amidst goods that are comparable in terms of a certain set of parameters, there is the greatest good, determined by the value-creating ratio implied by every other value-creating ratio determining any of the comparable goods, and the smallest good, whose value-creating ratio implies the others. The greatest good satisfies the maximum needs of the evaluating entity in terms of given parameters, while the least good is superseded by every other good. Two goods that exist alternatively form the sum of goods, determined by the alternative of their value-creating relationships; their combined existence is the product of goods, determined by the conjunction of value-creating relationships. According to the law of absorption, the sum of two goods, one of which is smaller than the other, is equal to the larger one, and their product is equal to the smaller one. If, in a given field, we are in possession of the greatest good, then according to the law of absorption,

no sum in which it is included is greater than it. Two goods whose sum is exhaustive and separable are complementary goods; a good that is complementary to the greatest good is an opposite good or an evil.

Each of the parameters against which individual goods are defined is also a good, defined in turn in relation to some other good. By creating relative products of value-creating relationships that define parameters as goods, a sequence can be created that leads to some absolute good common to all goods of a given parameter, thereby enabling the comparison of goods originally defined according to different parameters. The diversity of evaluating subjects is eliminated by generalisation: if x_1 is a good for subject z_1 and x_2 is a good for z_2 , then both x_1 and x_2 are goods for z_1 or z_2 , i.e. for one of the two subjects. Thus, by introducing an alternative combination of individual subjects, i.e. 'a subject in general', we obtain the possibility of understanding all goods as goods 'for anyone'.

Once the parameters and evaluating entities have been equalised, only value-creating relationships remain different in the definitions of goods. However, it is possible to reduce incomparable goods in a certain range of parameters to a limited comparison. On this basis, we can create a scale of goods that serves as a measure for comparing different types of goods. The symbol of the scale of goods in a broad area of social life is money, which represents a measure of goods in that it is used to exchange different types of goods, while not being identical to any of the goods for which it is used as a medium of exchange.

The set of goods produced by the actions of members of society constitutes its culture. Advancement in the field of culture, i.e. enlargement of the set of goods, is conditioned by two factors: axiological knowledge and work. Knowledge discovers and identifies goods, while work realises them, using existing goods as means or components for the production of new ones.



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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Transcendentals – a contribution to ontology*

On metaphysics, its schools of thought and concepts

Within the realm of ontological concepts, there exists a group of concepts with unique properties; the concepts belonging to this group are referred to as transcendentals, i.e. ideas that transcend the system of general concepts, or universals. Universals are arranged in a hierarchy from the lowest species to the highest genera, which are called categories; transcendentals lie outside the scope of categories. Universals refer to various worlds to which the individuals falling under the relevant concept belong: the concept of an animal to the world of animals, the concept of a number to the world of numbers. Amidst the multitude of these worlds, ontology distinguishes a world called being; this is the world encompassing the worlds of all universals. Categories, or the highest types among universals, boil down to two: self-existent being (*ens a se*), i.e. the individual object (first substance, in Aristotle), and non-self-existent being (*ens ab alio*), which is a property, relation, event, process, etc. One might think that the concept of being is a generalization encompassing both those categories, but herein lies a difficulty, already noted by medieval logicians, namely that the correct opposition of two generalized species requires that their specific differences be mutually exclusive as contradictory, meaning that they have no element in com-

* [Reprinted after: T. Czeżowski, "Transcendentalia – przyczynek do ontologii", *Ruch Filozoficzny* 35 (1977): 54–56.]

mon with the genus. On the other hand, the specific differences of self-existence and non-self-existence share an element with being, for both are beings; the generalization is therefore – as has been said – impure (*impura*), and the concept of being is not a genus overarching both of the aforementioned categories. Another difficulty arises from the ambiguity of the concept of “existence” in defining a characteristic. Namely, a characteristic exists if and only if there is an individual that possesses that characteristic. In this definition, the term ‘exists’ appears twice: in the *definiendum* ‘a property exists’ and in the *definiens* ‘there exists an individual possessing that property’. But if, in a definition, the same term appears as the term being defined and is repeated in the *definiens*, then the definition constitutes a vicious circle. To avoid this, the term ‘exists’ must be considered ambiguous and be denoted by two different symbols; this is done in the artificial language of logic, but colloquial language does not make such a distinction, so we must find another way. We distinguish between the existence of individuals and the existence of their properties (and also the properties of those properties, etc.) as belonging to different logical types, and we will continue to apply them in this way. The properties of individuals in one world are individuals in another; individuals of the physical world have spatial properties; these properties, as lines, surfaces, and solids, are individuals in the world of geometry; sets of individuals differ in number; these properties are individuals in the world of integers.

The extent of the concept of being is not a set in the sense accepted by logic, for in order to form a set, one must define it by specifying a common feature shared by the individuals in the set. One might be tempted to specify as such a defining feature the fact that the extent of the concept of being includes individuals of all logical types. But the term ‘individual’ is ambiguous; two individuals of different types are not individuals in the same sense, for the nature of their existence differs. The ambiguity of the term ‘individual’ renders the term ‘being’ equally ambiguous with regard to logical type; this was already intuited by medieval logicians when they asserted that the concept of being applies to various objects not unambiguously, but analogically.

The concept of being also differs from universals in that its negation is an empty term which has no meaning in any world. The negation of any universal, whilst excluding from its sphere of application the individual to which the negated concept applies, nevertheless has its own sphere of application, comprising the remaining individuals of the superordinate concept to which the negated concept and its negation belong; for instance, by negating the concept of a tobacco smoker,

we create the concept of a non-smoker, comprising all individuals who are not smokers. Relative to the concept of being, there is no superordinate concept; therefore, its negation, 'nothing' or 'nothingness', signifies nothing, and any proposition about nothingness would be a false proposition – one cannot make a judgement about 'nothing', at least within the context of classical ontology in which we find ourselves.

The concept of being does not determine any other concept; in other words, the intersection between the concept of being and any universal is identical to the scope of that universal, for in order for one concept to determine another, the scope of that other concept must extend beyond the scope of the determining concept, be superior to it, or intersect with it; the concept of being, however, precludes this. This property of non-determination characterizes all concepts grouped in ontology as transcendentals.

Thus, the modal terms 'necessity' and 'possibility', as well as the terms 'existence' and 'value', do not determine the universals classified as transcendentals. They are expressed in sentences of a specific structure, consisting of a sentence-forming functor and its argument in the form of an affirmative or negative sentence: it is necessary that p , it is possible that (it is contingent that) p is not. For existence, the functor takes the form: *it is true that*, which combines with the proposition p or not- p as an argument; for example, the proposition: *it is true that $2 \cdot 2 = 4$* affirms the existence of the equality relation between the two numbers mentioned. As for value, the functor is the phrase: *it is valuable that* (or: *it is good, it is beautiful, that*). Neither universals, nor transcendentals, nor being and its equivalents can be used in similar phrases. Necessity, possibility, existence, and value are not representable, but are stated in judgements. They do not belong to the description of objects and therefore do not determine the universals by which those objects are described. In contrast to the properties denoted by universals, they denote the so-called *modi entis*, that is, the modes of being of objects. It depends on these modes whether an object possesses properties, for only an object that exists possesses any properties – and how it possesses them, whether necessarily, possibly, or accidentally, or in such a way that it is valuable, good, or beautiful.

Modi entis differ from being in that they do not extend beyond the categories in the hierarchy of generalization; this is linked to a further distinction, namely that they can be negated, and their negations are not empty. They negate one another: the necessity that p and the possibility that not- p , that is, the contingency of p ; existence is opposed by absence as its negation, and positive values have negative values as their

opposites. Because of these differences, we shall divide the transcendentals into two varieties – one we shall designate as supra-categorical transcendentals, including being and equivalent concepts; the second variety of modal transcendentals will include modal terms, necessity, and possibility, as well as existence and value, which are sometimes understood analogously to those modal concepts.

There is a far-reaching parallel between judgements that establish existence and those that establish value, known as evaluations. Both are intuitive judgements. Intuitive cognition is defined as direct and holistic cognition, in contrast to discursive conceptual cognition, because it grasps its object without the mediation of words necessary for conceptual thinking or other signs – and is holistic, i.e. it grasps its object immediately in its entirety, as it were at a single glance, rather than by listing its individual features or parts. Such intuitive cognition is a perceptual judgement, in which the existence of an object perceived sensually or introspectively is established. Another type of intuitive cognition is Platonic *noesis* or Aristotelian cognition of the universal, that is, cognition of the essence in a particular instance; analogous to this is eidetic cognition, of which phenomenologists speak. Yet another type of intuitive cognition is the individual assessment of value in relation to a fact given directly. In all these cases, a condition sufficient for the occurrence of an intuitive cognitive act is the adoption of an appropriate cognitive attitude towards the object of cognition; this consists of attention in sensory and introspective cognition, and in the cognition of the general, whilst the specific evaluative, moral or aesthetic attitude – well known to moralists and aestheticians – is required in value judgements. Intuitive cognition in each of the forms mentioned is accompanied by a specific kind of self-evidence – sensory, introspective, apodictic, or of the kind found in moral or aesthetic judgements; this compels one to accept the intuitive judgement, but it can be unreliable and cannot serve as a criterion of truth. Intuitive judgements are true or false, unprovable, yet verifiable through the repetition of cognitive acts and their intercomparison.

The four types of intuitive cognition discussed above can be categorized as follows: three of them – sensory perception, introspection, and eidetic cognition – ascertain existence, whilst judgements ascertain value. Thus, intuitive cognition provides access to two, and only two, *modi entis*: existence and value. Necessity and possibility are varieties of existence, just as goodness and beauty are two varieties of value.

We have examined transcendentals as concepts. According to the tradition of Platonic realism, these were said to correspond to ideas – the

eternal archetypes of the changing objects of the earthly world. In Neoplatonic and later Hegelian speculation, the concept of being denoted reality, constituting the beginning and end of the evolution of the world. I propose a different answer here. Concepts are introduced into science through definitions, and primary concepts through axioms, which are embedded definitions. As axioms, they serve to construct, by means of analytical description, a theory describing reality. Theories provide a representation of reality; an isomorphic reflection of it; its abstract model. This most general model is supplemented by a system of transcendentals, superimposed upon the system of species and genera, from the lowest species to the highest categories.

1975

SECONDARY SOURCES



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The Metaphysical Problems of Tadeusz Hipolit Czeżowski's Meta-Axiology

The Toruń School of Axiologics

The subject of this article is not – as the syntax of the wording used in the title might suggest – a theoretical exposition of Tadeusz Czeżowski's theory of value, nor a meta-theoretical reflection on the system of values advocated by this philosopher. Rather, it is an examination of his original conception of axiology, which distinguishes him in several important respects, not only among Polish scholars but also among international researchers concerned with the equally elusive and fundamental problem of value. Czeżowski was a philosopher through and through rooted in the Polish philosophical tradition. In *Szkic do postaci Tadeusza Czeżowskiego* (*A Sketch of Tadeusz Czeżowski*), his former student and collaborator, Professor Bogusław Wolniewicz (1927–2017), recalled him in the following words:

Professor Czeżowski was my teacher at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. For two years, as Head of the Department of Logic, he was also my superior. I hold his memory in the highest esteem, and as the years pass, that esteem continues to deepen and become ever more firmly established. [...]

Let us attempt to discern the figure who remains, as it were, in the shadows, yet forms an integral part of the history of Polish philosophy. It is a figure marked by quiet dignity and profound gravity.¹

Likewise, when the young Wolniewicz, preparing for his final secondary-school examinations in the spring of 1947, was contemplating whether to study philosophy or mathematics² and asked his philosophy teacher, Aurelia Rozenthalowa, for advice about studying philosophy at the University in Toruń, she replied: "Certainly, you may. Above all, Professor Elzenberg is here – he is a European intellect. Professor Czeżowski is here as well; he is also an excellent scholar, though rather a distinctly Polish one".³

To the newly established Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń in 1945, Professor Czeżowski brought the finest traditions of Polish philosophy that had flourished before the Second World War at the Universities of Lvov and Vilnius. Together with the aforementioned Professor Henryk Elzenberg (1887–1967), he transplanted those traditions into the philosophical milieu that he was creating in Toruń, to which he himself had been resettled.⁴ The two professors became the first – and initially the only – holders of chairs in philosophy at the new university. Czeżowski assumed office by virtue of his letter of appointment issued on 1 June 1946.⁵ Five years later, by ministerial decree of 14 June 1951, the Chair of Philosophy I, which he headed, was reorganized into the Chair of Logic,⁶ whereas the chair directed by Professor Elzenberg was abolished and its incumbent was sent on what Czeżowski ironically described as a compulsory "research leave".⁷

¹ Bogusław Wolniewicz, "Szkic do postaci Tadeusza Czeszowskiego" ("A Sketch of Tadeusz Czeżowski") (26.7.1889–28.3.1981), in: Bogusław Wolniewicz, *Filozofia i wartości. Rozprawy i wypowiedzi* (*Philosophy and Values: Essays and Statements*) (Warsaw: Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Warsaw, 1993), 125.

² Tomasz Sommer, *Wolniewicz. Zdanie własne* (*Wolniewicz: His Own View*) (Warsaw: 3S Media Sp. z o.o., 2010), 33.

³ Wolniewicz, "Szkic do postaci Tadeusza Czeszowskiego", 125; Sommer, *Wolniewicz. Zdanie własne*, 37.

⁴ Czeżowski, *Wspomnienia (Zpiski do autobiografii)* (*Memoirs [Notes for an Autobiography]*). Manuscript (Toruń, December 1976), 22.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 24.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "O początkach UMK i organizowaniu katedr filozoficznych w Toruniu" ("On the Beginnings of Nicolaus Copernicus University and the Organization of Philosophy Chairs in Toruń"), in: *Uniwersytet Mikołaja*

In a letter recommending Associate Professor Tadeusz Czeżowski for the vacant Chair of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, addressed to the Dean of that Faculty, Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938) – Czeżowski's teacher and philosophical mentor – wrote:

A characteristic feature of his scholarly work is its reliability and precision. [...] The author expresses himself with exactness, concision, and objectivity, always striving to justify his claims as thoroughly as possible. The candidate for the chair is by no means a narrow specialist. Although most of his research concerns logistics, logic, methodology, and above all the mathematical sciences, one of his studies belongs to the field of axiology (e.g. *O formalnym pojęciu wartości* (*On the Formal Concept of Value*), 1920). That work deals precisely with certain ethical problems.⁸

Both this assessment and Wolniewicz's remark that at the University of Toruń Czeżowski lectured only on "logic and philosophy in general"⁹ clearly indicate that axiology never became his principal field of research, as it eventually did in the case of Elzenberg. Nor did Czeżowski seek – again unlike Elzenberg – to construct a comprehensive axiological system.¹⁰ Yet the relatively limited scope of his engagement with axiology should by no means be mistaken for its marginal significance within his philosophical oeuvre. On the contrary, Czeżowski had a great deal of profound and original insight to contribute in this domain. The present article offers a synthetic reconstruction of his meta-axiological position.¹¹ In characterizing it, I employ the terminology developed by

Kopernika. Wspomnienia pracowników (Nicolaus Copernicus University: *Memoirs of Its Staff*), ed. Andrzej Tomczak (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 1995), 40; Józef Pawlak, "Henryk Elzenberg", *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Filozofia* 12(228) (1991): 4.

⁸ Eugeniusz Wasilewski, "Działalność Tadeusza Czeżowskiego w Wilnie" ("Tadeusz Czeżowski's Scholarly Activity in Vilnius"), in: *Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981). Dziedzictwo idei: logika – filozofia – etyka* (Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981): *The Legacy of Ideas – Logic, Philosophy, Ethics*), eds. Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2002), 41.

⁹ Czeżowski, "O początkach UMK", 35; Sommer, *Wolniewicz. Zdanie własne*, 37.

¹⁰ Pawlak, "Henryk Elzenberg", 5; Ryszard Wiśniewski, "Henryk Elzenberg o złu" ("Henryk Elzenberg on Evil"), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 46(1) (1989): 81.

¹¹ On the term "meta-axiology", see Agnieszka Smolicka, "Świat wartości w ujęciu Tadeusza Czeżowskiego i Henryka Elzenberga: studium porównawcze" ("The World of Values in the Thought of Tadeusz Czeżowski and Henryk Elzenberg: A Comparative Study"), doctoral dissertation supervised by Prof.

Henryk Elzenberg.¹² Let me briefly recall that Elzenberg understood general axiology as a branch of philosophy¹³ integrating two fundamental divisions: formal axiology and substantive axiology.¹⁴

Formal axiology constitutes the foundational level of axiological inquiry. It serves as the point of departure and the logical basis for the normative aspirations of substantive axiology and, accordingly, ought to precede it logically.¹⁵ Its task is to formulate "propositions about value that it regards as true independently of which objects are taken to be valuable".¹⁶ These propositions encompass three mutually complementary domains:

1. the analysis of the concept of value, which seeks to answer the question of what values are as such and thus assumes the form of a logic of value;

Adam Jonkisz (University of Silesia, Katowice, 2010), 23; Jan Zubelewicz, "Ewolucja aksjologii Elzenberga w świetle jego tekstów. Analiza filologiczno-filozoficzna" ("The Evolution of Elzenberg's Axiology in the Light of His Texts: A Philological and Philosophical Analysis"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 26(4) [104] (2017): 373.

¹² Elzenberg, "Inedita deposited in the Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences", file 77: University Lectures III, "Toruń Lectures 1946/47," "Podstawowe pojęcia aksjologii I" ("Basic Concepts of Axiology I"), Lecture I, 17 October 1946.

¹³ Henryk Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem. Aforyzmy w porządku czasu (The Trouble with Existence: Aphorisms in Chronological Order)* (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2002), 157, 160; Bogusław Wolniewicz, "Myśl Elzenberga" ("Elzenberg's Thought"), *Studia Filozoficzne* 12 (1986): 60; Michał Woroniecki, "Elzenbergowska próba systemu" ("Elzenberg's Attempt at a System"), *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Filozofia* 12(228) (1991): 9–28.

¹⁴ Elzenberg, "Inedita"; Wolniewicz, "Z aksjologii Elzenberga" ("Studies in Elzenberg's Axiology"), *Etyka (Ethics)* 25 (1990): 8; Lesław Hostyński, *O wartościach: aksjologia formalna, estetyka i etyka Henryka Elzenberga (On Values: Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology, Aesthetics, and Ethics)* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1991); Hostyński, "Filozofia wartości Henryka Elzenberga na tle filozofii polskiej XX-lecia międzywojennego" ("Henryk Elzenberg's Philosophy of Value Against the Background of Polish Philosophy of the Interwar Period"), *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, Sectio I*, 29(4) (2004): 62.

¹⁵ Włodzimierz Tyburski, *Elzenberg* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 2006), 32; Henryk Elzenberg, "Podstawowe pojęcia aksjologii I. Wykłady toruńskie 1946–1949" ("Basic Concepts of Axiology I. Toruń Lectures 1946–1949"), ed. Andrzej Lorczyk, in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne (Axiological Writings)*, eds. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 197–257.

¹⁶ Elzenberg, "Inedita".

2. the theory of the cognition of value (the epistemology of value), which investigates the principles governing the apprehension of something as valuable;
3. the analysis of the relation between value and human consciousness, which examines the influence exerted by already recognized values upon actual human conduct. This dimension of inquiry is commonly referred to as the anthropology of value.¹⁷

Substantive axiology, in turn, is concerned with identifying classes of valuable objects on the basis of the properties they have in common, as well as according to the degree of their value.¹⁸ It advances propositions concerning the value of objects and, on that basis, determines the obligations for action entailed by those values.¹⁹ It is therefore a creative axiology,²⁰ distinctly normative in orientation. Accordingly, its judgments are categorical in character: "this has value," "that has no value", and so forth. It is not sufficient that the subject merely understand such judgments – they must also motivate him or her to act²¹ – whereas the judgments of formal axiology are hypothetical in form: "If such-and-such possesses value, then such-and-such follows from it". They neither assert the value of objects nor specify the criteria according to which values are to be preferred.

¹⁷ Elzenberg, "Podstawowe pojęcia aksjologii I", 198; Henryk Elzenberg, „Zależność aksjologicznych spraw formalnych od merytorycznych?" ("The Dependence of Formal Axiological Issues on Substantive Ones?"), ed. Lesław Hostyński, in: Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne*, 193–195; Ulrich Schrade, "Aksjologia formalna Henryka Elzenberga" ("Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), *Studia Filozoficzne* 12 (1986): 83–104; Wolniewicz, „Z aksjologii Elzenberga", 8; Jan Zubelewicz, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfect Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), *Etyka* 25 (1990): 87; Zubelewicz, "Ewolucja aksjologii Elzenberga", 373–374; Tyburski, *Elzenberg*, 32–33.

¹⁸ Elzenberg, "Inedita"; Henryk Elzenberg, "Nauka i barbarzyństwo" ("Science and Barbarism"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and Man. Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*) (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2005), 235.

¹⁹ Henryk Elzenberg, "Konstrukcja pojęcia wartości" ("The Construction of the Concept of Value"), ed. Lesław Hostyński, in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne* (*Axiological Writings*), eds. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 72, 81–84, 88, 90, 92.

²⁰ Jan Zubelewicz, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej w aksjologii formalnej Henryka Elzenberga" ("The Concept of Perfect Value in Henryk Elzenberg's Formal Axiology"), 87; Tyburski, *Elzenberg*, 32.

²¹ Wolniewicz, "Z aksjologii Elzenberga", 8.

It should be borne in mind that the axiology postulated by Elzenberg is monocategorical. He assigns all values to the same ontological category – that of possible states of affairs – although he at times hesitated as to whether a substantialist interpretation should instead be adopted.²² The anti-substantialist monocategoriality of Elzenberg's axiology is associated with an anti-naturalistic approach. This is an inevitable consequence of his distinction between two meanings of the term *value*: the naturalistic – more precisely, the utilitarian-subjective-relativistic (psychological) – according to which value is understood as whatever in a given object corresponds to and satisfies someone's desires, needs, aspirations, capacities, or strivings;²³ and the non-naturalistic – more specifically, the perfectionist – conception, which presupposes the immateriality, non-electiveness in Laird's sense,²⁴ non-utilitarian character, non-relativity (*scilicet*, absoluteness), objectivity, and deontic (normative) character of values.²⁵ According to Elzenberg, only values understood in this latter sense deserve to be called values in the strict sense.²⁶ Czeżowski demonstrates that Elzenberg derives two distinct types of normative ethics from these two respective conceptions of value. On utilitarian values rests hedonistic ethics, whereas perfection values provide the foundation for perfectionist ethics, conceived by Elzenberg as pure ethics.²⁷ Its embodiment and paradigmatic form is Stoic ethics.²⁸

²² Ibidem, 11–12.

²³ Henryk Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej" ("The Concept of Perfect Value"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and Man: Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*) (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2005), 15; Émile Bréhier, *Problemy filozoficzne XX wieku* (*Philosophical Problems of the Twentieth Century*), trans. Mieczysław Tazbir (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy „Pax”, 1958), 65.

²⁴ John Laird, *The Idea of Value* (Cambridge, UK: The University Press, 1929), Chap. 3, § 1, 92–93; Chap. 9, § 2, 302–304; § 2, 304–305. Cf. Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej", 16.

²⁵ Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości perfekcyjnej", 16–19.

²⁶ Ibidem, 18–19.

²⁷ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Henryk Elzenberg jako teoretyk etyki" ("Henryk Elzenberg as a Theorist of Ethics"), *Etyka* 4 (1969): 99–101. Cf. Henryk Elzenberg, "Ideal zbawienia na gruncie etyki czystej" ("The Ideal of Salvation on the Basis of Pure Ethics"), in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Wartość i człowiek. Rozprawy z humanistyki i filozofii* (*Value and Man. Essays in the Humanities and Philosophy*) (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2005), 211–231.

²⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, *Marek Aureljusz: z historii i psychologii etyki* (*Marcus Aurelius: Studies in the History and Psychology of Ethics*) (Lwów–Warszawa: nakł. Księgarni Polskiej B. Połonieckiego, 1922), 95 ff.

Czeżowski carefully studied Elzenberg's axiological writings. He presented the views developed therein with precision and due appreciation in his lecture entitled *Henryk Elzenberg as a Theorist of Ethics*.²⁹ Despite the fundamental differences in their methodological approaches to philosophy,³⁰ which, at least theoretically, should have placed the two scholars in opposition to one another – although there were indeed tensions between them,³¹ though never so serious as to estrange them completely – they maintained due respect for one another and for their respective work.³² Moreover, in matters concerning axiology and ethics (aesthetics did not occupy his attention to the same degree),³³ Czeżowski appears to have regarded Elzenberg's works with genuine admiration, being clearly impressed by them and, quite possibly, also influenced by them.³⁴ This is evidenced, for example, by the concluding remarks of the aforementioned lecture, in which Czeżowski states that "what has appeared in print impresses by its breadth of learning, depth of analysis, precision of expression, rigor of reasoning, and breadth of intellectual horizons, and will remain a lasting achievement of philosophical inquiry".³⁵

In one of his autobiographical recollections, Czeżowski recalls that during his university studies, which he began in 1907 and completed in

²⁹ Czeżowski, "Henryk Elzenberg jako teoretyk etyki". See also: Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Henryk Elzenberg (1887–1967)," *Studia Filozoficzne* 3 (1967): 283–285

³⁰ Waldemar Voisé, "Aksjologika: toruńska logika i aksjologika lat 1946–1950 po pół wieku" ("Axiologics: Toruń Logic and Axiologics 1946–1950 Half a Century Later"), *Analecta: studia i materiały z dziejów nauki* 5/1(9) (1996): 108, 119, 120.

³¹ Mieczysław Wallis, *Materiały Archiwalne Mieczysława Wallisa* (*Archival Materials of Mieczysław Wallis*), Archiwum Połączonych Bibliotek WFiS UW (IFiS PAN i PTF w Warszawie) (Archives of the Combined Libraries of the Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Warsaw [Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Philosophical Society in Warsaw]),teczka Rps nr 15 (file Rps no. 15), t. I (vol. I), k. 41 (fol. 41); Joanna Dorota Zegzuła-Nowak, "Henryk Elzenberg w świetle nieznanych źródeł archiwalnych Mieczysława Wallisa" ("Henryk Elzenberg in the Light of Unknown Archival Sources of Mieczysław Wallis"), *Studia z Historii Filozofii* 2(7) (2016): 146.

³² Voisé, "Aksjologika: toruńska logika", 110, 112.

³³ Smolicka, "Świat wartości", 84; Tomasz Siwiec, "Rekonstrukcja problematyki estetycznej w filozofii Tadeusza Czeszowskiego" ("Reconstruction of Aesthetic Issues in Tadeusz Czeżowski's Philosophy"), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 66(4) (2009): 811–818.

³⁴ Stefan Konstańczak, "Tadeusza Czeżowskiego koncepcja etyki naukowej" ("Tadeusz Czeżowski's Conception of Scientific Ethics"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 21, 3(83) (2012): 551–552.

³⁵ Czeżowski, "Henryk Elzenberg jako teoretyk etyki", 102.

1912 at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Lvov,³⁶ which at that time – while Poland remained partitioned – officially bore the name *Universitas Franciscana* until the end of the First World War (it was also known as the Imperial-Royal Emperor Francis I University in Lvov),³⁷ he was more deeply absorbed in mathematics and physics than in philosophy. At the same time, he studied philosophy under, among others, Kazimierz Twardowski and Jan Łukasiewicz, mathematics under Józef Puzyna and Waław Sierpiński, and physics under Ignacy Zakrzewski and Marian Smoluchowski.³⁸ In 1914, Czeżowski obtained his doctorate in philosophy, a discipline that – as he himself recalls – had already attracted his interest when he was a seventh-grade gymnasium student,³⁹ on the basis of his dissertation *Theory of Classes*,⁴⁰ written under the supervision of Kazimierz Twardowski, the founder of the renowned Polish philosophical Lvov–Warsaw School (whose conventional founding date is taken to be 15 November 1895, when Twardowski moved from Vienna to Lvov to assume the Chair of Philosophy at the then Francis

³⁶ Wojciech Słomski, “Tadeusz Czeżowski – obszary filozofowania” (“Tadeusz Czeżowski: Areas of Philosophical Inquiry”), *Galicja – Studia i Materiały* 8 (2022): 225.

³⁷ Anna Brożek, “Filozofia na Uniwersytecie Lwowskim do 1939 r.” (“Philosophy at the University of Lvov until 1939”), in: *Alma Mater Leopoliensis. Dzieje humanistyki lwowskiej 1661–1946 (z dwoma interaktywnymi inwentarzami)* (*Alma Mater Leopoliensis. A History of the Humanities in Lvov, 1661–1946 [with Two Interactive Inventories]*), vol. 3: “Filozofia, teologia, muzykologia, historia sztuki” (“Philosophy, Theology, Musicology, History of Art.”), eds. Anna Dąbrowska, Helena Sojka-Maształarz (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2025), 26; Małgorzata Przeniosło, Marek Przeniosło, “Profesorowie Uniwersytetu Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie urodzeni w rodzinach chłopskich (okres II Rzeczypospolitej) – portret zbiorowy” (“Professors of the Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov Born into Peasant Families [The Second Polish Republic]: A Collective Portrait”), *Dzieje Najnowsze* 52(3) (2020) (*Recent History*): 130, note 1; Anna Jedy-nak, “Początki szkoły lwowsko-warszawskiej” (“The Beginnings of the Lvov–Warsaw School”), *Galicja – Studia i Materiały* 2 (2016) (*Galicja – Studies and Materials*): 168–169.

³⁸ Ryszard Jadcak, “Uwagi o działalności dydaktycznej Tadeusza Czeżowskiego” (“Remarks on the Teaching Activity of Tadeusz Czeżowski”), *Edukacja Filozoficzna* 26 (1998) (*Philosophical Education*): 329.

³⁹ Czeżowski, *Wspomnienia*, 5.

⁴⁰ Czeżowski, “Teoria klas” (“Theory of Classes”), *Archiwum Naukowe*, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa dla Popierania Nauki Polskiej (Scientific Archive, Publications of the Society for the Advancement of Polish Learning), Division 1, vol. 9, no. 2 (1918). See also Czeżowski’s earlier article on this subject: “Niektóre zasadnicze twierdzenia logiki klas” (“Some Fundamental Theorems of the Logic of Classes”), *Ruch Filozoficzny* (*The Philosophical Movement*) 4 (10) (1914).

I University)⁴¹ and the founder of the scholarly journal *Ruch Filozoficzny* (*The Philosophical Movement*), established in Lvov on 15 January 1911.

Significantly, despite his predilection for the exact sciences, Czeżowski associated philosophy with reflection on the meaning of the term *good* and on the question of “how one ought to act in order to be good”,⁴² that is, with (meta-)ethical rather than strictly logical, epistemological, ontological, or methodological issues. Although this sensitivity to axiological problems – which, incidentally, was characteristic of the period, especially the first half of the twentieth century, when axiology was taking shape and when the impulse for its emergence (a point of particular importance in the context of Czeżowski's interests and methodological perspective) came from the circle of Austrian Brentanists, specifically from Christian Freiherr von Ehrenfels (1859–1932) and his two-volume *System der Werttheorie* (1897–1898)⁴³ – did not become the leitmotif of Czeżowski's philosophy as it did in the case of Elzenberg, his scholarly output in this field nevertheless comprises no fewer than forty academic articles, collected in the volume *Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*.⁴⁴ Among the most important of these are *On the Formal Concept of Value* (1919), *On the Subject Matter of Axiology* (1936), *Ethics as an Empirical Science* (1949), *How Should the Logic of Goods Be Constructed?* (1) (1959), *How Should the Logic of Goods Be Constructed?* (2) (1959/1960), *What Are Values?* (1965), *Two Kinds of Norms* (1966), and *Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms* (1970). In this context, mention should also be made of Czeżowski's as yet unpublished typescript entitled *Metaethical Reflec-*

⁴¹ Anna Jedynak, “Początki szkoły lwowsko-warszawskiej” (“The Beginnings of the Lvov–Warsaw School”), *Galicja – Studia i Materiały* (*Galicia – Studies and Materials*) 2 (2016): 168.

⁴² Czeżowski, “O początkach UMK i organizowaniu katedr filozoficznych w Toruniu” (“On the Beginnings of Nicolaus Copernicus University and the Organization of the Chairs of Philosophy in Toruń”), in: *Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika. Wspomnienia pracowników* (*Nicolaus Copernicus University. Memoirs of Its Staff*), ed. Andrzej Tomczak (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1995), 35.

⁴³ Christian von Ehrenfels, *System der Werttheorie* (*System of the Theory of Value*), vol. 1: *Allgemeine Werttheorie, Psychologie des Begehrens* (*General Theory of Value. Psychology of Desire*) (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1897); Christian von Ehrenfels, *System der Werttheorie* (*System of the Theory of Value*), vol. 2: *Grundzüge der Ethik* (*Fundamentals of Ethics*) (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1898).

⁴⁴ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), ed. Paweł J. Smoczyński (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1989).

tions.⁴⁵ This work is particularly noteworthy because, drawing upon the writings listed above, it constitutes an *ex post* attempt to synthesize and recapitulate them.

Czeżowski's achievements in the fields of axiology and ethics have been classified in various ways. The philosopher himself employed such designations as *the logic of goods*, *the theory of value* (axiology), or *metaethics*. Tadeusz Styczeń, by contrast, spoke of Czeżowski's remarkable "personal union of logic and ethics".⁴⁶ Waldemar Kmiecikowski emphasized the metaethical status of Czeżowski's analyses,⁴⁷ whereas Agnieszka Smolicka pointed to their meta-axiological character.⁴⁸ Abroad, Manuel Rebuschi,⁴⁹ and in Poland Marcin Drofiszyn,⁵⁰ proposed the designation *ethical logic*. The latter even argued that Czeżowski laid the "proper philosophical foundation" for ethical logic.⁵¹ Perhaps the most interesting terminological proposal, however, was advanced by Czeżowski's student Waldemar Voisé, who referred to his teacher's logic-based axiology as *axiologics* (*aksjologika*), a term which, incidentally, he also applied to Elzenberg's work.⁵²

⁴⁵ Stefan Konstańczak, "Tadeusza Czeżowskiego koncepcja etyki naukowej" ("Tadeusz Czeżowski's Conception of Scientific Ethics"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 21(3) (83) (2012): 555–557.

⁴⁶ Tadeusz Styczeń, "Refleksja metaetyczna na Katolickim Uniwersytecie Lubelskim" ("Metaethical Reflection at the Catholic University of Lublin"), in: Tadeusz Styczeń, *W drodze do etyki. Wybór esejów z etyki i o etyce* (*On the Way to Ethics. Selected Essays in Ethics and on Ethics*) (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1984), 161.

⁴⁷ Waldemar Kmiecikowski, "Wartości moralne między doświadczeniem a ontologią. Kilka uwag wokół etyki Ingardena, Czeżowskiego i Krąpca" ("Moral Values between Experience and Ontology. Several Remarks on the Ethics of Ingarden, Czeżowski, and Krąpiec"), *Studia z Filozofii Polskiej* 11, ed. Marek Rembierz, K. Śleziński (Cieszyn-Kraków: Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach – Wydawnictwo «scriptum»), 160.

⁴⁸ Agnieszka Smolicka, "Świat wartości", 23.

⁴⁹ Manuel Rebuschi, "Czeżowski's Axiological Concepts as Full-fledged Modalities", *Forum Philosophicum* 13, no. 1 (2008): 1–3.

⁵⁰ Marcin Drofiszyn, "Ontologiczne założenia logiki etycznej" ("Ontological Assumptions of Ethical Logic"), *Studia Philosophica Vratislaviensia* 6(1) (2011): 51–60.

⁵¹ Ibidem, 58.

⁵² Voisé, "Aksjologika: toruńska logika", 107–121.

Dimensions and Problems of Czeżowski's Meta-Axiology

Czeżowski's meta-axiology constitutes an intellectually compelling synthesis of several distinct philosophical traditions: metaphysical transcendentalism, Brentanism, anti-naturalism, and realism. Drawing upon the last of these, Czeżowski adopts the position of axiological realism. Dariusz Łukasiewicz, for interpretative purposes, employs the more restrictive designation moral realism,⁵³ maintaining, in agreement with Czeżowski, that "moral propositions possess a logical value (they are either true or false), and what confers logical value upon them are moral values existing in the world; at the same time, however, the deduction of moral propositions from propositions about facts is impossible (one cannot derive value from being)".⁵⁴

Axiological realism may assume either a naturalistic or an anti-naturalistic form. The naturalistic approach postulates the reducibility of all evaluative propositions to empirical propositions. Propositions concerning what ought to be are reduced to propositions concerning what in fact is. Anti-naturalism, by contrast, rejects such a possibility, pointing out that naturalism runs the risk of reducing axiological problems to truisms. If axiological phenomena are reducible to natural phenomena – for example, to pleasure or displeasure – then the question whether a given pleasure is morally acceptable might prove to be a trivial one, since pleasure is, indisputably, pleasure.

By adopting anti-naturalistic realism, we are confronted with the question of the nature and kind of such properties as *good*, *bad*, *beautiful*, *ugly*, and the like. Drawing upon the conception of Franz Brentano,⁵⁵

⁵³ Dariusz Łukasiewicz, "Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii w filozofii Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("Ontological Foundations of Axiology in Tadeusz Czeżowski's Philosophy"), *Filo-Sofija* 1(8) (2009): 156, 158, 159–166; Dariusz Łukasiewicz, "Źródła, zasady i perspektywy realizmu moralnego Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("Sources, Principles, and Perspectives of Tadeusz Czeżowski's Moral Realism"), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 66(4) (2009): 663–673.

⁵⁴ Łukasiewicz, "Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii", 156.

⁵⁵ Franz Brentano, *O źródle poznania moralnego* (*The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*), trans. Czesław Porębski (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1989), 19–21, 66–67, 98–113; Brentano, *Psychologia z empirycznego punktu widzenia* (*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*), trans. Włodzimierz Galewicz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1999), 346–348; William David Ross, "Brentano and the Foundations of Ethics", in: William David Ross, *Foundations of Ethics. The Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Aberdeen, 1935–6* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 279–283; Everett W. Hall, "Is Value the Being an Object or a Right Love?", in: Everett W. Hall, *What is Value? An Essay*

Czeżowski maintains that these are not real properties and therefore rejects the predicative theory of value. The question thus arises as to what values are and what syntactic category should be assigned to such expressions as *good*, *bad*, *beautiful*, *ugly*, and the like. Values are not properties; consequently, the expressions mentioned above cannot be predicates.⁵⁶ What category, then, do they belong to?

Czeżowski finds the answer in the vocabulary of medieval metaphysics. He argues that such expressions are sentence-forming functors determining different *modi entis*. Dariusz Łukasiewicz maintains that these are sentence-forming functors with one propositional argument, more specifically, modal operators.⁵⁷ However, on the basis of Czeżowski's works devoted to the formal concept of value,⁵⁸ this interpretation re-

in *Philosophical Analysis* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 94–112; Uriah Kriegel, "Foreword to the Routledge Classics Edition: Brentano's Moral Philosophy", in: Franz Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (London–New York: Routledge Classics, 2026), XVI–XXVII; Roderick M. Chisholm, "Defining Intrinsic Value," *Analysis* 41(2) (1981): 99–100; Roderick M. Chisholm, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value* (Cambridge, MA – New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–5, 9–11, 33–45; Arkadiusz Chrudzimski, "Brentanowska filozofia moralności" ("Brentano's Moral Philosophy"), *Etyka* 31 (1998): 110–112, 115–118; Dariusz Łukasiewicz, "The Brentanian Inspirations in Tadeusz Czeżowski's Philosophy", in: *The Significance of the Lvov-Warsaw School in the European Culture*, ed. Anna Brożek, Friedrich Stadler, Jan Woleński. *Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook* 21 (Wien: Springer, 2017), 79–92; Dariusz Łukasiewicz, "Brentanian Philosophy and Czeżowski's Conception of Existence", in: *Actions, Products, and Things. Brentano and Polish Philosophy*, eds. Arkadiusz Chrudzimski, Dariusz Łukasiewicz (Heusenstamm nr. Frankfurt: ontos verlag, 2006), 183–215; Kamil Moroz, "Zagadka podmiotowości w psychologii opisowej Franza Brentany" ("The Puzzle of Subjectivity in Franz Brentano's Descriptive Psychology"), *Principia* 63 (2016): 144–148; Artur Rojszczak, "Od sądów do zdań. Nośnik prawdy a obiektywizacja wiedzy" ("From Judgments to Propositions. The Truth-Bearer and the Objectification of Knowledge"), *Filozofia Nauki* 2(18) (1997): 94; Mark Textor, "That's correct! Brentano on intuitive judgement", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 31(4) (2023): 806–810.

⁵⁶ Łukasiewicz, "Źródła, zasady i perspektywy", 665.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, 66–67.

⁵⁸ Czeżowski, "Jak budować logikę dóbr? (1)" ("How Should the Logic of Goods Be Constructed? (1)"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), ed. Paweł J. Smoczyński (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1989), 130–135; Czeżowski, "Jak budować logikę dóbr? (2)" ("How Should the Logic of Goods Be Constructed? (2)"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), 136–138; Tadeusz Czeżowski, "O formalnym pojęciu wartości" ("On the

quires a slight correction through the introduction of a two-place functor. The modal operator would then constitute merely a special case of such a functor.

The legitimacy of introducing a two-place functor follows from Czeżowski's conception of the basic relation (*stosunek podstawowy*), formulated in 1919,⁵⁹ which in his later works, published in 1960, he referred to as the value-constituting relation (*stosunek wartościotwórczy*).⁶⁰ In its most concise formulation, this is "the relation connecting the object evaluated as a good with the value parameter and the valuing subject".⁶¹ By value parameter, Czeżowski understands "the good in virtue of which some-

Formal Concept of Value"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), 121–129. Cf. Włodzimierz Wasiukow, "Reinterpretacja formalnej teorii wartości Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("A Reinterpretation of Tadeusz Czeżowski's Formal Theory of Value"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981). *Dziedzictwo idei: logika – filozofia – etyka* (Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981). *The Legacy of Ideas: Logic – Philosophy – Ethics*), eds. Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2002), 123–143.

⁵⁹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "O formalnym pojęciu wartości" ("On the Formal Concept of Value"), *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 22(1–2) (1919): 13–24; I use the edition: Czeżowski, "O formalnym pojęciu wartości" ("On the Formal Concept of Value"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), 122–129. Cf. Adam Jonkisz, "Formalna teoria wartości" ("The Formal Theory of Value"), *Filozofia Nauki* 6(3–4) (23–24) (1998): 121–123, 128–129; Adam Jonkisz, "Tadeusza Czeżowskiego formalne pojęcie wartości" ("Tadeusz Czeżowski's Formal Concept of Value"), in: *Polska filozofia analityczna. W kręgu Szkoły Lwowsko-Warszawskiej* (*Polish Analytical Philosophy. In the Circle of the Lvov–Warsaw School*), eds. Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1999), 197–206; Wasiukow, "Reinterpretacja", 123–134; Katarzyna Ossowska, "Logiczne podstawy etyki – metaetyka Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("Logical Foundations of Ethics: Tadeusz Czeżowski's Metaethics"), *Humanistyka i Przyrodoznawstwo* 20 (2014): 417–419.

⁶⁰ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Jak budować logikę dóbr? (1)" ("How Should the Logic of Goods Be Constructed? (1)"), in: *Charisteria: rozprawy filozoficzne złożone w darze Władysławowi Tatarkiewiczowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* (*Charisteria: Philosophical Essays Presented to Władysław Tatarkiewicz on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*), ed. Tadeusz Czeżowski (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1960), 130–134; Czeżowski, "Jak budować logikę dóbr (2)" ("How Should the Logic of Goods Be Constructed? (2)"), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 1–2 (1959/1960): 186–188.

⁶¹ Czeżowski, "O formalnym pojęciu wartości", 122; Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Jak budować logikę dóbr? (1)" ("How Should the Logic of Goods Be Constructed? (1)"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), 130.

thing is valuable".⁶² Such a parameter may be a real or an ideal object, an individual or collective object, as well as something existing in the present, the past, or the future.⁶³ The value parameter is therefore the value-constituting point of reference in the light of which, and with respect to which, the evaluated object *a* acquires value (becomes valuable). The valuing subject is "the subject for whom something is valuable".⁶⁴ According to Czeżowski, the valuing subject *s* is the particular "factor for whom the value exists".⁶⁵

[...] in its primary sense, it may be an individual human being; in a broader sense, however, it may also be a group of people, a nation, a society, and, finally, metaphorically, even non-sentient objects, of which we may say that objects constituting the condition of their existence or development possess value for them; for example, coal mines possess value for large-scale industry.⁶⁶

The evaluated object *a* is any individual object to which the valuing subject *s* ascribes value. Observing that the moment of the valuing subject *s* is already contained in the very concept of the parameter, that is, the object *p*, since the parameter is something valuable for the subject *s*, Czeżowski proposes a simplification of the definition of value. Formally speaking, the value of the object *a* ($W\bar{a}$) is its relation *R* to the object *p*, that is, to the parameter. Symbolically, this definition may be expressed by the following formula: $W\bar{a} = a R p$. The relation *R* between the object *a* (the evaluated object) and the value parameter *p* is referred to by Czeżowski as the basic relation or the value-constituting relation.⁶⁷ It is this relation that determines whether the object *a* is assigned a positive or a negative value.⁶⁸

In ethical evaluations, the relation *R* consists in the conformity or non-conformity of an action with moral norms. In aesthetic evaluations, by contrast, the value-constituting relation that determines the positive or negative value of a work of art consists in its conformity or

⁶² Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Jak budować logikę dóbr? (1)" ("How Should the Logic of Goods Be Constructed? (1)"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), 130.

⁶³ Jonkisz, "Formalna teoria wartości", 122.

⁶⁴ Czeżowski, "Jak budować logikę dóbr? (1)", 130.

⁶⁵ Czeżowski, "O formalnym pojęciu wartości", 122.

⁶⁶ Ibidem.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, 123–124. Cf. Jonkisz, "Formalna teoria wartości", 122; Ossowska, "Logiczne podstawy etyki", 418.

⁶⁸ Czeżowski, "O formalnym pojęciu wartości", 123.

non-conformity with the principles governing the field of fine arts.⁶⁹ The value of the object a is represented by the subset of the set of all value-constituting relations R that the evaluated object a satisfies with respect to the parameter p . Symbolically, this may be expressed by the following formula: $W(a) = \{R \in \mathbf{R} : a R p\}$.⁷⁰ The greater the number of such relations, and consequently the broader their scope, the greater the objective value of the object a (that is, the more valuable the object a is). Conversely, the fewer such relations, and thus the narrower their scope, the smaller the objective value of the object a (that is, the less valuable the object a is).

The foregoing analyses lead to the conclusion that an axiological evaluation, in its logical explication, cannot be reduced to a simple one-place assertion affirming merely the truth or falsity of the proposition p . Rather, it expresses a relation between the evaluated object (or state of affairs) and the criterion on the basis of which the evaluation is made. Consequently, the formalization of axiological evaluations requires an extension of the classical modal framework by introducing a relational structure. Instead of a one-place modal operator, it seems justified to introduce a two-place functor $W(p, q)$, where the first argument (p) denotes the evaluated object, while the second (q) denotes the value parameter in Czeżowski's sense, that is, the good constituting the value-creating point of reference for a given evaluation.

Such an approach remains fully consistent with the aforementioned conception of the value-constituting relation R , according to which value is not an isolated, immanent property of an object but rather the result of a specific relation obtaining between the object under evaluation and the parameter of its value. Consequently, an axiological judgment assumes a relational form. A given object a is evaluated as valuable by virtue of the previously presupposed value, adopted by the evaluating subject, of another object p . Within this framework, the basic schema of valuation takes the form of a two-place propositional function: $a R p$, that is, a two-place predicate $R(a, p)$.

The introduction of a two-place functor makes it possible to construe autotelic values (absolute values) as a specific form of modality. In situations where an object is valuable in and of itself, both arguments of the functor become identical ($p = q$). This is illustrated by the following example: "It is valuable that we help others because we help others." In such a case, the two-place axiological functor is functionally reduced

⁶⁹ Ibidem. Cf. Jonkisz, "Formalna teoria wartości", 122; Ossowska, "Logiczne podstawy etyki", 418.

⁷⁰ Jonkisz, "Formalna teoria wartości", 122.

to a one-place modal operator. The claim that, in the case of autotelic values, the identity of arguments ($p = q$) obtains is corroborated by the analyses of Adam Jonkisz. He points out that the so-called elementary parameters (that is, primary or basic parameters), which Czeżowski refers to as “absolute goods”,⁷¹ are characterized precisely by the fact that “they are identical with their own parameters”.⁷² In this interpretation, the functor expressing “valuing something in virtue of the value of something else” assumes a reflexive form, thereby ontically closing the structure of value within the object itself.

The logical structure of the formal mechanism of the autotelicity of value differs from that of a utilitarian relation (e.g., *we help others (a) in order to attain peace of conscience (p)*), in which the value of the action is derivative with respect to the value of its end. Autotelic values, or – to employ Czeżowski’s terminology – absolute goods, “are valuable in the primary sense of the term, that is, not by virtue of something else, but solely by virtue of themselves”. Accordingly, autotelic values are self-referential and self-justifying. Logically, this corresponds to a situation in which a valuable state of affairs grounds itself as the criterion of value. Thus, in the case of absolute goods, the two-place functor expressing “valuing something in virtue of the value of something else” ($W\bar{a} = a R p$) is reduced to the one-place modal operator: “it is good that p ”.

From this perspective, it becomes evident that the modal operator does not constitute an alternative to the relational value-constituting functor but rather its limiting special case. A system of values consists of both relative and absolute values. Relative (instrumental) values possess a two-place relational structure, whereas autotelic values exhibit a one-place relational structure. They may therefore be regarded as a reduced case of the former. Relative values require an external frame of reference (expressed by the logical structure $a R p$), whereas autotelic values ground themselves, thereby identifying the object a with the parameter p and allowing them to be construed as one-place modal operators. The interpretation of values as one-place modal operators constitutes, in Czeżowski’s later philosophy, the logical expression of their ontological status as modes of being (*modi entis* or *modi essendi*), that is, as transcendentals.⁷³

⁷¹ Czeżowski, “Jak budować logikę dóbr? (I)”, 131–132.

⁷² Jonkisz, “Formalna teoria wartości”, 129.

⁷³ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Transcendentalia – przyczynek do ontologii” (“Transcendentals – A Contribution to Ontology”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, Its Directions and Pro-*

Metaphysical Foundations of Czeżowski's Axiology

The metaphysical foundations of Tadeusz Czeżowski's axiology constitute a rare attempt within the twentieth-century tradition of analytic philosophy to synthesize Brentanism, anti-naturalism, and the medieval doctrine of transcendentals. This position, referred to – as has already been noted – as axiological realism,⁷⁴ is based on the conviction that value judgments (evaluations) possess a logical value. However, in order to preserve the coherence of this conception with the ontological minimalism of the Lvov–Warsaw School, it is necessary to resolve a number of ontological and semantic problems concerning the nature of values as *modi entis*. Their resolution determines the coherence of Czeżowski's consistently adopted anti-naturalistic realism. In particular, the following issues require examination: the problem of justifying anti-naturalistic realism; the problem of truth-makers for evaluative judgments; the problem of the reducibility of evaluative judgments to existential judgments; the problem of the admissibility of the iteration of the axiological functor; and the problem of *modi entis* (transcendental properties).

Justification of Anti-naturalistic Realism

Czeżowski's axiological realism does not postulate the existence of specific non-natural properties, as does George E. Moore.⁷⁵ Instead, it

blems) (Kęty: Wydawnictwo Antyk, 2004), 188–192; Jan Woleński, "Two Theories of Transcendentals", *Axiomathes* 1–3 (1997): 367–380; Woleński, "Malum, Transcendentalia and Logic", in: *Phenomenology and Analysis: Essays on Central European Philosophy*, eds. Arkadiusz Chrudzimski, Wolfgang Huemer (Frankfurt–Lancaster: Ontos Verlag, 2004), 364–369; Jan Woleński, "On Analogical Concepts (Transcendentalia)", *Studia Metodologiczne* 37 (2016): 9–28; Jan Woleński, "Modalności zdaniowe" ("Sentential Modalities"), *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 52(2) (2004): 435–437; Wacław Janikowski, "Transcendentalia w teorii wartości Tadeusza Czeszowskiego" ("Transcendentals in Tadeusz Czeżowski's Theory of Value"), in: *Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981). Dziedzictwo idei: logika – filozofia – etyka (Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889–1981). The Legacy of Ideas: Logic – Philosophy – Ethics)*, eds. Włodzimierz Tyburski, Ryszard Wiśniewski (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2002), 161–169; Marcin Drofiszyn, "Ontologiczne założenia logiki etycznej", 58.

⁷⁴ Dariusz Łukasiewicz, "Metaphysics of Axiological Realism," *Philosophia Scientiae* 12(1) (2008): 57–74.

⁷⁵ George E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, revised edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Chap. 2, point 26, 93.

employs a functional analysis of language based on two argumentative pillars: (1) the thesis that axiological judgments possess logical value, and (2) the rejection of naturalistic reductionism.

The first of these is semantic-logical in character. Czeżowski maintains that evaluative judgments – just like descriptive judgments – are bearers of truth and falsity.⁷⁶ We may meaningfully say: “It is true that *X* is good”, which indicates that axiological judgments enter into inferential relations and are subject to assessment with respect to their logical value. This argument is transcendental in character. Since, in the practice of moral and aesthetic discourse, we employ reasoning, we thereby (*eo ipso*) presuppose its truth-apt character.⁷⁷

The second constitutive element of Czeżowski’s position is connected with the rejection of naturalistic reductionism. Czeżowski shares the view that the reduction of axiological properties (*scilicet*, values) to natural properties leads to the naturalistic fallacy in Moore’s sense.⁷⁸ If “good” meant the same as “pleasant” or “desired”, then the question whether a given pleasure is morally good would become tautological. Yet moral practice, mediated through axiological experience, clearly demonstrates the irreducibility of the normative level to the descriptive one. Therefore, according to Czeżowski, the reduction of values to empirical facts (e.g., to pleasure) leads to the trivialization of ethics.

As already mentioned, Czeżowski’s realism differs fundamentally from Moorean non-naturalism. Czeżowski does not accept the existence of specific “non-natural properties” but, in the Brentanian spirit, rejects the predicative interpretation of value.⁷⁹ In his view, value is not a property of a thing in the ontological sense but rather its mode of being (*modus entis*). Consequently, Czeżowski’s anti-naturalism is unequivocally ontological-categorial rather than ontologically inflationary.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Czeżowski, “Etyka jako nauka empiryczna”, 98; Czeżowski, “Dwojaki normy”, 145–146.

⁷⁷ Łukasiewicz, “Źródła, zasady i perspektywy”, 663.

⁷⁸ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne” (“Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms”), *Etyka* 7 (1970): 136. Cf. Łukasiewicz, “Metaphysics of Axiological Realism”, 58–59; Łukasiewicz, “Źródła, zasady i perspektywy”, 664–665; Stanisław Jedynek, “Błąd naturalistyczny” (“The Naturalistic Fallacy”), *Etyka* 2 (1967): 290–292; Piotr Makowski, “Moore i semantyczna autonomia etyki” (“Moore and the Semantic Autonomy of Ethics”), *Principia* 59–60 (2014): 69–72.

⁷⁹ Łukasiewicz, “Metaphysics of Axiological Realism”, 62–63; Łukasiewicz, “Źródła, zasady i perspektywy”, 665–666.

⁸⁰ Stephen Mumford, “A New Solution to the Problem of Negative Truths”, in: *Metaphysics and Truthmakers*, ed. Jean-Maurice Monnoyer (Frankfurt–Paris–

The Problem of Truth-Makers for Evaluative Judgments

Accepting the thesis that axiological judgments possess logical value, and therefore may be true or false, entails the necessity of resolving the question of their ontological grounding, that is, of identifying their objective correlates (truth-makers), which constitute their truth. In classical ontology, the truth of a proposition is taken to consist in its correspondence with a fact or state of affairs, understood as a definite configuration of objects and properties existing in reality and cognitively accessible through experience. With regard to evaluative judgments, this raises the question whether their truth has an analogous ontological foundation. Czeżowski, however, rejects the identification of values with facts. He does not treat values as real properties inhering in empirical objects.⁸¹ Consequently, his position requires a different account of the relation between an evaluative judgment and reality than that assumed by the classical correspondence theory of truth based on the notion of a fact as a truth-maker. The solution to this issue must be sought in his conception of transcendentals. Value, as a transcendental, is not one of the structural properties of an object but refers instead to its mode of existence (*modus essendi*). This means that value does not belong to an object as one of its empirical characteristics or constituent properties. This means that value does not belong to an object as one of its empirical characteristics or as a property belonging to the object's ontological structure and co-constituting its ontic identity, but rather qualifies its being within the axiological order.⁸² The proposition "*a* is good" has no counterpart in the form of a fact understood as a state of affairs comprising the object *a* together with the property of goodness as its immanent determination; rather, it constitutes an axiological qualification of the state of affairs consisting in the existence of *a*. Such an interpretation

Ebikon–Lancaster–New Brunswick: Ontos Verlag, 2007), 320; Scott A. Shalkowski, "Essence and Nominalism", in: *Metaphysics, Meaning, and Modality: Themes from Kit Fine*, ed. Mircea Dumitru (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 303, 305–306, 309, 311–312, 314.

⁸¹ Czeżowski, "Transcendentalia", 190; Tadeusz Czeżowski, "O przedmiocie aksjologii" ("On the Subject Matter of Axiology"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości (Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value)*, ed. Paweł J. Smoczyński (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1989), 115; Czeżowski, "O formalnym pojęciu wartości" ("On the Formal Concept of Value"), 122–123; Cf. Łukasiewicz, "Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii", 158, 175.

⁸² Łukasiewicz, "Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii", 162–170.

makes it possible to preserve the realist thesis concerning the truth of axiological propositions while at the same time avoiding ontological inflation consisting in the postulation of *sui generis* normative properties objectively inscribed into the structure of objects.

It may therefore be assumed that the truth-maker of axiological propositions is a particular state of affairs (e.g., the fact of the existence of object *a*), considered under the aspect of its axiological qualification. This means that the ground of the truth of the judgment "*a* is good" remains reality understood as a particular configuration of features, relations, and conditions constituting a given state of affairs that satisfies the adopted criterion of evaluation. In other words, value does not constitute a distinct component of the object's ontological structure but expresses the normative qualification of the total existential situation (the manner in which an object situated under particular circumstances presently exists), viewed from the perspective of specific axiological standards.⁸³ In this sense, axiological truth does not require ontological "inflation" but presupposes that normativity refers to real states of affairs without at the same time constituting an additional property of those states in the ontological sense. Value does not constitute a separate ontological layer of the object but determines the manner in which it is evaluated.⁸⁴ According to Renata Muszyńska, values, as "transcendental properties, add nothing to being [...]; they merely make explicit the content of the concept of being".⁸⁵ In this way, values such as goodness, which Stanisław Kowalczyk – on account of their transcendental character – calls "transcendental values", distinguishing them from the class of "categorical values," are merely "new aspects of being distinguished in relation to the subject's cognitive or conative-emotional faculties".⁸⁶ As Czeżowski cautions, however, the intuition of value thus constituted does not mean that one may "regard them as merely subjective ways of

⁸³ Łukasiewicz, "Metaphysics of Axiological Realism", 68, 72; Jonkisz, "Formalna teoria wartości", 121–122; Kmiecikowski, "Wartości moralne", 161–162.

⁸⁴ Cf. Cezary Gorzka, "Teoria wartości Tadeusza Czeszowskiego" ("Tadeusz Czeżowski's Theory of Value"), *Ruch Filozoficzny* 48(1) (1991): 21.

⁸⁵ Renata Muszyńska, "Własności transcendentalne i pierwsze zdanie metafizyki w ujęciu historycznym" ("Transcendental Properties and the First Proposition of Metaphysics in Historical Perspective"), *Studia Teologiczne* 22 (2004) (*Theological Studies*): 428.

⁸⁶ Stanisław Kowalczyk, "Filozoficzne koncepcje wartości" ("Philosophical Conceptions of Value"), *Collectanea Theologica* 56(1) (1986): 45.

relating to the object".⁸⁷ The point is that values as *modi entis* "belong to their object according to a certain *modus*, in a certain manner... such that it is beautiful or good, etc."⁸⁸

The Problem of the Reducibility of Value Judgments to Existential Judgments

Franz Brentano, in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, formulates the so-called idiogenetic theory of judgment,⁸⁹ according to which a judgment does not consist in the combination of representations (as in the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition), but in specific acts of affirmation (*Anerkennung*) or negation (*Verwerfung*) of the existence of the object of representation.⁹⁰ Every judgment – regardless of its grammatical form – can be reduced to an existential form: "A exists" or "A does not exist".⁹¹ Brentano explicitly emphasizes that even seemingly predicative judgments ("S is P") in fact assume the structure of affirmation or negation of the existence of a certain state of affairs.⁹² Thus, the constitutive element of judgment is not the attribution of a property to the object of representation (*Gegenstand der Vorstellung*), but the act of acknowledging (or rejecting) its existence.

Czeżowski – remaining under the strong influence of the Brentanian school⁹³ – accepts this concept at least in relation to descriptive judgments. As Dariusz Łukasiewicz shows, in Czeżowski's interpretation, descriptive judgments can be reduced to existential forms, and

⁸⁷ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Czym są wartości?" ("What Are Values?"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Filozofia na rozdrożu (Philosophy at the Crossroads)* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2009), 109.

⁸⁸ Ibidem.

⁸⁹ Franz Hillebrand, *Die neuen Theorien der kategorischen Schlüsse. Eine logische Untersuchung* (Wien: Alfred Hölder Kaiserlich und Königlich Hoflieferant und Universitäts-Buchhändler, 1891), Chap. 2: *Von der Natur des Urtheils*, § 16, 26.

⁹⁰ Cf. Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, transl. Antos C. Rancurello, Dailey Burnham Terrell, Linda L. McAlister (London–New York: Routledge, 1995), Book 2, Chapt 7, § 5, 161–162.

⁹¹ Ibidem, § 7–8, 163–172.

⁹² Ibidem, § 7, 163–171.

⁹³ Cf. Tadeusz Czeżowski, "O naukach humanistycznych" ("On the Humanities"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Odczyty filozoficzne (Philosophical Lectures)*, 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, *Prace Wydziału Filologiczno-Filozoficznego*, 1969), vol. 20, no. 3, 32.

thus to acts of affirmation or negation of the existence of a specific object or state of affairs.⁹⁴ This means that the logical analysis of descriptive sentences should take into account their existential core, even if their surface structure⁹⁵ suggests a classical subject-predicate form, i.e., a predicative sentence.

However, the question arises whether an analogous reduction also occurs in the case of value judgments. If we assume that a value judgment is also a judgment in the Brentanian sense, it would consistently follow that, similarly to descriptive judgments, it should be reducible to the form of a judgment affirming or negating the existence of the object of representation. Can the sentence “*a* is valuable”, then, be understood as a logical paraphrase of the sentence “it is valuable that *a* exists?” Czeżowski explicitly rejects in his works the possibility of reducing sentences of the type “*a* is valuable (good)” to the existential form: “there exists a valuable (good) *a*,” because “axiological sentences by definition state value, and not existence”.⁹⁶ This kind of analysis allows for maintaining consistency with the idiogenetic theory of judgment: the act of evaluation would then be an affirmation of the existence of the value of a given object, that is – as Czeżowski says – that it is such and such (e.g., truthful),⁹⁷ such as it should be, “if this and that is good (better, best)”.⁹⁸ At the same time, it does not imply treating value as a property belonging to an object in a predicative sense, but as its modality.

The problem becomes complicated, however, in a situation when we relate it to fictional beings⁹⁹ (*entia imaginaria*) or ideal objects (conceptual contents that are products of mental activities preserved, for example, in language).¹⁰⁰ If a value judgment is to concern a specific manifesta-

⁹⁴ Cf. Łukasiewicz, “Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii”, 160–161; Łukasiewicz, “Źródła, zasady i perspektywy”, 666–669; Łukasiewicz, “Metaphysics of Axiological Realism”, 63.

⁹⁵ Cf. Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge–London: The MIT Press, 2015), Chap. 1, 15–16.

⁹⁶ Łukasiewicz, “Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii”, note 8, 160.

⁹⁷ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Etyka jako nauka empiryczna” (“Ethics as an Empirical Science”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), 100.

⁹⁸ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Dwojakie normy” (“Two Kinds of Norms”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (*Writings on Ethics and the Theory of Value*), 147.

⁹⁹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, Its Directions and Problems*) (Kęty: Wydawnictwo Antyk, 2004), 84–85.

¹⁰⁰ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “O naukach humanistycznych”, sec. IV, 33.

tion of the mode of existence of an object stated in the evaluation, how does this relate to the evaluation of a literary work or a fictional character? According to the theory of the intentional relation adopted by Czeżowski – following Brentano and Kazimierz Twardowski – every mental act – that is, both representation and judgment – is invariably directed toward a specific object, which becomes its immanent correlate.¹⁰¹ An object understood in this way is not a Lockean idea merely representing a real object in the mind, but is the real and direct target of the cognitive act. The anti-representationalist position formulated in this way allows Czeżowski to include a wide spectrum of beings in his analysis, including literary characters and ideal objects.¹⁰² Consequently, a sentence such as “Hamlet is a valuable literary character” can be transposed into the sentence: “It is valuable that Hamlet exists as an intentional object” (in the mental process of his creator). Existential reduction does not require here the assumption of the real existence of the object, but only the acknowledgment of its existence in the intentional (mental) order “as a hypothetical-deductive construction”.¹⁰³ Extending the scope of the concept of existence is not equivalent to the ontological hypostatization of value, but is a consequence of applying the Brentanian concept of objecthood. It is also made possible by the ambiguity of the term “existence” itself. Ultimately, as Czeżowski states, all “mental worlds arise and exist in this one real world in the basic, narrow sense of this word”.¹⁰⁴

The presented analysis enables a coherent integration of three key components of Czeżowski's concept: (1) the idiogenetic theory of judgment, derived from Brentano's philosophy; (2) the realistic nature of value judgments, based on moderate semantic-ontological realism; and (3) the possibility of evaluating fictional beings without ontologically hypostatizing their real existence.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Book 2, Chap. 1, § 5, 68.

¹⁰² Czeżowski, “Pojęcie prawdziwości w odniesieniu do utworów literackich” (“The Concept of Truth with Reference to Literary Works”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Odczyty filozoficzne (Philosophical Lectures)*, 225–226.

¹⁰³ Ibidem, 226.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, 227.

Problem of the Admissibility of Iteration of the Axiological Functor

If we consider an axiological expression as a propositional operator $V(p)$ (where V denotes "it is valuable that..."), the question of the admissibility of constructions such as $V(V(p))$ naturally arises. This problem concerns the meaningfulness of statements of the type "it is valuable that it is valuable that p ". In the literature analyzing Czeżowski's position, such as in the works of Dariusz Łukasiewicz¹⁰⁵ and Manuel Rebuschi,¹⁰⁶ three fundamental strategies for resolving this issue are indicated:

1. Reduction of iteration to a single level: subsequent occurrences of the functor are reduced to one level, serving only the function of emphatic underlining of the strength of the evaluation.
2. Hierarchization of levels: iteration is permissible provided there is a distinction between different levels of reflection – from first-order values to the value of the act of acknowledging value.
3. Prohibition of iteration in the strict sense: the axiological operator applies exclusively to states of affairs expressing existence, which excludes its reflexivity.

From the perspective of Czeżowski's ontological minimalism, the third position, postulating a prohibition of iteration in the strict sense, appears most justified. Value as a *modus entis* (a modification of being) is not a property of judgments, but a qualification of the mode of existence of being. Since the category of transcendentals identified by Czeżowski as a separate class – modal transcendentals,¹⁰⁷ such as "necessity", "possibility", "good", or "beauty" – characterize the structure of an individual object (that is, the ontological arrangement of a specific, singular thing (substance), treated as a primary, independent, organized whole), while not being part of the description of its properties, they cannot become arguments for subsequent axiological operations of the same order. Iteration would lead to an unjustified shift of emphasis from ontology to metalanguage. Predicating value of object a consists only in qualifying the mode of its existence. The sentence " A is good" essentially means:

¹⁰⁵ Łukasiewicz, "Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii", 162; Łukasiewicz, "Metaphysics of Axiological Realism", 66.

¹⁰⁶ Rebuschi, "Czeżowski's Axiological Concepts", 103–108.

¹⁰⁷ Czeżowski, "Transcendentalia", 54–56. Cf. Jan Woleński, "Wstęp" ("Introduction"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, Its Directions and Problems*), 14.

"It is valuable that *a* exists". This is the level of ontology, because the evaluating functor refers directly to the object *A*'s mode of being.

While reflection on the evaluation of the mode of existence of a specific being itself is possible, it no longer constitutes a direct axiological act (an intuition of value), but is a second-order act of a cognitive or metatheoretical nature. Consequently, value judgments are reduced to existential judgments of the type "It is valuable that *a* exists", where the evaluating functor operates directly on the fact of existence.

Transcendentals as *Modi Entis*

The reinterpretation of the doctrine of the transcendentals constitutes one of Tadeusz Czeżowski's most original contributions – within the framework of analytical philosophy and analytical axiology¹⁰⁸ – to contemporary ontology and meta-axiology. As Jan Woleński observes, Czeżowski is the only analytical philosopher known to him "who considered this issue";¹⁰⁹ doing so in a manner entirely characteristic of his own philosophical approach. By synthesizing Brentanism, the Scholastic tradition, and the methodological rigor of the Lvov–Warsaw School, Czeżowski proposed an account in which the transcendentals cease to be understood merely as coextensive (convertible) attributes of being¹¹⁰ and instead become instruments for the categorization and classification of its modes of existence.

The foundation of Czeżowski's conception lies in abandoning the understanding of the transcendentals characteristic of classical Scholasticism in favor of dividing them into two principal varieties:

- supracategorical transcendentals, which comprise the concept of being (*ens*) together with terms equivalent to it, such as "something" or "object". These are the most general concepts, which neither determine other concepts¹¹¹ nor admit of negation (non-being is "an empty term signifying nothing in any of the worlds");¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Łukasiewicz, "Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii", 167.

¹⁰⁹ Jan Woleński, "Modalności zdaniowe", 435. Cf. Stanisław Majdański, "Ethicae loci naturales. Wybrane uwagi i refleksje metaetyczne" ("Ethicae loci naturales. Selected Remarks and Metaethical Reflections"), *Ethos. Kwartalnik Instytutu Jana Pawła II KUL* 37, no. 4(148) (2024): 322, 325.

¹¹⁰ William A. Frank, Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus. Metaphysician* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1995), 37.

¹¹¹ Czeżowski, "Transcendentalia", 190.

¹¹² Ibidem, 189.

- modal transcendentals, which include “the modal terms necessity and possibility, as well as existence and value, which are conceived analogously to those modal concepts”.¹¹³

As both Jan Woleński and Dariusz Łukasiewicz emphasize, this should not be understood as Czeżowski’s complete abandonment of the Scholastic heuristic of the transcendentals, but rather of their conceptualization as developed by Thomas Aquinas. The matter is, however, neither sufficiently unambiguous nor entirely clear, especially since Czeżowski himself never explicitly addresses it, nor does he refer by name, in this context, either to Aquinas or to John Duns Scotus. He merely employs the general designation “medieval logicians”.¹¹⁴ Woleński maintains that Czeżowski’s “modern conception of the transcendentals” constitutes, in essence, “a certain synthesis of the position of Thomas Aquinas and that of Duns Scotus”.¹¹⁵ Łukasiewicz, in turn, states that “Czeżowski nevertheless does not accept Thomas Aquinas’s theory of the transcendentals, because he holds that there is a difference between the transcendental *being* and the *modi essendi*.” The justification for this claim is “that being is not subject to negation, whereas the *modi essendi* can be negated”.¹¹⁶ The negation of being is non-being, that is, something non-existent, whereas the negation of goodness is evil, and the negation of beauty is ugliness, that is, something that exists.

The possibility of negating the transcendentals brings to Łukasiewicz’s mind an association with Duns Scotus’s notion of the *passiones disiunctivae*, that is, disjunctive transcendentals (disjoined from being), contrasted by Scotus with the convertible transcendentals (*passiones convertibiles cum ente*).¹¹⁷ I shall set aside the discussion that Łukasiewicz’s association is

¹¹³ Ibidem, 190.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, 188–189.

¹¹⁵ Woleński, “Wstęp”, 14.

¹¹⁶ Łukasiewicz, “Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii”, 166.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, 166–167. Cf. Allan B. Wolter OFM, *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1946), 136; Andrzej Maryniarczyk SDB, “Transcendentalia w perspektywie historycznej (od arche do antytranscendentaliów)” (“The Transcendentals in Historical Perspective (From Arche to Anti-Transcendentals)”), *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 43(1) (1995): 150–151; Sebastian Tomasz Kołodziejczyk, *Granice pojęciowe metafizyki (The Conceptual Boundaries of Metaphysics)* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2017), 163. The *locus classicus* of Scotus’s conception of the disjunctive transcendentals is the passage in Book I of his *Ordinatio*, Distinction 8, Part 1, Question 3. See Johannes Duns Scotus, “Ordinatio,” Liber I, in: *Iohannes Duns Scotus, Opera omnia*, vol. 4, ed. Carl Balić, Martin Bodewig, Stanislav Bušelić, Pietro Čapkun-Delić, Barnaba

justified only partially and only in a formal sense, of which Łukasiewicz himself is, moreover, aware.¹¹⁸ For Duns Scotus unequivocally classifies goodness as a convertible transcendental, whereas Czeżowski regards it as a modal transcendental, interpreted by Łukasiewicz, just as by Woleński, as disjunctive in the Scotistic sense.¹¹⁹

Czeżowski transferred the disjunctive structure of the transcendentals¹²⁰ into the domain of axiology, which enabled him to regard good and evil as transcendental modes of being rather than as descriptive properties of being. The comparison of Czeżowski's modal reinterpretation of the transcendentals with Duns Scotus's conception of the transcendentals is justified by the fact that Scotus – following a line of thought already present in the works of Bonaventure¹²¹

Hechich, Ivan Jurić, Bruno Korošak, Luca Modrić, Sebastiano Nanni, Iulio Reinhold, and Odulf Schäfer (Civita Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1956), 169–229. Cf. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and Their Function*, 4–12; Allan B. Aertsen, “Scotus's Conception of Transcendentality: Tradition and Innovation”, *Archa Verbi. Subsidia* 5 (2008): 112.

¹¹⁸ Łukasiewicz, “Ontologiczne podstawy aksjologii”, 167.

¹¹⁹ Woleński, “Malum, Transcendentalia and Logic”, 364.

¹²⁰ Jacek Surzyn, “Jana Dunsza Szkota pytanie o metafizykę” (“John Duns Scotus's Question Concerning Metaphysics”), *IDEA – Studia nad strukturą i rozwojem pojęć filozoficznych* 23 (2011) (*IDEA – Studies on Structure and Development of Philosophical Concepts*): 20–21; Jacek Surzyn, “Szkotowy projekt nauki transcendentalnej” (“Scotus's Project of Transcendental Science”), *Folia Philosophica* 30 (2012): 66.

¹²¹ Allan B. Wolter, Jan A. Aertsen, Jean-François Courtine, and Jared Isaac Goff unanimously argue – to cite here Aertsen's representative formulation – that: “[...] the source of this conception may have been Bonaventure, who in *De mysterio Trinitatis* bases one of his proofs for the existence of God on ten ‘differences of being’ (*differentiae entis* – addition by P. D.), such as ‘possible being and necessary being’ or ‘being in potency and being in act.’ What is new in Scotus's thought, however, is his understanding of the disjunctive properties of being as transcendental”. See Aertsen, “Scotus's Conception of Transcendentality”, 118; Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought. From Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012), Chap. 9: “Duns Scotus: a Turn in the Doctrine of the Transcendentals,” 388–389; Wolter, *The Transcendentals and Their Function*, 132–137; Jean-François Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990), 384–385; Jared Isaac Goff, *Caritas in Primo. A Study of Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2015), XXX–XXXI; 9, note 22. Cf. St. Bonaventure, “Quaestiones Disputatae de Mysterio Trinitatis”, in: *St. Bonaventure, Opera omnia*, vol. 5: “Opuscula varia theologica” (Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), near Florence: Printing House of St. Bonaventure's College, 1891), Question 1, Article 1, points 10–20, 46b–47a. In contrast to the above-mentioned authors, other scholars, such as Frederick Charles Copleston SJ and Jacek Surzyn,

and generalizing it:¹²²

[...] extends the range of transcendental concepts – which traditionally include ‘unity,’ ‘truth,’ and ‘goodness’ (these concepts being logically co-extensive with ‘being’) – by adding three further kinds of concepts: ‘being’ itself; disjunctive pairs such as ‘actual and potential,’ ‘finite and infinite,’ and ‘contingent and necessary’; and pure perfections such as ‘life,’ ‘wisdom,’ and ‘will.’¹²³

Czeżowski categorically rejects the predicative nature of values, maintaining that goodness, truth, and beauty are not properties of objects (their attributes), but rather their modes of being (*modi entis* or *modi essendi*).¹²⁴ According to Czeżowski, expressions such as “round”, “coloured”, or “loud” belong to categorial predicates, that is, proper predicates, namely those that “correspond to the constituents of the content of presentations, images, or concepts”.¹²⁵ By contrast, expressions such as “existing”, “beautiful”, or “good”, that is, the transcendentals, lie “outside the domain of the categories”. As such, they are not representable,¹²⁶ a fact which, as Czeżowski points out, has long been well known in phi-

maintain that Duns Scotus adopted the general scheme of the division of the transcendental attributes of being either from Avicenna (Copleston) or from Albert the Great (Surzyn), rather than from Bonaventure. See Frederick C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), 218; Surzyn, “Jana Dunsza Szkota pytanie o metafizykę”, 20.

¹²² Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, 384; Wolter, *The Transcendentals and Their Function*, 132, 137; Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 148; Kołodziejczyk, *Granice pojęciowe metafizyki* (*The Conceptual Boundaries of Metaphysics*), 163. Cf. Duns Scotus, “Ordinatio”, Book I, Distinction 8, Part 1, Question 3, nos. 113–115, 205–207.

¹²³ Frank, Wolter, *Duns Scotus. Metaphysician*, 38, note 8. Cf. Surzyn, “Jana Dunsza Szkota pytanie o metafizykę”, 20.

¹²⁴ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Definicje deiktyczne” (“Deictic Definitions”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Filozofia na rozdrożu (Analizy metodologiczne)* (*Philosophy at the Crossroads (Methodological Analyses)*) (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2009), 37–38; Czeżowski, “Czym są wartości?”, 109.

¹²⁵ Czeżowski, “Czym są wartości?”, 108.

¹²⁶ Czeżowski, “Transcendentalia”, 190; Czeżowski, “Czym są wartości?”, 109; Czeżowski, “Klasyfikacja rozumowań i jej konsekwencje w teorii nauki” (“The Classification of Reasonings and Its Consequences for the Theory of Science”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Filozofia na rozdrożu (Philosophy at the Crossroads)* (*Analizy metodologiczne (Methodological Analyses)*) (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 2009), 155.

losophy. "Hume and Kant maintained this".¹²⁷ The transcendentals do not add any new sensible quality to the description of an object. "They are asserted in various kinds of modal propositions".¹²⁸

According to Czeżowski, the transcendentals characterize the structure of an individual object without constituting parts of that structure. They designate the manner in which properties are interconnected within a given individual and qualify its mode of being. The transcendentals, including values, as *modi*, are not representable in presentations,¹²⁹ but are apprehended in judgments, more precisely, in propositions having a modal structure,¹³⁰ where modal operators (including axiological modalities) – that is, expressions of the form "it is necessary that...", "it is true that...", "it is good that...", "it is beautiful that..." – function as propositional-forming functors.¹³¹ Propositions with a modal structure consist "of a propositional-forming functor and its argument in the form of an affirmative or negative proposition," namely "*p*" or "*not-p*".¹³² "In the case of existence, the functor takes the form: 'it is true that.' For value, by contrast, the functor is the expression: 'it is valuable that' (or: 'it is good that,' 'it is beautiful that')." ¹³³

Czeżowski distinguishes three kinds of judgments in which *modi entis* are predicated: (1) assertoric judgments, (2) apodictic judgments, and (3) axiological judgments (evaluations).¹³⁴ He analyses them primarily in his works on ontology, epistemology, and meta-axiology, such as *Filozofia na rozdrożu* (*Philosophy at the Crossroads*) (1965), *Transcendentalia – przy-*

¹²⁷ Czeżowski, "Definicje dejktyczne", 37.

¹²⁸ Czeżowski, "Czym są wartości?", 108.

¹²⁹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Etyka a psychologia i logika" ("Ethics and Psychology and Logic"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Odczyty filozoficzne* (*Philosophical Lectures*), 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu (*Toruń Scientific Society*), *Prace Wydziału Filologiczno-Filozoficznego* (*Papers of the Faculty of Philology and Philosophy*), 1969), vol. 20, no. 3, 241.

¹³⁰ In order to avoid the error of psychologism, the overcoming of which, according to Czeżowski, constitutes the task of logic, he draws a subtle but highly significant distinction between a judgment and a proposition. A judgment is a psychic act (an activity of the mind, a cognitive experience such as acceptance, evaluation, or assertion), whereas a proposition is a linguistic entity, the logical structure of a given language expressing the content of a judgment. Thus, a proposition is the linguistic expression, the carrier of the content of a judgment. On this matter see, e.g., Czeżowski, "Etyka a psychologia i logika", 241.

¹³¹ Czeżowski, "Definicje dejktyczne", 37.

¹³² Czeżowski, "Transcendentalia", 190.

¹³³ *Ibidem*.

¹³⁴ Czeżowski, "Klasyfikacja rozumowań i jej konsekwencje w teorii nauki", 155.

czyniek do ontologii (*Transcendentals: A Contribution to Ontology*) (1977), and the textbook *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych* (*The Main Principles of the Philosophical Sciences*). The claims he advances in this respect constitute the core of his conception of transcendental modes of being (*modi entis*). Assertoric judgments merely state a factual state of affairs, that is, the existence of an object or one of its properties, “without asserting necessity or possibility”¹³⁵ or the values attributable to it. Apodictic judgments predicate necessity. Axiological judgments (evaluations) predicate value, that is, beauty or goodness. Besides these, Czeżowski also distinguishes problematic judgments. These are “propositions in which possibility is asserted”.¹³⁶

The Empirical Character of Axiology

According to Czeżowski, the aforementioned kinds of judgments by means of which *modi entis* are predicated possess the characteristic that they do not result from a purely intellectual analysis of concepts,¹³⁷ hence, they are not *a priori* judgments in the classical rationalist sense.¹³⁸ Czeżowski regards judgments concerning transcendentals *en bloc* as synthetic judgments because they express “empirical convictions”.¹³⁹ “In them, we ascribe to their objects properties that cannot be inferred by reasoning from the definitions of those objects”.¹⁴⁰ Such an operation requires recourse to experience. Unlike the special (alias empirical) sciences, however:

[...] philosophy extends the scope of experience beyond natural experience. The natural sciences recognize only one kind of experience – sense experience – but philosophers have long drawn attention to its other kinds, designated by various names. They all share the common feature that the cognitive act apprehends its object, whatever its type may be, directly – that

¹³⁵ Czeżowski, *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych* (*Fundamental Principles of the Philosophical Sciences*) (Toruń: Nakładem Księgarni Naukowej T. Szczęsnego i S-ka (Published by T. Szczęśny & Co. Scientific Bookshop), 1949), Chap. 2: “Logika i metodologia” (“Logic and Methodology”), 92, sec. 4.

¹³⁶ Ibidem.

¹³⁷ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “O poznaniu” (“On Cognition”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych* (*Fundamental Principles of the Philosophical Sciences*), 8.

¹³⁸ Ibidem, 9.

¹³⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁰ Ibidem. Cf. Czeżowski, “Transcendentalia”, 191.

is, in its own proper form, and not through the mediation of any signs – and as a whole, precisely in the way an object is apprehended, for example, in visual perception. For this reason, such cognition is called intuitive, the original meaning of this term (*intuitive* = *visual*) being extended to every kind of cognition that is direct and holistic.¹⁴¹

Although intuitive cognition is extrasensory cognition, it possesses “features common to sensory cognition”,¹⁴² which is empirical cognition in the narrow sense:

[...] being direct, it is self-evident, although there are different kinds of self-evidence corresponding to different kinds of intuition. It is not demonstrable, because it is factual rather than apodictic – one cannot prove to anyone that things are as I see them except by showing that very same thing to that person. It is, however, verifiable in the sense that it may be repeated by different persons, under different circumstances, and compared.¹⁴³

Thus understood, intuitive cognition, according to Czeżowski, is not situated – as is usually assumed in philosophy, for example in the circle of neo-positivist philosophy¹⁴⁴ – outside the context of empirical cognition, but rather forms part of “experience in the broad sense of the word,” providing “empirical knowledge,” that is, “individual knowledge, although concerning objects of various logical types, such as numbers or geometrical figures...”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Filozofia na rozdrożu” (“Philosophy at the Crossroads”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Filozofia na rozdrożu (Analizy metodologiczne)* (*Philosophy at the Crossroads [Methodological Analyses]*) (Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Scientific Publishing House, 2009), 17.

¹⁴² Ibidem.

¹⁴³ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁴ Cf., for example, Anna Jedynak, “Intuicyjne podstawy empirystycznych koncepcji sensu” (“The Intuitive Foundations of Empiricist Conceptions of Meaning”), *Filozofia Nauki (Philosophy of Science)* 1(21) (1998): 5.

¹⁴⁵ Czeżowski, “Filozofia na rozdrożu”, 18. Cf. Francesco Coniglione, “Logica, scienza, e filosofia in Tadeusz Czeżowski” (“Logic, Science, and Philosophy in Tadeusz Czeżowski”), *Global Philosophy* 8(1–3) (1997): 230. Coniglione points out that “Czeżowski therefore advocates an extension and transformation of the concept of experience, in accordance with the indications of Bergson, Husserl, and existentialism, although he acknowledges that these new paths of cognition have not yet been sufficiently investigated and developed, unlike the methods of the natural sciences (cf. [1951], 41). Precisely by referring to Bergson’s philosophy, Czeżowski emphasizes that this new ‘irrationalist or intuitionist metaphysics’ is nevertheless not anti-rationalist, since it does not oppose the classical methods of scientific inquiry, which it rather seeks to complement; moreover, it

Czeżowski sees the legitimation of his position in the view according to which, first, “the scope of human knowledge is always limited, and in two ways: only a finite segment of unlimited spacetime is accessible to experience, and it is moreover limited qualitatively by the range of human cognitive means”.¹⁴⁶ Second, “the totality of what exists” partly lies within the range of the exploratory possibilities of human experience, while partly it “extends further than human experience”.¹⁴⁷ The empirical world in the strict sense is the domain of research in the natural sciences, whereas the extra-empirical part of existence remains within the interest of metaphysics. It is obvious that “[t]his extra-empirical part of existence is not knowable”,¹⁴⁸ and therefore metaphysics is condemned, to a considerable extent, to making conjectures, carrying out extrapolations, and engaging in quasi-scientific speculations. Accordingly, it is indeed true that metaphysical constructions are not “hypotheses in the sense accepted in science”, since they are not decidable and, moreover, “they are not susceptible to being made probable”.¹⁴⁹ In the strict sense, however, “no natural-scientific proposition is decidable” either, although – in contrast to metaphysical constructions – natural-scientific propositions “through successive empirical tests receive an increasingly higher degree of probability”.¹⁵⁰ The epistemologically problematic status of metaphysical constructions does not, however, render them entirely devoid of value. Czeżowski expresses the conviction that:

Their value must be sought elsewhere. Every such construction represents a certain possible answer to questions arising against the background of knowledge of the empirical world, yet extending beyond the limits within which scientific methods are capable of providing answers. Such constructions therefore indicate possible directions for the expansion of knowledge

aims to distinguish itself both from anti-rationalist metaphysics and from mystical positions, and is characterized by the verifiability of its methods and by the hypothetical rather than apodictic character of its results, thereby approximating the requirements of scientific criticism typical of the natural sciences (cf. [1948d], 23–24)”. See Coniglione, “Logica, scienza, e filosofia in Tadeusz Czeżowski”, 231. Cf. Ryszard Wiśniewski, “Intuitionism in Contemporary Polish Ethics. Part I. From Modernism to the Lviv-Warsaw School”, *Ruch Filozoficzny* (*The Philosophical Movement*) 75(4) (2019): 150–151.

¹⁴⁶ Czeżowski, “Filozofia na rozdrożu”, 14. Cf. Czeżowski, “O poznaniu”, 42.

¹⁴⁷ Czeżowski, “Filozofia na rozdrożu”, 14. Cf. Czeżowski, “O poznaniu”, 42.

¹⁴⁸ Czeżowski, “Filozofia na rozdrożu”, 14.

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁰ Ibidem.

beyond its currently attained boundaries. In this lies their heuristic significance.¹⁵¹

Were even this argument still to prove debatable for opponents of incorporating metaphysics into the system of the sciences, it would undoubtedly be difficult for them – according to Czeżowski – to dispute the view that the value of metaphysical constructions is ultimately determined by their function and cognitive usefulness. The significance of metaphysics is justified above all by its role in organizing, ordering, and integrating scientific cognition. Czeżowski justifies the need to incorporate metaphysics into the system of the sciences by the function it performs with respect to science, binding into a “unity of generalization” the diverse laws formulated within the particular sciences. In this way, it becomes a “complement to the theories of the special sciences,” constituting the “unity of a scientific worldview”.¹⁵² Czeżowski does not claim here that metaphysics is true because it is useful. Rather, he maintains that metaphysics is necessary because it responds to the natural need for a synthesis of knowledge. It is precisely this unifying function that justifies its presence within scientific culture.

As can thus be seen, Czeżowski advocates a twofold line of justification for incorporating metaphysics into the system of the sciences. First, metaphysics provides the “unity of generalization” of the results of strictly empirical scientific cognition.¹⁵³ Second, given the limited character of natural-scientific empiricism, which confines the natural sciences to acquaintance with “only one kind of experience – sense experience”, metaphysics makes it possible to transcend this limitation by attempting to reach directly and comprehensively those regions of expanded experience that possess a non-sensory character.¹⁵⁴ Czeżowski formulates here an important methodological reservation, according to which any cognition based on experience other than sensory experience cannot be rejected as unscientific if it satisfies the “basic condition of scientific correctness, namely the criterion of intersubjective verifiability, which makes it possible to distinguish what is objective from subjective illusions”.¹⁵⁵ According to Czeżowski, this criterion is un-

¹⁵¹ Ibidem, 15.

¹⁵² Ibidem, 16. Cf. Woleński, “Wstęp”, 12.

¹⁵³ Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, Its Directions and Problems*), 129.

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem, 128.

¹⁵⁵ Czeżowski, “Filozofia na rozdrożu”, 18.

doubtedly fulfilled by the “various forms of intuitive cognition”.¹⁵⁶ For, as he maintains, one can “learn to make correct judgments in various domains of intuitive, extrasensory cognition, just as one can learn to use a microscope or to detect diminished breath sounds in the lungs and heart murmurs”.¹⁵⁷

Czeżowski includes the following kinds of experience within extra-sensory empiricism:

- Internal experience (identified by Czeżowski with introspection or reflection): it comprises the direct perception of one’s own mental phenomena (such as “physical pain”, “one’s own beliefs, moods, desires”,¹⁵⁸ seeing, hearing, believing, or rejoicing) through living through and experiencing them within oneself, as well as the indirect cognition of one’s own and other people’s mental phenomena (past, present, and future) by means of their representations in “reproductive imagination”,¹⁵⁹ these representations are expressed by means of observational propositions concerning “mental phenomena experienced by the observer”.¹⁶⁰ The observational propositions of internal experience “have a certain initial degree of probability, which increases as observations are repeated under given conditions, by the same or by other observers.”¹⁶¹
- Axiological experience:¹⁶² it is one of the varieties of broadly understood intuition, which Czeżowski identifies with the expanded concept of empiricism, referring to it as “axiological empiricism”.¹⁶³ It encompasses the sphere of moral values (represented by goodness) and aesthetic values (represented by beauty), which are ap-

¹⁵⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁸ Czeżowski, “O poznaniu” (“On Cognition”), 42.

¹⁵⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁰ Czeżowski, “O tak zwanym uzasadnieniu bezpośrednim i oczywistości” (“On So-Called Direct Justification and Self-Evidence”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Filozofia na rozdrożu (Analizy metodologiczne)* (*Philosophy at the Crossroads [Methodological Analyses]*), 71.

¹⁶¹ Ibidem, 71.

¹⁶² For more on axiological experience in Czeżowski’s understanding, see Ryszard Wiśniewski, “Doświadczenie aksjologiczne a teorie etyczne w koncepcji Tadeusza Czeszowskiego” (“Axiological Experience and Ethical Theories in Tadeusz Czeżowski’s Conception”), in: *Człowiek i wartości moralne. Studia z dziejów niezależnej myśli etycznej* (*Human Beings and Moral Values: Studies in the History of Independent Ethical Thought*), eds. Zdzisław J. Czarnecki, Stanisław Soldenhoff (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1989), 259–287.

¹⁶³ Czeżowski, “Dwojakie normy”, 148.

prehended and recognized within it in their objectivity. According to Czeżowski, the objectivity of values stems from the fact that goodness and beauty exist independently of acts of valuation¹⁶⁴ and independently of the emotional states of the valuing subject.¹⁶⁵ Czeżowski categorically rejects axiological subjectivism,¹⁶⁶ according to which we evaluate something as good only because what we so evaluate gives us pleasure. In his view, the relation is precisely the reverse. The evaluation of value given in axiological intuition is primary and cognitive in character, whereas the feeling accompanying it (satisfaction, liking) is merely its secondary consequence.¹⁶⁷ For one does not "regard something as beautiful because one likes it, or as good because it gives one satisfaction; on the contrary, liking or satisfaction arises only as a consequence of the evaluation in which one states that something is beautiful or good".¹⁶⁸ For Czeżowski, value is an objective object of cognition and not merely a "content of experience", that is, a subjective experience.¹⁶⁹ This is so, in his view, because when one predicates of values "that this or that is beautiful, good, valuable", one is not merely predicating one's attitude toward a thing (that one likes it, that it gives one satisfaction, that it arouses positive feelings and desires), but is predicating "something that belongs to the thing itself".¹⁷⁰ Although values are "contentless" in the descriptive sense ("they contribute no new content to the description of an object"),¹⁷¹ they nevertheless inform us about a distinctive, objective aspect of reality insofar as a given "property belongs to its object according to a certain *modus*, in a certain manner".¹⁷² In the case of axiological modalities (values), a given property belongs to an object in such a way "that it is beautiful or good".¹⁷³ The af-

¹⁶⁴ Woleński, "Wstęp" ("Introduction"), 12.

¹⁶⁵ Dariusz Łukasiewicz, "Analiza i egzystencja w ujęciu Tadeusza Czeżowskiego i Mariana Przełęckiego" ("Analysis and Existence in the Thought of Tadeusz Czeżowski and Marian Przełęcki"), *Analiza i Egzystencja (Analysis and Existence)* 15 (2011): 18.

¹⁶⁶ Czeżowski, "Czym są wartości?", 106–108. Cf. Agnieszka Smolicka, "Świat wartości", 48–50.

¹⁶⁷ Czeżowski, "Czym są wartości?", 106.

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem, 108.

¹⁶⁹ Ibidem, 106.

¹⁷⁰ Ibidem.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem, 108.

¹⁷² Ibidem, 109.

¹⁷³ Ibidem.

- firmation of value is the recognition of the objective belonging of an object to the "world of values", rather than an arbitrary act of will or an emotional impulse on the part of the evaluating subject.
- Intellectual intuition, which Czeżowski compares to Plato's *noesis*, Aristotle's cognition of essence, and phenomenological eidetic cognition (*Wesensschau*).¹⁷⁴ He defines it as an act of grasping an essence in a particular instance or of extracting from an observed individual case its generic component (species element). It is by no means a form of theoretical conjecture; rather, it enables the cognition of the necessity that characterizes the structure of an individual object, that is, the manner in which the properties belonging to a particular individual are interconnected.¹⁷⁵ This means that, analogously to sensory perception, by carrying out an intuitive insight into a particular object, the investigator is able to discern in it not only its accidental properties but, above all, that which constitutes its essence (*essentia*). Through the intuitive apprehension of necessary relations (for example, in mathematics or logic), the investigator may accept axioms that are "entangled definitions"¹⁷⁶ of reality and constitute the basis of deductive systems.
 - Mathematical intuition: the issue of mathematical intuition in Czeżowski's philosophy constitutes an integral element of his conception of expanded empiricism and of his programme of rendering philosophy scientific through logic.¹⁷⁷ Mathematical intuition is a variety of direct cognition directed toward "objects of various logical types",¹⁷⁸ such as numbers or geometrical figures. Czeżowski maintains that numbers and geometrical figures may be objects of extrasensory experience when they are apprehended directly as facts (e.g., the fact that two non-parallel straight lines intersect on a plane), rather than merely being deduced from definitions alone. A key feature of Czeżowski's position on this matter is his recognition of primary mathematical insights as synthetic

¹⁷⁴ Czeżowski, "Transcendentalia", 191.

¹⁷⁵ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Dyskusja" ("Discussion"), in: Mieczysław A. Krąpiec OP, "Filozofia bytu a zagadnienie wartości" ("The Philosophy of Being and the Problem of Value"), *Znak* 130 (1965): 438.

¹⁷⁶ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "O tak zwanym uzasadnieniu bezpośrednim i oczywistości" ("On So-Called Direct Justification and Self-Evidence"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Filozofia na rozdrożu (Analizy metodologiczne)* (*Philosophy at the Crossroads (Methodological Analyses)*), 74.

¹⁷⁷ Coniglione, "Logica, scienza, e filosofia in Tadeusz Czeżowski", 228–229.

¹⁷⁸ Czeżowski, "Filozofia na rozdrożu", 18.

cognition. Although mathematics is commonly associated with apriority, the axioms that constitute its point of departure are, for him, synthetic in character,¹⁷⁹ since they do not result directly from the mere analysis of concepts but from a direct "encounter" with an ideal object (e.g., a number or a geometrical figure). According to Czeżowski, such an object appears to the investigator "intuitively", in its own form, and not through one description or another, nor through symbols. "Usually, intuition lies at the basis of accepted axioms".¹⁸⁰

- Existential intuition: Czeżowski analyses this issue in two dimensions: (1) the logical-ontological dimension and (2) the metaphysical dimension. Existential experience, considered in the logical-ontological dimension, consists in grasping the very fact of existence in existential experiences, "that is, acts of judging understood as acknowledging the existence of an object given in an appropriate presentation. [...] The linguistic expression of this experience is the (affirmative) existential proposition".¹⁸¹ Such a proposition may be subjected to rigorous logical analysis (for example, by paraphrasing it into the language of first-order predicate calculus with identity),¹⁸² which constitutes the scientific foundation for its investigation. Existential experience, considered in the metaphysical dimension, goes beyond a purely logical approach, referring to the experience of "existence apprehended in an evaluative manner".¹⁸³ It is characterized by a "striving to grasp one's own self in its existence".¹⁸⁴ According to Czeżowski, it approximates "certain experiences of religious asceticism",¹⁸⁵ reaching the "innermost" core of individual human existence in such a way that "everything that can in any way be qualitatively apprehended [within it – supplement by P.D.] will be rejected as external to it".¹⁸⁶ This experience manifests itself particularly in situations such as dejection, boredom, anxiety, despair, suffering, loneliness, or

¹⁷⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁸⁰ Ibidem.

¹⁸¹ Łukasiewicz, "Analiza i egzystencja", 16. Cf. Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach*, 84.

¹⁸² Łukasiewicz, "Analiza i egzystencja", 16.

¹⁸³ Łukasiewicz, "Analiza i egzystencja", 16.

¹⁸⁴ Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach*, 124.

¹⁸⁵ Ibidem, 123.

¹⁸⁶ Ibidem, 124.

death,¹⁸⁷ which shake the human being and enable him or her to grasp the meaning of his or her own existence. "Experiences of this type should not be rejected as unscientific, provided only that they are intersubjectively verifiable".¹⁸⁸

All the aforementioned kinds of extrasensory experience are regarded by Czeżowski as synthetic rather than analytic cognition, because they provide knowledge of facts that cannot be derived from the mere analysis of concepts.

Axiological – Deontological Complementarism

For a fuller understanding of Czeżowski's conception of expanded empiricism, it is essential to take into account the relation, emphasized throughout his writings, between extrasensory (intuitive) experience and the adoption by the cognizing subject of an appropriate attitude toward the object of cognition. According to Czeżowski, an act of intuitive cognition depends upon the subject's assuming a specific "state of psychological readiness" to engage in a particular "way of comporting oneself toward the world": cognition, action, or contemplation,¹⁸⁹ which Czeżowski refers to as an "attitude".¹⁹⁰ He distinguishes three such attitudes: (1) the cognitive attitude – defined as a "readiness to cognize empirical objects through their perception";¹⁹¹ (2) the evaluative (practical) attitude – defined as a readiness to assess the value of a given object;¹⁹² and (3) the aesthetic attitude, which is a "readiness for aesthetic evaluations in which the beauty of an object is affirmed,"¹⁹³ just as in a perceptual conviction one affirms the existence of an object, whereas in an "evaluative judgment one affirms its goodness".¹⁹⁴ The attitude proper to sensory and introspective cognition, as well as to the "cognition of what is general" (essential cognition), is attention. By contrast, the attitude

¹⁸⁷ Ibidem, 126.

¹⁸⁸ Łukasiewicz, "Analiza i egzystencja", 16.

¹⁸⁹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Trzy postawy wobec świata" ("Three Attitudes toward the World"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Odczyty filozoficzne (Philosophical Lectures)*, 162–163.

¹⁹⁰ Ibidem, 163.

¹⁹¹ Ibidem.

¹⁹² Ibidem, 163–164.

¹⁹³ Ibidem, 164.

¹⁹⁴ Ibidem.

proper to evaluations of the value of a given object is the "evaluative, moral, or aesthetic attitude".¹⁹⁵ The adoption of an appropriate cognitive attitude is a "sufficient condition for the emergence of an intuitive cognitive act".¹⁹⁶

The issue of the human subject's adopting an appropriate attitude toward the world constitutes, in Czeżowski's philosophy, an indispensable psychological and epistemological condition for the emergence of empirical ethics. Without adopting a specific attitude (in this case, a moral attitude), it would not be possible to obtain empirical data (primary individual moral evaluations possessing a "structure analogous to that of observational statements in the natural sciences"¹⁹⁷ and functioning as protocol statements), upon which the entire edifice of ethical theory is inductively built up (from the bottom up).¹⁹⁸ A complete ethical system, in Czeżowski's understanding, is a system of deontic propositions¹⁹⁹ encompassing two kinds of moral norms: teleological and formal. Teleological norms indicate a "set of goods constituting the ends of ethically positive conduct".²⁰⁰ Deontic norms, by contrast, do not designate particular goods as the ends of moral conduct, as teleological norms do; rather, "all of them bind moral conduct to their observance".²⁰¹ Both kinds of norms standardize human moral conduct in such a way that teleological norms derive rules of conduct from moral good (and, more broadly, from moral values), prescribing its (their) maximization. Formal norms, in turn, take the concept of moral obligation, rather than value, as primary. Such obligation consists in acting "in accordance with a norm". Only such action ensures the realization of the moral good indicated by the norm in question.²⁰² Since teleological norms are grounded in moral values, Czeżowski refers to them as axiological norms.²⁰³ The fact that formal norms are directed toward acting "out of duty in accordance with a norm"²⁰⁴ reveals their deontic character. Consequently, following

¹⁹⁵ Czeżowski, "Transcendentalia", 191.

¹⁹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁹⁷ Czeżowski, "Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne", 136.

¹⁹⁸ Wiśniewski, "Intuitionism in Contemporary Polish Ethics", 152.

¹⁹⁹ Czeżowski, "Dwojakie normy", 145, 149.

²⁰⁰ Czeżowski, "Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne", 135.

²⁰¹ Ibidem, 133.

²⁰² Ibidem, 134.

²⁰³ Ibidem, 134.

²⁰⁴ Ibidem, 134.

Harold Arthur Prichard and William David Ross,²⁰⁵ Czeżowski decides to refer to them as “deontic norms”.²⁰⁶

Axiological norms indicate which moral values ought to be realized (e.g., “helping those in need is a good thing; therefore, one ought to do so”)²⁰⁷. They arise through the generalization of “elementary evaluations”,²⁰⁸ that is, primary individual evaluations, “made in individual cases”,²⁰⁹ such as, for example, “this is good”, which are reports of direct axiological experience. Deontic norms, by contrast, determine a mode of conduct without reference to any specific end that such conduct is intended to realize. They are adopted as the primary assumptions of an ethical system, that is, as its axioms.²¹⁰ Their introduction is *a priori* in character and proceeds by means of the method of analytic description. The method of analytical description is a research procedure that makes it possible to transform a direct insight into the nature of a phenomenon

²⁰⁵ Czeżowski does indeed refer in the article “Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne” to Prichard and Ross, but he gives no specific references to their works. Ross mentions the complementarity of axiological (teleological) and deontic norms (principles) in: William David Ross, *Foundations of Ethics. The Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Aberdeen, 1935–6* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 46–48. As for Prichard, he discusses this issue, among other places, in: Harold Arthur Prichard, “Moral Obligation,” in: Harold Arthur Prichard, *Moral Writings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 186–189. The point is that although Czeżowski refers to Ross and Prichard in the matter under discussion, they were not the first to draw attention to it. For Ross refers here to the analyses of Charlie Dunbar Broad, who in turn refers in this matter to Henry Sidgwick. See Ross, *Foundations of Ethics*, 46. Cf. Charlie Dunbar Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1930, 7th impression 1956), 162. Prichard, in turn, refers in his analyses, in this respect, to John Henry Muirhead. See Harold Arthur Prichard, “Moral Obligation,” 187. Cf. John Henry Muirhead, *Rule and End in Morals* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1932), 6–8; Muirhead, “The New Deontology,” *Ethics* 50(4) (1940): 448. The truth is that it was Broad who first introduced the division of ethical theories into teleological and deontological ones, whereas Muirhead developed and popularized it. Cf. Peter Vallentyne, “The Teleological/Deontological Distinction,” *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 21 (1987): 21–32; and Selim Berker, “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” *Philosophical Review* 122 (2013): 337–393.

²⁰⁶ Czeżowski, “Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne”, 134.

²⁰⁷ Ibidem, 138.

²⁰⁸ Ibidem, 134, note 1.

²⁰⁹ Ibidem, 136.

²¹⁰ Ibidem, 137; Tadeusz Czeżowski, “O jedności nauki” (“On the Unity of Science”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Odczyty filozoficzne (Philosophical Lectures)*, 217.

into a real analytical definition.²¹¹ Axioms possess formal truth, which means that they are always true within a given system, regardless of whether they are reflected in its semantic model, namely an “empirical community”, and thus regardless of whether they are in fact respected by that community in concrete action.²¹² Following the French logician Joseph Diaz Gergonne, Czeżowski accepts that “the axioms of *a priori* theories” are “entangled definitions of the undefined (primitive) terms occurring within them”.²¹³ Originally, in his 1818 article entitled “Variétés. Essai sur la théorie des définitions” (“Miscellanies. Essay on the Theory of Definitions”), Gergonne employed the term *définitions incomplètes*²¹⁴ – *incomplete definitions*. These are definitions which, “although sufficient to distinguish a given object from all others, are nevertheless insufficient for its complete cognition”.²¹⁵ Mario H. Otero interprets Gergonne’s notion of “incomplete definitions” in terms of “implicit definitions” (*définition implicite*)²¹⁶ – that is, definitions that are understood rather than explicitly stated. As Czeżowski writes:

[...] analytical description, proceeding from the object being described, apprehends it as a representative of a certain general class and leads to general propositions possessing apodictic self-evidence. [...] Such a description provides an analytical definition of the object described through its generic or typical features (even if it does not take the form of a proposition exhibiting the structure characteristic of a definition); it is therefore at the same time a semantic analysis of the name of the object being described. This definitional character of analytical description explains its generality, which

²¹¹ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “O metodzie opisu analitycznego” (“On the Method of Analytical Description”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Odczyty filozoficzne* (*Philosophical Lectures*), 138, 141.

²¹² Czeżowski, “O tak zwanym uzasadnieniu bezpośrednim i oczywistości”, 72; Czeżowski, “Dwojakie normy”, 146–147; Czeżowski, “Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne”, 138. Cf. Maciej Zinkiewicz, “Metoda opisu analitycznego Tadeusza Czeżowskiego” (“Tadeusz Czeżowski’s Method of Analytical Description”), *Zagadnienia Filozoficzne w Nauce* 61 (2016): 53–103.

²¹³ Tadeusz Czeżowski, “Kilka uwag o racjonalizmie i empiryzmie” (“A Few Remarks on Rationalism and Empiricism”), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Odczyty filozoficzne* (*Philosophical Lectures*), 20.

²¹⁴ Joseph Diaz Gergonne, “Variétés. Essai sur la théorie des définitions” (“Miscellanies. Essay on the Theory of Definitions”), *Annales de Mathématiques pures et appliquées* 9 (1818–1819): 18.

²¹⁵ Gergonne, “Variétés. Essai sur la théorie des définitions”, 18.

²¹⁶ Mario H. Otero, “Les définitions implicites chez Gergonne” (“Implicit Definitions in Gergonne”), *Revue d’histoire des sciences* 23(3) (1970): 251–255.

brings it close to *a priori* mathematical propositions, since it is valid *ex definitione* for all cases falling under it.²¹⁷

The model of ethical theory built upon a system of axiological norms is based on the inductive method deriving from Francis Bacon,²¹⁸ because by way of induction it proceeds from concrete, particular moral evaluations to the formulation of general ethical laws determining the general criteria of moral goodness.²¹⁹ By contrast, the model of ethical theory built upon a system of deontic norms is based on the deductive method deriving from Galileo and is constructed "from above," following the model of axiomatic hypothetico-deductive sciences.²²⁰

As examples of ethical theories based on a system of axiological norms, Czeżowski cites eudaimonism, perfectionism, virtue ethics, and utilitarianism.²²¹ Examples of ethical theories based on a system of deontic norms are provided for Czeżowski by the ethics of Immanuel Kant, Christian ethics, Schopenhauer's ethics of compassion, and Czesław Znamierowski's ethics of universal benevolence.²²²

Logical analyses of the structural and conceptual specificity of the two fundamental types of ethical theories – axiological and deontic – lead Czeżowski to formulate the conclusion concerning the complementary, that is, the axiological-deontological, nature of a complete system of ethics. In his 1970 article "*Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne*" ("Axiological and Deontic Moral Norms"), he states unambiguously in this regard that: "a complete system of norms must determine both the set of goods that constitute the goals of ethically positive conduct and conduct toward other people as ethical subjects as well; it should therefore contain both axiological and deontic norms".²²³

On the basis of the reconstructed line of reasoning, according to which "empirical theories may be [...] constructed in two ways, from above or from below, deductively or inductively",²²⁴ Czeżowski advances the conclusion central to his analyses: "I regard ethics as an empirical science, for empirical propositions include primary evaluations as

²¹⁷ Czeżowski, "O metodzie opisu analitycznego", 138.

²¹⁸ Czeżowski, "Dwojakie normy", 149–150.

²¹⁹ Czeżowski, "Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne", 137, 139–140.

²²⁰ Ibidem, 138–140; Czeżowski, "Dwojakie normy", 149–150; Czeżowski, "O metodzie opisu analitycznego", 138.

²²¹ Czeżowski, "Aksjologiczne i deontyczne normy moralne", 133.

²²² Ibidem.

²²³ Ibidem, 135.

²²⁴ Czeżowski, "Dwojakie normy", 149.

its premises, together with the generalizations and teleological norms derived from them".²²⁵

Conclusion and Final Remarks

Within the framework of his original, logic-based approach to the philosophical theory of value, Tadeusz Czeżowski accomplished a unique synthesis of Brentanian motifs, axiological realism, and the medieval doctrine of transcendentals as revised by himself. This enabled him to develop a coherent anti-naturalistic position while at the same time preserving the ontological minimalism characteristic of the programme of the Lvov–Warsaw School. The principal findings of the present article may be summarized as follows:

- (1) Czeżowski demonstrated that values are not real properties of objects (predicates), but rather their modes of being (*modi entis*). At the formal level, this is expressed through a two-layered structure of predication: from the relational value-generating functor ($a R p$) in the case of relative goods, to the one-argument modal operator ($V(p)$) in the case of autotelic goods, that is, goods in which the object remains identical with the value-parameter.
- (2) By interpreting values as modal transcendentals, Czeżowski succeeded in identifying truth-makers for axiological propositions while avoiding ontological inflation. Moreover, by applying Brentano's idiogenetic theory of judgment, he justified the reducibility of evaluations to existential judgments (including intentional judgments), which enabled him to extend his analysis to fictional and ideal entities as well.
- (3) Czeżowski's fundamental achievement consists in his programme of rendering axiology scientific through an appeal to the concept of extrasensory (intuitive) experience. The legitimization of axiological intuition as a source of synthetic knowledge allows

²²⁵ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Konflikty w etyce" ("Conflicts in Ethics"), in: Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Filozofia na rozdrożu (Analizy metodologiczne)* (*Philosophy at the Crossroads (Methodological Analyses)*), 116. Czeżowski's project of empirical ethics is subjected to a detailed analysis by his former student, and my mentor, Prof. Ryszard Wiśniewski, among others in the article "O możliwościach recepcji etyki empirycznej Tadeusza Czeżowskiego" ("On the Possibilities of the Reception of Tadeusz Czeżowski's Empirical Ethics"), *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici* 234 (1991), *Filozofia XIII – Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne* (*Philosophy XIII – Humanities and Social Sciences*), 7–21.

- Czeżowski to regard ethics as an empirical science, constructed inductively and proceeding from primary particular evaluations.
- (4) The ethical system founded upon this conception of axiology integrates axiological (teleological) norms and deontic (formal) norms. Such an approach makes possible a comprehensive account of the phenomenon of morality, combining the pursuit of objective moral goods with the *a priori* obligation to observe the moral norms that presuppose those goods and lead to their realization.

In conclusion, Czeżowski's meta-axiology – referred to as axiologies (*aksjologika*) – constitutes a methodologically rigorous alternative both to axiological irrationalism and to reductionist metaethical naturalism. His proposal to conceive of values as transcendental modifications of being remains one of the most significant – and still insufficiently explored – projects in the history of Polish analytic thought.

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Summary

The article reconstructs and analyses the meta-axiology of Tadeusz H. Czeżowski as an original philosophical project situated at the intersection of logic, ontology, epistemology, and ethics. It argues that by combining Brentanian inspirations, axiological realism, and a reinterpreted doctrine of transcenden-

tals, Czeżowski developed a coherent theory of value consistent with the methodological assumptions of the Lvov–Warsaw School. The paper discusses Czeżowski’s formal theory of value, grounded in the concept of the value-generating relation, and examines its connection with the metaphysical status of values as *modi entis* and with the problem of the truth of axiological propositions. It also presents the epistemological foundations of Czeżowski’s axiology, associated with the concept of axiological experience and the notion of value intuition, as well as the programme of ethics as an empirical science founded upon them. The analyses lead to the conclusion that Czeżowski’s meta-axiology constitutes a consistent form of anti-naturalistic realism, avoiding both ontological inflation and the reduction of values to empirical facts. His conception of values as transcendental modifications of being remains one of the most original achievements of twentieth-century Polish analytic philosophy.

Keywords: Tadeusz Czeżowski, Henryk Elzenberg, meta-axiology, axiologics, theory of value, transcendentals, *modi entis*, axiological realism, anti-naturalism, axiological experience, empirical ethics, Lvov–Warsaw School



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Logico-ontological remarks on Henryk Elzenberg's theory of value

1. The concept of value

An object is valuable or, in other words, has a certain value if and only if it is as it should be. This conviction, repeatedly expressed, discussed and analyzed by Henryk Elzenberg,¹ raises many questions. The purpose of this article, however, will not be to reconstruct his views. Instead, Elzenberg's remarks will inspire independent and autonomous research into the logical and ontological aspects of the concept of value.

The formula quoted at the beginning raises a number of questions. First, about the logical status of this formula. Is it a definitional formula or an axiomatic formula? In other words, is this formula a definition of value, or is it an expression of some intuitively obvious, characterization of what value is or that a certain object is valuable? If we consider that it is a definitional formula, then we can further ask whether it is a nominal definition or a real definition of value. Thus, does it answer the question 'What does the word value mean?' or 'What does it mean that a certain

¹ See Henryk Elzenberg, "Konstrukcja pojęcia wartości", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma Aksjologiczne*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2002, 71–95.

object is valuable?' or does it answer the question 'What is value?' or 'What does it consist in that a certain object is valuable?'. It is of course possible that this formula, is both a nominal definition of the word 'value' and a real definition of value. However, interpreted as a nominal definition, it certainly does not constitute a reporting definition of the term 'value' found in everyday language. We think that this formula should be interpreted as a real definition of value, or of a particular type of value – perfect value, and as a nominal design definition of the term 'value' by which we mean perfect value. Let us now consider a certain paraphrase of the formula in question.

(1) An object is valuable if and only if it is as it should be.

Many comments by Elzenberg himself indicate that this should be understood as follows:

(2) An object is valuable if and only if it is such-and-such, and at the same time such-and-such should be.

Here, however, further problems arise. First, it is necessary to clarify what kind of object is what is being defined. Is one defining here a certain quality of being valuable or having value, or a certain state of affairs consisting in the fact that a certain object is valuable? This is because it determines whether value is recognized as a quality of something or even a feature of something, or as a certain state of affairs that may or may not occur. Secondly, it needs to be further clarified what it is that the object is such-and-such. Is it that the object has a certain feature, or that it is related to other objects through certain relations, or that something happens to it, or more generally, that it is the subject of a certain state of affairs that occurs? According to Elzenberg, the fact that object *a* is such and such is that the object has a certain feature *C*. Therefore, formula (2) could be interpreted as

(3) *a* is valuable if and only if *a* should be *C*, and at the same time *a* is *C*.²

As Elzenberg writes, "the word 'valuable' means 'such as it should be', 'having such a property as it should have'. This property, in turn, is something different from value itself". Moreover, some of Elzenberg's remarks suggest that value as what is defined in this formula is a certain state of affairs. Thus, in such a view, the value of an object is not any of its features, but a certain state of affairs that pertains to that object. The

² Elzenberg, "Konstrukcja pojęcia wartości", 92.

expression ' a is valuable' standing on the left side of the definitional equivalence thus represents the object being defined, i.e. the value of object a itself, which is a certain state of affairs.³ On the right side, on the other hand, we have an expression characterizing this very state of affairs. Formula (3) is thus an explicit definition. However, further difficulties arise. The logical difficulty is related to the question of what role the letter C appearing in formula (3) plays. Is it a constant, denoting a certain specific feature, or a feature being the value of a certain function for the argument which is the object a , or a variable running over the class of all features? If the letter C were interpreted as a constant, this would lead to consequences that are difficult to accept. The letter C would then stand for a certain fixed feature. Under this assumption, every valuable object would have to have this feature. If the letter C were interpreted as a feature being the value of some function for an argument which is object a , the consequences of this would be equally difficult to accept. Then, for an arbitrarily determined object a , we would have exactly one such feature C that an object that does not have this feature is not valuable. Thus, we claim that C should be treated as a variable. But then the left-hand side of the definitional equivalence (3) should be preceded by some quantifier that binds this variable, such as an existential quantifier. Formula (3) would then take the form of

(4) a is valuable if and only if, for some C , a should be C and a is C .

However, as Elzenberg notes, it may be that for some fixed object a_0 and for some fixed features C_1 and C_2 ,

(5) a_0 should be C_1 and a_0 is C_1 ,

(6) a_0 should be C_2 and a_0 is not C_2 .⁴

According to formula (4), the object a_0 is valuable. However, probably not completely and in all respects. Elzenberg therefore proposes a distinction between the partial value of an object and the excellent value of an object.⁵ Accordingly, it can be assumed that

(7) a is partially valuable if and only if, for some C , a should be C and a is C .

³ As Elzenberg writes, "the value of an object is only this fact – the fact that it feature c possesses [...] Value, then, is not a feature [...], but is the possession of a certain feature [...]" (ibidem, 92).

⁴ Ibidem, 94.

⁵ Ibidem.

and that

(8) **a** is excellent valuable if and only if, for any C, if **a** should be C then **a** is C.

Another difficulty is an ontological difficulty. Well, in formula (3) and in formulae (7) and (8) we have expressions that refer to objects belonging to three different ontological categories. This is because on the left side of equivalence we have a state of affairs, while on the right side of equivalence we have an object and a feature. Moreover, the quantifiers used on the right side of equivalence bind the variables running over features. This is quite a rich ontology, with which second-order logic is involved. Let us try, then, to simplify it a bit, while departing from Elzenberg's assumptions. The idea is to refer only to objects and states of affairs and to modalities. The notion introduced by Eugenia Ginsberg – Blaustein of a certain object being the subject of a certain state of affairs proves to be helpful here.⁶ Thus, the fact that an object is such and such will not be understood to mean that it possesses a certain feature, but that it is the subject of a certain state of affairs that obtains. In particular, it may be that the object possesses a certain feature, but also that the object is related to other objects through certain relations, and that something happens to it, for example, it changes in some respect. Thus, the basic ontological categories will be: the category of individuals, which we will call, objects, the category of states of affairs, and the category of modalities *de dicto*, such as *should be so that...*, or *... is the subject of that...* Thus, the logic we will use will be multimodal propositional logic with quantifiers binding propositional variables.⁷ Therefore, the subject of our consideration will be contexts such as object **a** is the subject of state of affairs B. The letter **a** stands for an arbitrarily fixed object, while the letter B stands for an arbitrarily fixed state of affairs. Let's adopt some informal notation here. For an arbitrarily fixed object **a** and an arbitrarily fixed state of affairs B, the lettering **aB** will mean that **a** is the subject of B. The letters P, Q, R ... will denote arbitrarily fixed propositional variables running over states of affairs. In turn, the symbols ~,

⁶ Eugenia Ginsberg, "On the Concepts of Existential Dependence and Independence", in: *Parts and Moments*, ed. Barry Smith (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 1982), 265–287. (Originally published in polish: Eugenia z Ginsbergów Blausteinowa, "W sprawie pojęć samoistości i niesamoistości", in: *Księga Pamiątkowa Polskiego Towarzystwa Filozoficznego we Lwowie, 12.II.1904–12. II.1929* (Lwów, 1931).

⁷ An outline of this logic will be presented in the final section of the article.

$\neg$, $\rightarrow$ and $\equiv$ will be used as symbols of negation, conjunction, material implication and material equivalence, respectively, while the symbols $\forall$ and $\exists$ will stand for quantifiers binding propositional variables, universal and existential, respectively. The inscription $*A$, on the other hand, will read: it should be the case that A . We will also use parentheses as auxiliary symbols.

Thus, we can give the formula (7) the form

(9) a is partially valuable if and only if, $(\exists P)(*P \wedge aP \wedge P)$.

On the other hand, we can give the formula (8) the form

(10) a is excellent valuable if and only if, $(\forall P)(*P \wedge aP \rightarrow P)$.

Formula (9) says that an object a is partially valuable if and only if a certain state of affairs, of which object a is the subject, obtains and should obtain. In other words an object is valuable exactly when something happens to it that should happen. We can say that this state of affairs, while occurring, gives a certain value to object a , which is its subject. In turn, formula (10) says that object a is excellent valuable if and only if every state of affairs, the subject of which is object a and which should obtain, obtains. It can be said that all these states of affairs, occurring, give excellent value to object a , which is their subject. Of course, what is partially valuable need not be excellent valuable at all. The formula

(11) $(\forall P)(*P \wedge aP \rightarrow P)$

does not follow from the formula

(12) $(\exists P)(*P \wedge aP \wedge P)$.

But is what is excellent valuable also partially valuable? Not necessarily. Well, formula (12) does not follow from formula (11). Instead, it follows from formula (11) and an additional assumption, namely formula

(13) $(\exists P)(*P \wedge aP)$.

According to formula (13), every object is the subject of at least one such state of affairs that should obtain. This is a very strong, albeit somewhat persuasive, because optimistic, assumption. It says that every object is affected by something that should be. So every object is at least potentially valuable. Being an object entails a certain, if only purely ontological, possibility of being valuable.

If, on the other hand, we reject this assumption then we allow the existence of objects that are not affected by anything that should be. We will call such objects ought-free objects. We will say that

(14) a is ought-free if and only if $\sim(\exists P)(*P \wedge aP)$.

The right side of formula (14) is in turn equivalent to formula

(15) $(\forall P)(*P \rightarrow \sim aP)$.

Let us now note that an object that is free of ought is excellent valuable. Indeed, formula (11) follows from formula (15).

2. Values, ought and existence

The notion of value is related to two other important notions, namely, the notion of existence and the notion of ought. In what follows, when we write that an object is valuable, we mean that it is partially valuable. The following questions therefore arise here:

- (a) Does every valuable object exist?
- (b) Should every valuable object exist?
- (c) Is every object that should exist valuable?
- (d) Is every object that should exist and does exist valuable?

In order to answer question (a), one must first somehow determine when an established object exists. In the logical notation used here, one could say that object a exists, symbolically Exa , if and only if a certain state of affairs whose subject is object a , obtains. This is reflected in the formula

(16) Exa if and only if $(\exists P)(aP \wedge P)$.

Thus, if object a is valuable then, by the same token, this object exists. The right side of formula (16), that is, formula

(17) $(\exists P)(aP \wedge P)$,

follows from formula (12). However, it is not the case in general that every object that is perfectly valuable exists. For this to be the case, one would have to, as an additional assumption, take formula (13) discussed earlier again.

The answer to question (b), on the other hand, will be in the negative. Not every valuable object is an object that should exist. As Elzenberg writes, "One must suppose that by sheer numerical multiplication of valuable objects the world is approaching perfection. But we soon come

to sober up when this "accumulation" becomes such that out of despair we are ready to ask the first better Huns to deign to clean it up".⁸ That object *a* should exist is reflected in the formula

$$(18) *(\exists P)(aP \wedge P).$$

However, formula (18) does not follow from formula (12). For it to do so, two additional assumptions would have to be made. First, that if the state of affairs *A* logically implies the state of affairs *B*, then the ought of the state of affairs *A* logically implies the ought of the state of affairs *B*. And second, that from the fact that object *a* is valuable, it follows that object *a* should be valuable. Both of these assumptions, especially the second one, are at least debatable.

Similarly, the answer to question (c) will be in the negative. Formula (12) also does not follow from formula (18).

The answer to question (d), on the other hand, is more complex. If one were to make an additional and quite intuitive assumption, namely that every object is the subject of a state of affairs consisting in the fact that this object itself exists, then of course every object that should exist and does exist would be a valuable object. Indeed, the above assumption is expressed by the formula

$$(19) a(\exists P)(aP \wedge P).$$

Well, formula (12) saying that object *a* is valuable follows logically from formulas (17), (18) and (19).

3. Value and the world

The question of whether the world is valuable, that is, whether the world has any value has been asked since time immemorial. But, to answer this question, one must first determine what the world is. We claim here that the world is a universal object, that is, one that is the subject of every state of affairs. For everything that occurs, or can occur, occurs in the world, and everything that happens, or can happen, concerns the world. Therefore, if object *a* is the world, then *a* is the subject of every state of affairs. Therefore,

$$(20) a \text{ is the world if and only if } (\forall P)(aP).$$

⁸ See Elzenberg, "Konstrukcja pojęcia wartości", 87.

Of course, accepting formula (20) does not determine either that there is such an object **a** that is the world or that if an object is the world, then it is exactly one such object. Here we are entering the boggy ground of metaphysics. However, as a working hypothesis, let's assume that there is exactly one such object that is the world. Let us call this object **a**₀. Obviously, by virtue of formula (20), we have

$$(21) (\forall P)(\mathbf{a}_0 P).$$

If we assume that there is at least one such state of affairs that obtains and should be the case, that is

$$(22) (\exists P)(*P \wedge P),$$

which seems a fairly reasonable assumption, then we can conclude that the world is partially valuable. This is because from formulas (21) and (22) follows the formula

$$(23) (\exists P)(\mathbf{a}_0 P \wedge *P \wedge P).$$

However, the world is not perfectly valuable. In order to recognize the formula

$$(24) (\forall P)(*P \wedge \mathbf{a}_0 P \rightarrow P),$$

one would have to assume that

$$(25) (\forall P)(*P \rightarrow P),$$

i.e., that everything that should be the case occurs. However, this does not seem reasonable.

4. Intrinsic values

A slightly different concept of value than the concept of perfect value analyzed by Elzenberg is that of intrinsic value. It can be said that an object is intrinsically valuable exactly when it must be as it should be. In other words,

(26) An object is intrinsically valuable if and only if it must be such-and-such, and at the same time such-and-such should be.

In order to express this more precisely, we need to introduce a new concept here, namely *the concept of a state of affairs that is necessary for a certain specified object*.

Assume that for an arbitrarily fixed object **a** and an arbitrarily fixed state of affairs **B**, the lettering **a!B** will mean that **B** is a state of affairs, which is necessary for object **a**. Thus, we can give the formula (26) the form

(27) **a** is intrinsically valuable if and only if, $(\exists P)(*P \wedge aP \wedge a!P)$.

One can now ask: Does every intrinsically valuable object exist?

As we have previously established (in formula (16)) object **a** exists, symbolically Exa , if and only if a certain state of affairs whose subject is object **a**, obtains, symbolically $(\exists P)(aP \wedge P)$. Thus, object **a** can be intrinsically valuable and at the same time not exist. The right side of formula (16), that is, formula $(\exists P)(aP \wedge P)$ does not follow from the right side of formula (27), that is, formula

(28) $(\exists P)(*P \wedge aP \wedge a!P)$.

Hence it follows that an object can be intrinsically valuable and at the same time not valuable in Elzenberg's sense.

With the help of the concept of a state of affairs, which is necessary for a certain specified object, one can also define the concept of a real object. Real objects are contrasted here with fictional objects, virtual objects, etc. Of course, not every real object exists, while the question of whether every existing object is real is more complicated.⁹

In the logical notation used in this section, one could say that object **a** is a real object, symbolically Ra , if and only if every state of affairs which is necessary for object **a** obtains. This is reflected in the formula

(29) Ra if and only if $(\forall P)(a!P \rightarrow P)$.

It follows that, if an object is intrinsically valuable and at the same time is a real object, then it is valuable in the sense of Elzenberg and therefore exists. This is because the formula (12), which characterizes the concept of perfect value, follows logically from formula (28) and the right side of formula (29), that is, formula

(30) $(\forall P)(a!P \rightarrow P)$.

⁹ See, e.g. Tadeusz Czeżowski, *O metafizyce, jej kierunkach i zagadnieniach* (*On Metaphysics, its directions and problems*) (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1948), 77–78.

5. Good, evil and value

The concept of value, however, can be analyzed not only with the concept of what should be the case, but also with the concept of what is good when it is the case. The latter approach is closer to that of Tadeusz Czeżowski.¹⁰ According to this approach, the value of an object is understood as follows:

(31) An object is valuable if and only if it is such-and-such, and at the same time it's good when it is such-and-such.

Assume that we will read the inscription +A: it is good when A.

We can now reformulate the formula considered earlier that characterizes the concept of perfect value by giving it the form

(32) a is valuable if and only if, $(\exists P)(+P \wedge aP \wedge P)$.

The expressions '*it should be the case that A*' and '*it is good when A*' logically behave to some extent similarly, although they differ in some respects. For example, we can assume that if a certain state of affairs should be the case and a certain other state of affairs should also be the case, then the conjunction of these two states of affairs should also be the case, i.e.

(33) $(\forall P)(\forall Q) (*P \wedge *Q \rightarrow *(P \wedge Q))$.

Similarly, it can be assumed that if it is good when a certain state of affairs obtains and good when a certain other state of affairs obtains, then it is also good when the conjunction of these states of affairs obtains, i.e.

(34) $(\forall P)(\forall Q) (+P \wedge +Q \rightarrow +(P \wedge Q))$.

It seems reasonable to hypothesize that if anything should be the case then its negation should not be the case, i.e.

(35) $(\forall P)(*P \rightarrow \sim \sim P)$.

On the other hand, however, the fact that if it is good when something is the case, then it is not good when its negation is the case, i.e.

¹⁰ See, e.g. Tadeusz Czeżowski, "O przedmiocie aksjologii", in: *Pisma z etyki i teorii wartości* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo, 1989), 115–116.

$$(36) (\forall P)(+P \rightarrow \sim +\sim P),$$

is no longer so obvious.¹¹

Of course, it should be the case that everything that should be obtains, i.e.

$$(37) (\forall P)*(*P \rightarrow P).$$

On the other hand, it is good when any state of affairs obtains if and only if it is good when it obtains, i.e..

$$(38) (\forall P)(+P \equiv P).$$

More important, however, is the following point. Well, the concept of good is inseparable from the concept of bad. Therefore, in addition to expressions of the form *It's good when A*, we should also consider expressions of the form *It's bad when A*. With the help of the latter formulation, we can characterize another important axiological concept, namely the concept of counter-value, assuming that

(39) An object is counter-valuable if and only if it is such-and-such, and at the same time it's bad when it is such-and-such.

Assume that we will read the inscription $\neg A$: it is bad when A.

We can now reformulate the formula (39) that characterizes the concept of counter-value by giving it the form

$$(40) a \text{ is counter-valuable if and only if, } (\exists P)(\neg P \wedge aP \wedge P).$$

Here, however, some difficulties arise. Well, one would expect that if an object is valuable, then it is not counter-value. However, this is not the case on the grounds of the formulas cited above that characterize the concept of value and counter-value. Formula $(P)(+P \wedge aP \wedge P)$ does not logically imply formula $\sim(\exists P)(\neg P \wedge aP \wedge P)$. This will be the case even if we assume that if it is good when it is so-and-so, then it is not bad when it is so-and-so, i.e.

$$(41)(\forall P)(+P \rightarrow \sim \neg P).$$

To get rid of this difficulty, it is necessary to strengthen the concepts of value and counter-value by introducing the concepts of strict value and strict counter-value, respectively. Thus, we will say that an object

¹¹ From a logical point of view, if we consider formulae (33) and (34) to be logically valid and assume that if $(A \rightarrow B)$ is logically valid, then $(*A \rightarrow *B)$ and $(+A \rightarrow +B)$ are logically valid, then we should consider formulae $(\exists P)(\sim *P) \equiv (\forall P)(*P \rightarrow \sim \sim P)$ and $(\exists P)(\sim +P) \equiv (\forall P)(+P \rightarrow \sim +\sim P)$ to be logically valid.

is strictly valuable exactly when it is valuable and at the same time it is not counter-valuable, and that an object is strictly counter-value exactly when it is counter-value and at the same time it is not valuable.

Another way out of this situation would be to simply make the general assumption that no object that is valuable is also counter-valuable. Such an assumption, however, seems too far-fetched and too optimistic.

Finally, let's consider the logical relations that take place between the modalities behind expressions of the form *It should be that A*, *It's good when A* and *It's bad when A*.

It seems that if something should be the case, then it is bad when it is not the case, i.e.

$$(42) (\forall P)(*P \rightarrow \neg\neg P).$$

On the other hand, if it is bad when something is the case, then it should not be the case, i.e.

$$(43) (\forall P)(\neg P \rightarrow * \neg P).$$

In turn, from (42) and (43) follows the formula

$$(44) (\forall P)(\neg P \equiv * \neg P)$$

and the equivalent formula

$$(45) (\forall P)(*P \equiv \neg\neg P),$$

which says that any state of affairs should obtain if and only if it is bad, when it fails to obtain. Thus, the concepts of evil and ought are closely related logically. One could ask here whether the concepts of evil and ought are mutually definable. However, we believe that this is not the case and we interpret formulae (44) and (45) not as definitional formulae, but as axiological theses.

Of course, if it is bad when a certain state of affairs obtains, it is good when that state of affairs fails to obtain, i.e.

$$(46) (\forall P)(\neg P \rightarrow + \neg P),$$

but not conversely. On the other hand, if anything should be the case, it is good when it is the case, i.e.

$$(47) (\forall P)(*P \rightarrow +P),$$

but not conversely.

Note that formulae (45) and (46) logically imply formula (47) and formulae (45) and (47) logically imply formula (46). The formulae (46) and (47) are therefore equivalent on the grounds of formula (45).

Note also that formula (45) and formula (33) logically entail the following formula

$$(48) (\forall P)(\forall Q)(\neg P \wedge \neg Q \rightarrow \neg(P \vee Q)),$$

which states that if it is bad when a certain state of affairs obtains and bad when a certain other state of affairs obtains, then it is also bad when the disjunction of these states of affairs obtains. Moreover, formula (45) and formula (48) logically entail formula (33). The formulae (33) and (48) are therefore equivalent on the grounds of formula (45).

Let us note further, that formula (45) and formula (35) logically entail the formula

$$(49) (\forall P)(\neg P \rightarrow \sim\sim P),$$

which states that if it is bad when something is the case, then it is not bad when its negation is the case. Let us also note, that formula (45) and formula (49) logically entail formula (35). So, the formulae (35) and (49) are therefore equivalent on the grounds of formula (45).

Finally, let's note that formula (45) and formula (37) logically entail the formula

$$(50) (\forall P)(\neg(\neg P \wedge P)),$$

which states that it's bad when such a state of affairs obtains, which is bad when it obtains. Moreover, formula (45) and formula (50) logically entail formula (37). Therefore the formulae (37) and (50) are equivalent on the grounds of formula (45).

6. Logic

We will now give an outline of the logic we used in the earlier discussions. However, this will be only a purely logical framework. We will treat the formulae discussed earlier regarding value, ought, good, evil and existence as axiological or ontological theses and hypotheses.

Let us introduce a formal language for multimodal propositional logic with quantifiers binding propositional variables. The alphabet is given by

- (a) a denumerable set of propositional constants. We refer to these as $P_0, P_1, P_2, P_3, \dots$ etc.,
- (b) a denumerable set of propositional variables. We refer to these as $P_0, P_1, P_2, P_3, \dots$ etc.,

- (c) the symbols of logical connectives $\sim$, $\wedge$ and $\rightarrow$ for negation, conjunction and material implication respectively,
- (d) a denumerable set of one-placed modal operators. We refer to these as $a_0, a_1, a_2, a_3, \dots$ etc.,
- (e) the symbol of existential quantifier: $\exists$,
- (e) the auxiliary symbols (and) for parentheses.

The letters **P, Q, R...** are used as metalogical variables, to range over propositional constants, the letters *P, Q, R...* are used as metalogical variables, to range over propositional variables and the letters **a, b, c...** are used as metalogical variables, to range over modal operators.

We will call an expression any finite sequence of symbols belonging to the alphabet. The letters α and β will replace arbitrarily fixed expressions. An inscription of the form $\alpha\{s\}$ will be understood as an expression containing the symbol **s** as some of its elements. By $\alpha\{\beta/s\}$, on the other hand, we will understand an expression formed by replacing the symbol **s** in the expression α in all places with the expression β .

A set of well-formed formulae is the smallest set X such that:

- (F1) for any natural number i , P_i belongs to X ,
- (F2) if α belongs to X , then $\sim\alpha$ belongs to X ,
- (F3) if α belongs to X and β belongs to X , then $(\alpha\wedge\beta)$ and $(\alpha\rightarrow\beta)$ belong to X ,
- (F4) if $\alpha\{P\}$ belongs to X , and variable P does not occur in $\alpha\{P\}$, then $(\exists P)(\alpha\{P/P\})$ belongs to X ,
- (F5) if α belongs to X , then for any natural number k , $a_k\alpha$ belongs to X .

The letters **A, B, C...** are used as metalogical variables, to range over well-formed formulae. An inscription of the form $A\{s\}$ will be understood as a formula containing the symbol **s** as some of its elements. The well-formed formulae represent states of affairs.

Other symbols used in the paper are introduced by following definitions:

- (D1) $(A\vee B) = \sim(\sim A \wedge \sim B)$,
- (D2) $(A\equiv B) = (A\rightarrow B) \wedge (A\leftarrow B)$,
- (D3) $(\forall P)(\alpha\{P\}) = (\sim\exists P)(\sim\alpha\{P\})$.

Let us note that in well-formed formulae can occur only bound variables.

The set of theses is the smallest set Y containing:

(A0) all formulae that are substitutions of tautologies of propositional logic,

(A1) all formulae of the form $A\{B/P\} \rightarrow (\exists P)(A\{P/P\})$,

(due to (F4), variable P cannot appear in formula $A\{P\}$),

and at the same time such that

(R1) if formula $(A \rightarrow B)$ belongs to Y and formula A belongs to Y , then formula B also belongs to Y ,

(R2) if formula $(A\{P\} \rightarrow B)$ belongs to Y and furthermore formula B does not contain the constant P , then formula $((\exists P)(A\{P/P\}) \rightarrow B)$ also belongs to Y ,

(R3) if formula $(A \equiv B)$ belongs to Y , then any formula of the form $(aB \equiv aA)$ also belongs to Y .

By virtue of the definition introducing the general quantifier symbol $\forall$, each formula of the form $((\forall P)(A\{P/P\}) \rightarrow A\{B/P\})$ are a thesis. Moreover, if formula $(B \rightarrow A\{P\})$ is a thesis and formula B does not contain constant P , then formula $(B \rightarrow (\forall P)(A\{P/P\}))$ is also a thesis. In particular, if a formula of the form $A\{P\}$ is a theorem, then a formula of the form $(\forall P)(A\{P/P\})$ is also a theorem. (Due to (F4), the variable P cannot occur in $A\{P\}$.) Therefore, the set of theses is closed under the generalization rule.

It can be proven that the set of all theses is consistent. However, this is a technical matter that we will not discuss here.

Finally, let's draw attention to a few simple theorems illustrating some interesting aspects of the logic under consideration.

Theorem 1. Any formula of the form $(\exists P)(P)$ is a thesis.

Proof: By virtue of (A1), both the formula $P \rightarrow (\exists P)(P)$ and the formula $\sim P \rightarrow (\exists P)(P)$ are theses. Therefore also the formula $(P \vee \sim P) \rightarrow (P)(P)$ is a thesis and hence also the formula $(\exists P)(P)$ is a thesis.

The theorem can be read to say that by virtue of logic certain states of affairs obtain.

Theorem 2. There is a formula of the form $A(P)$ such that the formula $(\exists P)A(P/P)$ is a thesis and, at the same time, for any natural number i , the formula $A(P_i/P)$ is not a thesis.

Proof: By virtue of Theorem 1, any formula of the form $(\exists P)(P)$ is a thesis, while it can be shown that no propositional constant is a thesis.

Therefore, the set of all theses is not a constructive set.

Theorem 3. Any formula of the form $\sim(\forall P)(P)$ is a thesis.

Proof: Of course, both the formula $(\forall P)(P) \rightarrow P$ and the formula $(P)(P) \rightarrow \sim P$ is a thesis. Therefore, also the formula $(\forall P)(P) \rightarrow (P \wedge \sim P)$ is a thesis and hence also the formula $\sim(P)(P)$ is a thesis.

Therefore, by virtue of logic alone, not all states of affairs occur.

Another theorem follows directly from this theorem.

Theorem 4. Any formula of the form $(\exists P)(\sim P)$ is a thesis.

Therefore, by virtue of logic, certain states of affairs do not occur.

By virtue of the next theorem, a state of affairs that implies anything is exactly a state of affairs that does not occur.

Theorem 5. Any formula of the form $\sim A \equiv (\forall P)(A \rightarrow P)$ is a thesis.

Proof: Obviously, any formula of the form $\sim A \rightarrow (A \rightarrow P)$, assuming that the constant P doesn't occur in the formula A , is a thesis, and therefore any formula of the form $\sim A \rightarrow (\forall P)(A \rightarrow P)$ is also a thesis. On the other hand, any formula of the form $(P)(A \rightarrow P) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow (P \wedge \sim P))$ is a thesis and therefore any formula of the form $(\forall P)(A \rightarrow P) \equiv \sim A$ is also a thesis.

The last theorem, finally, says that a state of affairs that occurs is exactly the state of affairs that is implied by all states of affairs.

Theorem 6. Any formula of the form $A \equiv (\forall P)(P \rightarrow A)$ is a thesis.

Proof: Of course, any formula of the form $A \rightarrow (P \rightarrow A)$, assuming that the constant P does not occur in the formula A , is a thesis, and therefore any formula of the form $A \rightarrow (\forall P)(P \rightarrow A)$ is also a thesis. On the other hand, any formula of the form $(\forall P)(P \rightarrow A) \rightarrow ((P \vee \sim P) \rightarrow A)$ is a thesis and therefore any formula of the form $(\forall P)(P \rightarrow A) \equiv A$ is also a thesis.

One can also provide a semantic characterization of the logic in question using some version of the possible worlds semantics. Then introduce the concept of tautology and prove that any formula is a theorem if and only if it is a tautology. This allows you to use the method of counter-example. However, these are technical details that we will not discuss here.

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Summary

The subject of the paper are selected aspects of ontological structures of perfect values in reference to the analyzes and comments of Henryk Elzenberg. The definitions of various types of values and the ontological premises of such definitions are discussed. The subject of attention was also logical relations between different concepts of perfect value and introduced in the paper notion of intrinsic value. An important feature of the Elzenberg analysis of the perfect values is their strict connection with the states of affairs which should be the case. According to the author, at the level of logical analysis of this issue, however, it is necessary to move away from the subject-predicate structure of the state of affairs and to treat the content of the phrase '*should be the case*' as a modality that refers directly to the situation (or state of affairs) taken as an integral whole. However, this requires a more detailed characterization of the relationship that can occur between situations (or states of affairs), *ie.* something that can should be the case, and objects that can be subjects of these situations and, therefore, can be valuable. Also considered is the connection of the concept of value with not what should be the case, but to what is good when it is the case, which is closer to the approach of Tadeusz Czeżowski. A certain multimodal logical calculus with quantifiers binding propositional variables is used to analyze the issue at hand.

Keywords: ought, good, perfect value, partial value, excellent value, intrinsic value.

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem artykułu są wybrane aspekty ontologicznych struktur wartości perfekcyjnych w nawiązaniu do analiz i komentarzy Henryka Elzenberga. Omówiono definicje różnych typów wartości oraz ontologiczne przesłanki takich definicji. Przedmiotem uwagi były także relacje logiczne między różnymi pojęciami wartości perfekcyjnej oraz wprowadzonym w artykule pojęciem wartości wewnętrznej. Istotną cechą Elzenbergowskiej analizy wartości perfekcyjnych jest ich ściśle powiązanie ze stanami rzeczy, które powinny zachodzić. Zdaniem autora, na poziomie analizy logicznej tego zagadnienia konieczne jest jednak odejście od podmiotowo-orzecznikowej struktury stanu rzeczy i po-

traktowanie treści wyrażenia „powinno tak być, że” jako modalności odnoszącej się bezpośrednio do sytuacji (lub stanu rzeczy) ujętej jako integralna całość. Wymaga to jednak bardziej szczegółowej charakterystyki relacji, jaka może zachodzić pomiędzy sytuacjami (lub stanami rzeczy), tj. czymś, co może zachodzić, a przedmiotami, które mogą być podmiotami tych sytuacji, a zatem mogą być wartościowe. Rozważa się również związek pojęcia wartości nie z tym, co powinno być, ale z tym, co jest dobrze, gdy jest, co jest bliższe podejściu Tadeusza Czeżowskiego. Do analizy omawianego zagadnienia wykorzystywany jest pewien multimodalny rachunek logiczny z kwantyfikatorami wiążącymi zmienne zdaniowe.

Słowa kluczowe: powinność, dobro, wartość perfekcyjna, wartość częściowa, wartość doskonała, wartość wewnętrzna.

RUCH FILOZOFICZNY

**PART II:
METHODOLOGY OF ETHICS
AND NORMATIVE THEORY:
THE PROJECT
OF SCIENTIFIC ETHICS**

SOURCE TEXTS



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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Ethics as an empirical science

I. Individual primary judgements

It is a common view that whoever judges something to be good or beautiful is merely expressing their attitude towards it; in other words, that moral and aesthetic judgements are purely subjective, unlike perceptual beliefs, in which we grasp the objective existence of objects. Contrary to this view, one can point to a far-reaching parallel between perceptual beliefs and axiological judgements as cognitive processes – and, therefore, between the existence that is affirmed in perceptual beliefs,¹ and the good and the beautiful, which are affirmed in judgements: This parallelism supports the conclusion that, from an ontological point of view, the value of an object should be understood analogously to the existence of that object.

A perceptual belief is a belief in which the existence of a perceived object becomes established. The motive for a perceptual belief is the perceptual image of the object. However, not every perceptual image is connected with a perceptual belief, but only those that find themselves in the field of attention. Attention, as the cognitive attitude of the subject, is a necessary condition for the formation of a perceptual belief and, at the same time, a sufficient condition in the sense that a perceptual image that is within the field of attention acquires sufficient motivational force

¹ The author adheres to the so-called idiogenic (or, as others say, idiogenetic) theory of beliefs, which was advocated by Franz Brentano and which assumes that every belief is existential, i.e. it affirms or denies the existence of its object.

for a perceptual belief to arise. The mechanism of forming analytical beliefs based directly on concepts is similar to that of perceptual beliefs based on perceptual images. For example, the concept of a wheel becomes the motive for an analytical belief stating certain properties of a wheel when attention is directed to this concept as a cognitive attitude through which we become aware of the content of the concept. We then ascertain the existence of the properties contained in the conceptual content in the wheel.

Value judgements and aesthetic judgements arise, as one might suppose, in an analogous manner. Namely, the motive for making a judgement is always and only the presentation of the object being judged when the person making the judgement takes a specific evaluative, moral, or aesthetic stance towards the object. These stances, well known to moralists and aestheticians, are akin to attention as a cognitive stance; like attention, they are characterized by an intensification of their field at the expense of its narrowing. However, what distinguishes them from attention is their use of presentation as a motive for determining value, rather than for determining existence. This is precisely what distinguishes the content of an assessment from the content of a perceptual or analytical belief.

The assessments thus formed are individual, similar to perceptual or analytical beliefs, whose subject is taken in *suppositione formali*, i.e. in relation to the abstract object of the concept. They have either an empirical individual as their object, when the object of judgement is given imaginatively, or an abstract object of a general concept, as in the case where, based on an analysis of the concept of happiness, happiness is judged to be positively valuable. It should be noted here that we differentiate between the individual assessments referred to here and their generalizations discussed below.

Judgements, like all beliefs, are either affirmative or negative, and at the same time true or false. Namely, a judgement stating the value of an object is true only if the object is valuable: the judgement is false in the opposite case.

Turning to the next point in our comparison, we find that judgements are directly justified as perceptual beliefs, i.e. when determining the value of an object, we rely on the self-evident nature of the judgement, which – again, like a perceptual belief – cannot be proved; in other words, it cannot become the conclusion of deductive reasoning. However, judgement can be mistaken; mistaken judgements – like mistaken perceptual beliefs – are eliminated by verification, i.e. by repeating the same type of judgements in different conditions and comparing them

with each other. The ability to judge develops through practice, as does the ability to observe (in particular, for example, the ability to use a microscope or listen to murmurs in an internal examination). Gaining proficiency in judging makes it easier to eliminate erroneous judgements.²

In psychological considerations, judgements are usually linked to feelings, as they are part of aesthetic sensations and emotions. However, it would be incorrect to assume that these feelings are the motives for judgements. Judgements can be sufficiently explained by the assumption that the presentation of an object becomes the motive for judgement against the background of the judging attitude. Adopting this attitude presents the object in such a way that its representation acquires this motivational power. On the other hand, there is neither aesthetic preference nor feeling of value, i.e. emotion (such as joy, sadness, anger), without a more or less explicit judgement, so that judgement must be considered a precondition for pleasant or unpleasant preference or emotion. When it comes to aesthetic feelings, the presentation of the object of emotion together with an aesthetic evaluation is also a sufficient condition for aesthetic pleasure or displeasure. On the other hand, the arising of a feeling of value is additionally conditioned by the belief in the existence of the object of feeling (Meinong), which is not related in any way to the judgement of value, which may also arise in relation to a non-existent object. Therefore, the judgement is not conditioned by the feeling as the motive for its action, but on the contrary, both types of feelings associated with judgements, i.e. aesthetic feelings and feelings of value, are based on judgement – pleasure or displeasure arises against the background of making a judgement. The same is true in relation to perceptual and other beliefs; the formation of a belief entails the pleasure that characterizes so-called intellectual feelings. Thus, as far as the connection with the realm of feelings is concerned, there is no significant difference between judgements and perceptual beliefs.

Individual judgements – just like perceptual beliefs, can also be generalized in the same way as perceptual beliefs. This generalization leads to the establishment of evaluation criteria. Finding in a series of cases that the objects of judgement have a common feature is the basis for the generalization that every object possessing this common feature is subject to the same kind of judgement, i.e. it is good, bad, beautiful, tragic, sublime, etc. The criterion of judgement is always some empirical feature, while the value judged is not an empirical property of the object. Thus,

² Cf. H. Elzenberg, *Estetyka jako dyscyplina wartościująca*, „Pion” 1936, no. 10, Reprinted in: *Wartość i człowiek*, Toruń 1966.

for instance, we judge acts that bear the hallmarks of theft, fraud, etc. as bad, and acts that are prudent, creative, and self-sacrificing as good. The hallmarks of the first type are criteria of evil, while those of the second type are criteria of good. Similarly, beliefs that define criteria for existence in these generalizations are also generalized; for example, the empirical criterion of existence is stated in the sentence 'whatever can be perceived exists'; another sentence of the same type is the metaphysical principle 'whatever works exists'. In most cases, however, perceptual sentences are generalized in yet another way, leading to the statement of a relationship in the form 'if A exists, then B exists'. This form of generalization is also found in the field of judgement, where it forms the starting point for distinguishing between absolute and relative values. Generalizations here take the following form: 'if A is valuable, then B is valuable', with B usually remaining in relation to A as a means to an end or a part to a whole.

The above statements reveal a striking similarity between goodness and beauty, which are assessed in judgements, and existence, which is ascertained in beliefs. These are not terms that refer to objects or characteristics of objects. As regards existence, Hume and Kant had already stated clearly that an existing object does not differ in appearance from a non-existing object – the same applies to an object that we evaluate as good or bad, beautiful or ugly; the judgement adds nothing to its description. This, as is sometimes said, the 'meaninglessness' of judgements may be the source of the belief in their subjectivity, as well as in their connection with feelings. We do not represent existence, goodness, or beauty as characteristics of objects, but rather affirm them in beliefs or judgements. They belong to a group of concepts that were referred to in metaphysics as transcendentals, i.e. modifications of being that do not fit into any category because they cannot be determined by any category: adding them to determining characteristics or subtracting them from them has no effect on determination.

The terms good and beautiful are ambiguous. Good and beautiful have been juxtaposed with truth in the sense that they are the three most general goals to strive for. However, such a juxtaposition assumes different meanings for these terms; good is here a general term that covers all objects that we evaluate as good – beauty is, analogously, a term that covers beautiful objects; these are objects that meet the criteria of good and beauty – and, finally, truth is a general term for true beliefs. Anyone who proclaims that truth, goodness and beauty are the most general goals of striving is simply stating that these goals involve the unlimited multiplication of knowledge and the realisation of good and beautiful things to the greatest extent possible.

II. Ethical principles

The conclusions I intend to draw from the above analysis are an attempt to present the structure of ethical theories in a different light than is usually the case. By the term 'ethical theory' we mean a logically connected set of statements, including statements of duty or variously formulated ethical norms, or finally any other statements of a similar type; all of which boil down – with some additional stipulations – to general statements asserting that certain things are good or bad. For the purposes of further discussion, let us refer to general statements of this kind as ethical laws. Based on their conceptualization of ethical rights, ethical theories can be divided into two groups. Objectivist theories regard ethical rights as equivalents of objective good or evil, while subjectivist theories see them as a reflection of human desires and aspirations, whether individual or collective. Objectivist theories are simultaneously absolutist, while subjectivist theories are relativistic; the former defend the absoluteness of ethical laws, while the latter deny that there are any ethical laws that are absolutely valid, as all of them are conditioned in their validity by changing circumstances, either sociologically or psychologically. At the same time, absolutists consider ethical laws to be *a priori* statements. This situation seems similar to that which once prevailed in the natural sciences, when rationalist philosophers, led by Descartes and later Kant, defended the absoluteness of knowledge, seeking *a priori* principles as a guarantee of its certainty.

For the purposes of our discussion, we will divide ethical judgements of individual cases into two types: primary and secondary judgements. The judgements we discussed earlier are primary judgements. They arise from the very act of bringing the object of judgement to mind, if the subject takes the position of judging it. We therefore consider them to be subjective psychological reactions to the phenomena of the world around us, as direct as perceptual beliefs. Secondary assessments are the result of applying a previously established criterion in the case that is being assessed, and therefore occur in such a way that the case in question is subordinated to some ethical law. Primary judgements arise spontaneously, while secondary judgements are either the result of reflection or, in most cases, have become automated and are then applied stereotypically. The two must be distinguished from a direct, impulsive reaction to events, when there is no judgement, but only behaviour driven by blind (as they say) passions, fear, anger, lust, aggressive, or repulsive behaviour.

Primary judgements are subject (as already mentioned) to generalization, thanks to which evaluation criteria are established. General statements in which ethical judgement criteria have been established are ethical laws. Like all generalizations, they are uncertain and changeable, i.e. a criterion established in a certain area of moral experience may prove insufficient in a broader context, when even cases of primary judgements cannot be subordinated to it. The second reason for the variability of ethical laws is that the meaning of the general terms used to formulate them is subject to change. The meaning of terms such as fidelity, courage, heroism, lying, betrayal, and deception is constantly changing as customs change, and as a result, the content of sentences containing ethical laws must be reformulated. Finally, changes in social relations also require the criteria for evaluation to be adapted to them, if these are not sufficiently diverse to embrace the ever-increasing richness of situations.

Ethical laws in this light become a variation of empirical hypothetical laws and, like all laws of this kind, can only be justified by reductive reasoning, which refers to primary judgements as premises. It is not a priori ethical laws, but empirical primary judgements that play the role of ethical assumptions. The moral laws engraved in human hearts, referred to by apriorists, take on in this interpretation a dispositional character, not for the cognition of general ethical laws, but for the making of individual judgements; the 'moral sense' is a disposition to make individual moral judgements, just as sight is a disposition to make individual perceptions of colours and shapes.

The discussions that took place on the subject of judgements could not lead to a conclusion because of the failure to distinguish between individual judgements of a primary nature and their generalizations defining the criteria of goodness; for either the intuitiveness of individual judgements was transferred to generalizations, demanding for them a certain obviousness that they did not really possess, or, on the contrary, the uncertainty and variability of generalizations was extended to the original individual judgements.

Once the distinction has been made, the question of whether a particular thing is objectively good or bad should be understood in the same way as the question of whether an object that we see as red is objectively red. An idealist and a realist will give different answers to this question, but the construction of a physical theory describing the world of colours does not depend on accepting one answer or the other, but on whether the empirical material of observations in a given field is appropriately selected and established for the construction of the theory. The same seems to apply to the construction of ethical theories. Such a theory will

be properly grounded regardless of how judgements are interpreted in epistemological or metaphysical terms, as long as these judgements provide sufficient material for making generalizations and testing them.

The same can be said about the question of the objectivity of judgements: do all people judge in the same way, regardless of the differences in the conditions in which judgements are made, and what factors influence the formation of judgements? If we ask a similar question, whether all people perceive objects in the same colours, the answer will certainly be negative; it suffices to cite the examples of colour blindness and jaundice. However, this does not prevent us from constructing a theory of the visual world, and it would not be an obstacle to the construction of ethical theories if it were found that judgements vary in different circumstances. At that point, it would suffice to introduce appropriate reservations into the theory in order to maintain its validity.

The prerequisite for constructing an ethical theory, therefore, is neither the assumption of objectivity nor the assumption of the absoluteness of judgements, but something else. The point is that judgements should be intersubjectively communicable and verifiable or, to put it more simply, that different researchers should be able to agree with each other on how they judge and whether their judgements are congruent. Undoubtedly, methods of evaluation are much less developed in this respect than methods of sensory perception. However, it seems that everyday experience in the field of assessment does not show such far-reaching differences compared to everyday experience in the field of sensory cognition as to predict any insurmountable difficulties in developing methods for determining and verifying ethical assessments that are sufficiently accurate for the purposes of theory building. In general, even people from very different cultures, when they relate to each other 'humanly', forgetting the struggles and differences of interest that divide them, are able to find a common language in their views on good and evil. Certain simple ethical principles are so enduring and widespread that they demonstrate the reliability of the judgements on which they are based, which is close to absolute certainty. When we make mistakes in our judgements, we can correct them. We are capable of developing ethical sensitivity, i.e. improving our ability to make judgements. The verification of judgements is carried out in the same way as the verification of perceptual judgements, by repeating them several times in similar or modified conditions by the same or different people. In more complex cases, we are able to analyse judgements by breaking them down into their components and evaluating them separately. Finally, just as experience in the physical world is constantly enriched by observations

of phenomena that were once unknown or inaccessible, experience in the field of ethical judgements is also enriched by the fact that we make them in ever new conditions of life and human relations.

Perhaps an objection will arise here, directed usually against authors who attempt to formulate ethical laws by investigating people's beliefs about what is good. The objection criticizes these authors for confusing two different things: what people believe to be good and what is good; stating that the fact that something is believed to be good does not justify the claim that it is good. Therefore, to claim that primary judgements should serve as premises for constructing ethical laws is, as one might think, to refer to human opinions as the basis for justifying those laws. However, in our case, this objection is based on an obvious misunderstanding. Properly formulated, this objection is directed against reasoning in which a certain claim *P* is justified by referring to the fact that *P* is the substance of a belief that is more or less widespread among people. There is no logical relationship between the claim *P* and the claim '*P* is the content of someone's belief' that would allow the former to be justified by the latter. In this case, however, in order to justify *P* in the form of a general statement, we refer to individual judgements *p*, which are subalternate to *P*, and we assume as true, not that *p* is the content of someone's belief, but *p* directly, as in any case of justifying general laws.

We have assigned the property of truthfulness to judgements, and therefore they constitute knowledge. We have concluded that we make judgements about individual objects in the same way that we make judgements about individual objects in our perceptual beliefs; that they arise in the same way as perceptual beliefs and that, in the same way, they are directly justified and verifiable. It seems appropriate, therefore, to refer to the knowledge contained in judgements as empirical knowledge and to speak of axiological empiricism, just as one speaks of natural or psychological empiricism. At the same time, we are aware that this is a specific type of empiricism and that when we talk about axiological empiricism, we are extending the scope of the concept of empiricism beyond that accepted in the natural sciences and psychology. Generalizations of individual judgements yield hypothetical axiological laws, which must again be assigned an analogous cognitive value as generalizations of empirical sciences in general. Just as empirical scientific theories, based on the laws and hypotheses of these sciences, are constantly evolving, so too are ethical and aesthetic systems, based on the criteria of evaluation provided by axiological generalizations. In addition to individual evaluations and axiological laws, axiological theories – like all

others – include considerations of a definitional nature, leading to the establishment of the meanings of terms, distinctions, and analytical relationships. Thus, in this respect, an analogy can be drawn between the structure of theories based on evaluations and the structure of theories based on the results of natural observation.



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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Remarks on ethics as an empirical science

Prof. Ossowska's article "Main models of ethical 'systems'" (*Studia Filozoficzne*, 1959, no. 4, pp. 3–21) in the section entitled "A few remarks on induction in ethics" contains several lines (pp. 17–18) criticizing the views I presented in my lecture "Ethics as an empirical science" (*Kwartalnik Filozoficzny*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1949; reprinted in *Odczyty filozoficzne*, 1958, pp. 59–67). The author has no pleasure in being misunderstood, and since I believe that this has happened in this case, I would like to contribute to the clearing up of misunderstandings with the following explanations.

I refer to ethics as an empirical science because I believe that its subject matter consists of ethical facts established in ethical judgements. However, not every empirical science is inductive. Two main methods of research exist in empirical sciences: analytical and inductive (which can also be called experimental, as induction is usually based on experiment). The first is represented in the history of science by Galileo, the second by Bacon. The difference between them is that the analytical method formulates its general statements as so-called principles, axioms, or definitions, often using mathematical apparatus, while the second method formulates them as so-called inductive laws. Inductive laws explain the facts that fall under them and allow us to predict future facts of the same kind; the role of ethical principles, on the other hand, is not limited to explaining ethical facts or predicting that someone will judge and act in a certain way. Like the principles of mechanics, which idealize the phenomena of motion, ethical principles describe an idealized world of ethical facts, abstracting from its imperfections. Propositions obtained by analytical methods are, like inductive laws, tested against statements

about facts and corrected if necessary, but theories constructed by analytical methods always retain the character of deductive theories. To my mind, this is the nature of all ethical theories or systems when they start with some general principles and then derive normative guidelines from them.

I asked myself about the nature and justification of these fundamental principles. There are usually two answers to this question: the first is that these principles are definitive, self-evident assumptions, inherent in human nature, so to speak; the second is that they are conditioned by subjective emotional responses to various situations. Neither answer is satisfactory to me. The first suggests that ethical principles, with their authoritative nature, correspond to the equally authoritative assumptions of mathematics and mathematical natural science as understood in rationalist scientific theory; however, this theory had to give way to an empiricist theory, which understands mathematical sciences as hypothetical-deductive systems whose assumptions are explicit or implicit definitions and whose applicability to explaining facts is a separate issue that can only be resolved through empirical testing. It can be assumed that ethical systems that deduce their assertions from fundamental assumptions are analogous to hypothetical-deductive systems.

The explanation of the structure of these fundamental assumptions, if one refuses to accept them as absolute, is – as I mentioned above – sought in emotional reactions, and thus reaches into the field of psychology. I believe that here, too, certain reservations and distinctions are necessary, primarily with regard to the research method and its starting points. When talking about the method of psychology, a distinction is usually made between the introspective method and the objective method, with the introspective method being considered an outdated stage that must give way to the objective method. Both methods are used in experimental psychology and do not exhaust the tasks of psychological research, which is generally forgotten. Before proceeding to study the relationships that experimental psychology seeks to detect, it is necessary to analyse in their entirety the elements of mental life between which these relationships occur.¹ This work of conceptual demarcation

¹ Por. J.S. Mill, *System of Logic...* Book III, chapter 7. § 1, *Of Observation and Experiment*: „The mental analysis, however, must take place first... for the observer is not he who merely sees the thing which is before his eyes, but he who sees what parts that thing is composed of. To do this well is a rare talent. One person, from inattention, or attending only in the wrong place, overlooks half of what he sees; another sets down much more than he sees, confounding it with what

in the field of cognitive and emotional mental phenomena continued for many centuries, from Aristotle to Kant, and in the 19th century it was systematically pursued by Brentano and his successors in the form of what is known as descriptive or analytical psychology. It was carried out using analytical methods, developing conceptual distinctions to serve as a point of departure for experimental research, and modified as needed for that research. When the philosophical sciences, theory of cognition, logic, and ethics refer to psychological concepts, they primarily find them in descriptive psychology.

In ethics, this psychological concept is the concept of judgement related to the feelings of value distinguished by descriptive psychology. Analysis reveals a set of simpler components in them, including these judgements and elementary experiences of pleasure or pain. Value judgements are part of ethical principles, so anyone who sees the source of ethical principles in emotional reactions makes value judgements dependent on experiences of pleasure or pain. I believe that the opposite is true, namely that value judgements are a necessary condition for the emergence of emotional experiences, but they can arise without them. As I have tried to show in my lecture quoted above, the only sufficient condition for them is a specific attitude on the part of the person making the judgement.

I distinguish between primary and secondary judgements. Primary judgements arise, in my opinion, in the same way as elementary perceptual judgements. Both are based on a perceptual image in which an object with certain properties is given: in a perceptual judgement, the existence of an object is stated, while in a judgement, its value, and this is how they differ from perceptual judgements. Value, like existence, is not a property of an object, i.e. it does not belong to its representation; Aristotle and medieval metaphysicians already distinguished between the properties of objects and modifications of being, such as existence, necessity, possibility, and goodness: Hume and Kant were also familiar with this distinction. The sentence '*a* exists' has a structure different from the sentence '*a* shines'; it means 'for a certain *x*: *x* is identical to *a*'.²

he imagines, or with what he infers; another takes note of the *kind* of all the circumstances, but being inexpert in estimating their degree, leaves the quantity of each vague and uncertain; another sees indeed the whole, but makes such an awkward division of it into parts, throwing things into one mass which require to be separated, and separating others which might more conveniently be considered as one..."

² Cf. W. C. Kneale, *Is Existence a Predicate?* [in:] H. Feigl. W. Sellars, *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, New York 1949.

Similarly, the sentence '*a* is good' expands to 'it is good that *a* exists' (or 'it would be good if *a* existed'), i.e. 'it is good that for *a* certain *x*: *x* is *a*' and similarly for sentences about necessity and other modifications of being; it would be nonsense if someone wanted to expand in a similar way a sentence in which a feature is asserted, e.g. '*a* is square'.

I consider these primary judgements to be as intuitive as perceptual judgements. They are the point of departure for the definition of goods, i.e. objects that meet the criteria of goodness. Individual objects or events, judged in primary judgements as good, have certain characteristics that distinguish them from other objects or events: they are good because they are such and such. This such and such becomes a criterion of goodness through a generalization of the form: 'such and such things are good'; this generalization is used as an ethical (or, more generally, axiological) principle, leading deductively to norms and judgements that I call secondary: something is such and such, therefore it is good.

The considerations summarized above do not constitute the construction of an ethical system, but rather an attempt to analyse systems of normative ethics that establish certain fundamental ethical principles: it is, so to speak, a meta-ethical consideration. The study of ethical systems can be conducted (like any other empirical study) in two ways, as mentioned above, either by the analytical, Galilean method or by the Baconian method, whereby sometimes – as is the case in the so-called descriptive or historical sciences – research conducted according to the latter method stops at the purely descriptive stage, limiting itself to the description of individual examples or types and their classification, without seeking general dependencies to explicate the reality being described. I have used an analytical method in my considerations: my aim is to explain the structure of normative ethical systems, and I present this explanation in the form of statements that are not inductive: I believe that these statements outline the characteristics of any normative ethical system. It is therefore a complete misunderstanding when Prof. Ossowska writes, referring to the content of my arguments, "This programme of ethics, unsupported by any example that could serve as a sample and a foothold for discussion, raises the most far-reaching doubts, and it does not seem to be a coincidence that no one in the course of centuries of ethical inquiry has left behind such a construction, while there is no shortage of ethical systems built *more geometrico*".³ I am not presenting an ethics programme that is supported by examples, but

³ M. Ossowska, op. cit., p. 18.

rather analysing ethical systems, including those that are constructed *more geometrico*.

The author then compares the sentence 'a is good' with the sentence 'a is green' to conclude that the former can only mean 'a is what people consider to be good'. This comparison is flawed, as I have attempted to demonstrate by analysing the primary judgements. According to this analysis, the sentence 'a is good' means 'it is good that for *a* certain *x*: *x* is identical to *a*', and the sentence 'a is green' means 'for *a* certain *x*: *x* is *a* and *x* is green'; both sentences have different structures, because 'green' is a predicate, and 'good' is not a predicate, but a functor analogous to modal functors. The analogy between observational sentences and primary judgements, which I emphasize, consists (as I have tried to demonstrate) of something else.

Perhaps there is an error in my analyses; perhaps someone else will reject the methodological assumptions on which I base them; I do not pose my claims as dogmas. However, I believe that they can only be undermined by criticism based on their proper interpretation.⁴

⁴ I wrote more extensively about the analytical method in the chapters *On the Method of Analytical Description* and *Aristotle, Galileo, Bacon* in the book *Odczyty filozoficzne* [Philosophical Lectures], Toruń 1958, and about feelings of value in the book *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych* [The Main Principles of Philosophical Sciences], Wrocław 1959.



Henryk Elzenberg

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On the concepts of value and duty

Excerpt from the essay

The words *value* and *valuable* are used – as a more detailed examination reveals – in two completely different senses. In one of them, a “valuable object” is an object that corresponds to someone’s desires or needs, or more generally to “desires, needs, tendencies, aspirations, abilities” perhaps even “the conditions of existence and duration” of someone or something; this extended interpretation is the one we find in E. Goblot’s *Logic of Value Judgements*.¹ In the first instance, it is the value of the kind of correspondence between the nature of the thing being evaluated and the desires or needs of the moment (commonly referred to as “the ability to satisfy them”); in the second, it is the somewhat vague correspondence between the same nature and the equally vague “nature” of some other object. Thus, for example, power has value for an ambitious person, science for an engineer and for technology itself, food for every living being, but also “the right interval for someone with a trained musical ear” (Goblot’s example), and even – in the broadest interpretation – dry air for crystals that would disintegrate in the presence of moisture. Value in this sense is relative by definition; it is always a value for someone or something, and if it is for someone, it does not mean “in someone’s eyes”, “in someone’s belief”, but whether for someone or for something, it always indicates a certain adaptation, a certain usefulness.

¹ E. Goblot, *La logique de jugements des valeur*, Paris 1927.

If the term *utilitarian* could be freed from its hedonistic connotations, it would be the most convenient term for describing value understood in this way; in fact, it cannot be avoided. Other terms have been tried: for example, J. Laird, in his *Idea of Value*,² speaks of “elective” values, i.e., values “by choice”. Despite the various nuances that this concept can take on (Laird’s point of view, for example, is not entirely identical to that of Goblott), it is, after all, a concept on which it does not seem too difficult to reach agreement in principle.

This is not the case with the second meaning of the word *value*, which must be clearly distinguished from the first. Centuries ago, the author of *Letters to Lucilius* had this in mind when (LXXI, 33) he distinguished and contrasted two categories of “good” things: those that have *pretium* (are ‘valuable’) and those that have *dignitas* (“dignity”); adding that we do not attribute “dignity” to what is *necessarium* (‘necessary’) or *in diem utile* (“useful for the moment”). Have we managed, since Seneca’s time, to formulate this contrast more precisely? The words *perfection* or *nobility*, like the word *dignitas*, can only serve as a preliminary orientation, and it remains a matter of pure terminology when Laird, fearing the ambiguities inherent in the traditional term, attempts to speak of *excellence* – something like “illustriousness” – instead of “perfection”.

In Polish, perhaps the best way to describe this would be “szacowność” (“respectability”); however, the best purely technical term – emotionally neutral and unbiased – would probably be “perfect value”. However we express it, one thing is clear: judgements about perfection – whether dignity, respectability, or perfect value – are certainly not the same as judgements about utilitarian or elective value. When we speak, in general terms, of the “superiority” of someone or something – a dog over an earthworm, a human over a dog, a civilized human over an uncivilized one, “spirit” over “matter,” the eternal over the transient, the pleasure of reading a good poem over the pleasure of drinking a good cherry liqueur – we are employing precisely this ineffective, non-utilitarian concept.

And now we arrive at the following claim: perfect values are more important than utilitarian values, “More important” in at least two ways, which we will now explain.

First of all: perfect values are not, by definition, “relative” in the same sense that utilitarian values are relative. Are they relative in the second sense already mentioned above – i.e. that a thing can be valu-

² J. Laird, *The Idea of Value*, Cambridge 1929.

able, respectable, perfect, or noble only in someone's opinion or feeling, and may, without the possibility of resolving the dispute, not be so in someone else's opinion or feeling? That is already a problem. The author of these remarks, based on what are probably not entirely superficial arguments of others and his own, thinks that they are not. Their double absoluteness would constitute a certain primary advantage.

The second will take us further, and it consists in the fact that between the perfect value and that which is most authoritative *de iure* for human conduct, which we call "duty" or "obligation", a relationship exists that clearly does not exist between the latter concept and the concept of utilitarian value. A value based on the satisfaction of needs or desires will never in itself justify any duty: for needs and desires are sometimes contradictory, and if we accept that one should be satisfied, then the other, which is contrary to it, should not; that is, we cannot say, "it is necessary, so it should be". Judgements of perfect value, on the other hand, serve as a completely sufficient justification for judgements stating that "it should be so and so", that "it must be so".

A given ideal value, whether it can be realized or not, should in principle be realized. For now, this is only a theoretical obligation; however, if a conscious agent is found who is capable of actually realizing it, then for that agent (taking into account various real situational factors that complicate the matter) a concrete obligation arises, in time and place, to actually implement the desired state of affairs. Therefore, if we disregard the situational factors mentioned only in passing here, which are obviously very important in practice, human behaviour (*de iure*, of course) is entirely subject to the norms resulting from the fact that perfect values do exist and are binding. And this is also the main advantage of perfect values over elective ones; in the event of a conflict, they are not equal partners; perfect values prevail *de iure*. Therefore, anyone who has created or accepted the concept of perfect value will consider it disproportionately "higher" and "more significant" than elective value. One may even be inclined to reserve the honourable title of "value" exclusively for it. This is also the meaning of the word *value* in the title of this communication, and it will continue to be used in this sense whenever we use it without additional qualifiers.³

³ In the further part of the essay, I attempted to demonstrate that "valuable" can be analysed as meaning "such as it should be". But – among other less serious objections – in the same text I made the following argument: if one does not rely on the concept of value as primary, one cannot explain why things should be one way rather than another. Duty would fall "from the sky"; the imperative

“to be this or that” would be completely groundless. This prompted me to significantly modify the view I presented in this work and which I later held for a long time. It is not possible to describe the changes that have taken place here; my view has become much more complicated.

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Axiological and deontic moral norms

Textbooks and introductions to philosophy divide ethical norms into teleological and formal, with the division being based on the distinction between definitions of ethical conduct: according to the teleological norm, conduct is ethical if it seeks to achieve a moral good, which, for the perfectionist, is self-improvement, and for the eudaimonist, happiness, whereas, according to the formal norm, conduct is ethical if it conforms to a moral norm. This differentiation conceals yet another contrast: the teleological norm governs conduct directed towards its ends, i.e. towards states of affairs or objects which the conduct is, in keeping with the norm, intended to achieve. Thus, for example, in Socratic ethics and various ancient ethical systems descended from it, moral virtues are regarded as the ends of moral pursuit; whereas in the utilitarian system, the overarching norm indicates the goal of conduct as the promotion of well-being, understood as 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people'. Formal norms include: in Kant's ethics, the categorical imperative, which prescribes conduct whose principle could become a law binding on all people; in Christian ethics, the commandment to love one's neighbour; in Schopenhauer's ethics, the norm prescribing compassion for every sentient being; and in the ethics developed by Czesław Znamierowski, the norm of universal benevolence. None of the formal norms cited as examples specifies the goal of conduct, yet all of them link moral conduct to adherence to them. Furthermore, they all concern the relationship of the ethical agent to other people or even animals, as in the ethics of Buddha and Schopenhauer, so that this feature should be regarded as characteristic of formal norms.

Teleological norms are introduced depending on moral judgements that identify goods as the ends of moral conduct: the judgement that 'this and that is morally good' establishes the norm that 'this and that is precisely what one ought to choose as the end of one's conduct', with the additional proviso that, of the various ends, one must always choose the best. Teleological norms therefore define duty through the good; namely, the ethical duty is conduct that aims to maximize moral good. A formal norm, on the other hand, takes the concept of duty as primary, wherefrom it follows that by acting in accordance with duty as dictated by the norm, we accomplish moral good. In view of this difference between teleological and formal norms, we will call the former axiological and the latter (following Prichard and Ross) deontological¹.

Deontological norms fall into two categories. One type encompasses all those norms that contain the postulate of equal rights: everything that is due to me under certain conditions is also due to everyone else when they satisfy the same conditions; or, in other words: what I demand as a right for myself in certain circumstances, I grant to everyone else under the same circumstances. This postulate is contained in the norm of the categorical imperative, which refers to a universal law to which everyone should submit; it is also contained in the commandment to love one's neighbour, which demands that one treat every human being as one would treat oneself, and is likewise contained in the other deontic norms cited above. Let us designate these norms as egalitarian. On the opposite pole are norms that negate the egalitarian postulate, granting greater privileges to selected individuals or communities, to the detriment of others. We can refer to them collectively as elitist, distinguishing between individual elitism and group elitism, the latter focusing on the rights of one's own society or social group and placing them above the rights of other societies, groups, and outsiders, and even individual members of one's own group. Individual elitism is the elitism of Nietzsche's

¹ In the chapter "Conflicts in Ethics" from the book *Philosophy at a Crossroads* (Warsaw 1965, p. 126), I referred to the deontic norms as principles, given their a priori nature. I do not uphold this term in such a usage, reserving it to denote propositions obtained by generalizing elementary judgements, i.e. propositions defining criteria of the good, in accordance with the determination set out in the chapter "Ethics as an Empirical Science" of the book *Odczyty filozoficzne* [Philosophical Readings] (Toruń 1958, 63); I do so because these generalizations of elementary judgements become what are known as moral principles as components of moral character. They guide moral conduct, inclining one towards actions consistent with the criteria of the good, and restraining one from those that oppose these criteria (cf. *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych*, 3rd ed., Wrocław 1959, 215).

Übermensch or, in practical life, the selfishness of the social exploiter. Collective elitism governs the self-serving policies of states in international relations, but it also manifests itself as the self-interest of national, class, and professional groups in domestic politics. Group elitism implicitly underlies utilitarian ethics, which balances the general welfare even at the expense of individual members, if this contributes to the increase of the general welfare.

Alongside the egalitarian and elitist positions, a third possibility is theoretically conceivable, whereby one prioritizes the rights of others over one's own. This third postulate can be combined with either of the two previous ones, creating, in the case of egalitarianism, a sort of higher degree of self-sacrifice in favour of the rights of others, whilst otherwise maintaining the egalitarian postulate in the sense that under no circumstances should the rights of others be subordinated to one's own. As for the combination with the postulate of elitism, this third case takes the form of the subject's voluntary submission to an elite individual or group.

A comprehensive system of norms needs to define the set of goods that constitute the goals of ethically positive conduct, as well as behaviour towards other people as fellow ethical agents; it should therefore include both axiological and deontological norms. This is the case in Christian ethics, where, alongside the commandment to love one's neighbour as a deontic norm, other Gospel teachings contain axiological norms of conduct; the same is true of the ethical system devised by W. D. Ross². In various ethical systems where only one type of norm is explicit, the other type of norm is contained *implicite* within the overarching norm; thus, in ancient ethical systems of an axiological nature – virtues, particularly the virtue of justice – regulate interpersonal relations according to the principle of either egalitarianism (as in Stoicism) or elitism (as still found in Aristotle). In utilitarian ethics, the determination of whose rights prevail in the event of a conflict – the rights of the general public or the rights of this or that individual – is made according to the principle that priority is given to those rights which yield the greatest increase in the general welfare. In Kant's deontological ethics, however, axiological norms must be derived from the content of the principles falling under the categorical imperative; among these principles are, *inter alia*:³ to patiently endure

² Cf. S. Soldenhoff, *O intuicjonizmie etycznym – obowiązek i wartość w systemie W. D. Rossa* (Warszawa, 1969).

³ Based on the examples given in: *Uzasadnienie metafizyki moralności*, Biblioteka Klasyków Filozofii (Warszawa, 1953), 51 et seq.

adversity, keep promises, perfect one's own abilities, and assist others in misfortune.

In establishing moral norms, axiologists and deontologists alike have justified them from a psychological perspective, i.e. they have cited the motives that lead to their adoption, whilst generally neglecting to examine them from a logical perspective, either because they held the view that judgements and norms are not propositions in the logical, i.e. that they do not possess the logical values of truth and falsehood, or – if they were regarded as propositions in the logical sense – their logical nature could not be properly determined owing to the lack of a sufficiently developed logical analysis.

Axiological norms are reduced (as mentioned above) to moral judgements, amongst which, as elementary forms, one can distinguish individual judgements made in specific cases, such as in the biblical story of the Good Samaritan. Such elementary judgements arise in a manner analogous to perceptual judgements, provided that an evaluative attitude is adopted (corresponding to an attitude of attention during perception), and the sentences in which these judgements are formulated have a structure analogous to natural observational sentences; the distinction lies in the fact that observational sentences assert existence, whereas evaluative sentences (or, simply, judgements) assert the value of the object;⁴ value, like existence, belongs to the category of so-called *transcendentals*, i.e. predicates that do not determine the subject of the sentence, as they cannot be represented in images or concepts, but may only be stated in sentences. Such judgements, like observational sentences, are subject to verification through repetition; reasoning that occurs in this case is reasoning by analogy. They are also often generalized by induction in cases where elementary judgements recur, attributing value to things, properties, or events of the same kind. Thus, for example, if we positively evaluate acts of charity in a given set of observations from a moral standpoint, we obtain grounds for the generalization that charity is morally good. This generalization allows us to regard charity as one of the criteria of moral good, i.e., as a feature that qualifies all acts of charity as morally good. However, criteria of the good cannot be equated with the good (value); anyone who did so would commit an error, termed by E. G. Moore the naturalistic fallacy, because charity is a descriptive, i.e. natural, feature, whereas value, as a *transcendentale*, is not a descriptive feature.

⁴ Cf. "Ethics as empirical science", *Odczyty filozoficzne* (Toruń, 1958), 59 et seq.

Elementary judgements and their generalizations are therefore empirically justified, just like natural scientific observational statements, with the difference, however, that in this case the justification refers to a specific form of axiological empiricism. Axiological norms, defined by judgements, are likewise justified. Some axiologists view judgements as *a priori* and general, imposing themselves upon intuition, which detects them in individual cases. But they too must admit that axiological empiricism provides us with only elementary judgements, in which these *a priori* judgements are apprehended, and that only these elementary judgements can serve to verify such intuitive data; thus, this view differs from the one previously presented solely in terms of the origin of judgements, and does not concern their justification. The situation is different, however, with regard to deontic norms, which can be illustrated by the example of Kant's categorical imperative. Kant introduces it with the following statement: "Finally, there is an imperative which commands a certain conduct immediately, without having as its condition any other purpose to be attained by it. This imperative is categorical... This imperative may be called that of morality."⁵ This sentence contains a nominal definition ("we will call it") of morality by the categorical imperative; similarly: „All moral concern consist solely in respect for the law"⁶, i.e. "act according to a maxim which can likewise be valid as a universal law",⁷ namely one that could become a common law. The definitions of the primary terms of a deductive theory – and in ethics, the term 'morality' is such a term – constitute its axioms. By analogy, we shall call the proposition defining moral conduct through the categorical imperative, from which Kant deduces individual moral duties, an axiom of his ethics; by an axiom we mean the proposition that we accept as true in order to define a primary term of a theory or system (i.e. to give it meaning). This result generalizes into other cases of deontic norms, which in various systems are introduced by reference to variously understood intuitions that do not provide them with the empirical justification we have seen for axiological judgements and norms: all such deontic norms, from the point of view of logical analysis, are posited as axioms of an ethical system. Another particularly clear example can be found in Znamierowski:⁸ "The judgement of universal benevolence is called

⁵ *Uzasadnienie metafizyki...*, p. 43.

⁶ *Ibidem*, 69.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 69–70.

⁸ C. Znamierowski, *Rozważania wstępne do nauki o moralności i prawie* (Warszawa, 1964), 36.

a moral judgement. The sole source of this moral judgement is universal benevolence; this is what sharply and clearly distinguishes this judgement from others". Elaborating on the mental shortcuts contained in the above statement, we may rephrase it as follows: moral conduct is always and only conduct guided by universal benevolence. An ethical system based on this premise – despite the psychological terminology in which it is framed – is an axiomatic deontological system.

The two types of norms are therefore reflected in two types of normative ethical structures. Ethics based on axiological norms has a structure analogous to that of empirical theory. Its premises are elementary judgements, which through induction yield general laws providing criteria of the good; with their help, axiological norms are formulated: theft and murder are wrong, and so one ought not to steal or kill; helping the needy is a good thing, and thus one ought to do so. Deontic ethics, constructed axiomatically, has the structure of a hypothetical-deductive theory. As such, it provides an abstract model of the community in which it applies. The relationship between such an ethics and the empirical community to which it applies is analogous to the relationship between a legal system and the society in which that system applies, or – to seek further analogies – the relationship between a theory of physics *and* the domain of facts described by that theory. Such a theory is idealized; it describes facts approximately, allowing for deviations from the theory within certain limits; the same applies in the fields of legislation and ethics; the precepts of the law are broken, but if this occurs within limits that do not undermine the system, the law continues to apply; the same holds true in ethics. The fact that the norm still applies despite being breached raised the question of the nature of this binding force; a contradiction of the same kind was perceived here as that between a general proposition and a particular proposition subordinate to it; as is well known, Lotze introduced the term '*Geltung*' to distinguish the relationship between a norm and its application from the relationship of contradiction between a general and a particular proposition; the term '*Geltung*' corresponds in English to '*validity*' and in Polish terminology to '*walor*' or '*ważność*'; in the case of a contradiction between a true particular proposition and a general proposition, the latter becomes false; in the case of a contradiction between a norm and an act falling under it, the norm does not cease to apply, i.e. it retains its validity, that is, it continues to be applicable. The matter is, however, much simpler if the deontic system of norms is likened to a hypothetical-deductive axiomatic system. Within such a system, its propositions possess a truth that is relative to the system itself, referred to, following Kant's example, as formal truth.

The norms of deontic ethics preserve their formal truth within the system, even though, in cases where they are transgressed, they lose their material truth in the world of their application, known as the system's semantic model. The difference between these two types of truth, however, is a matter of syntactic category; that is, propositions belonging to the syntactic category of elementary propositions - i.e., propositions about individuals and facts - are materially true; general sentences, i.e. sentences about abstract objects - and this is precisely what sentences in axiomatic hypothetical-deductive systems are - belong to a different syntactic category, and their formal truth must, according to this, be distinguished from material truth.

The point of departure for the above considerations was the distinction between two types of ethical norms and the systems built upon them; the question these considerations sought to resolve was: what is their logical structure? Assuming that judgements and norms are propositions in the logical sense (which I sought to justify in the article "*Dual Norms*"⁹), it became apparent that axiological systems of norms have the structure of empirical theories, whilst deontic systems of norms have the structure of hypothetical-deductive theories. These considerations also sought to draw a clear distinction, on the one hand, between heuristics in the field of morality - that is, various methods of discovering and formulating moral norms - with reference to moral experience, self-evidence, and other psychological motives, and, on the other hand, the logical justification of the system, which in axiological systems refers to individual judgements as the primary premises, whilst in deontological systems it has axioms as the primary premises.

Moral norms and their systems vary across different communities; the morality of knights differed from that of merchants; the morality of a schoolboy convinced of it being acceptable to cheat in school meets with opposition from a teacher guided by a more refined moral code. Axiological norms evolve over time, and these changes are linked to development and the growing complexity of social relations; concepts of criteria for good and evil, such as courage, justice, betrayal, and lying, are subject to change depending on shifting circumstances, and this in turn influences the content of the norms that refer to these criteria. This variability is not always apparent, for there is a wide range of relatively fixed norms that unite people from different cultural circles - norms that are,

⁹ "Ethics" 1, 1966; reprinted in: *Odczyty filozoficzne*, 2nd ed. (Toruń, 1969).

in this sense, universal. Axiological systems are an inductive elaboration of the moral relations existing in the relevant communities.

In empirical theory, statements about empirically established facts are subordinate to principles – that is, to the general propositions of the theory in question – in a relationship of subordination. The principle states: ‘Every charitable act is good’, so my charitable act is also good; the conviction expressed in this sentence becomes a guide for me to perform this charitable act as a duty. When, however, someone refrains from performing such an act in certain circumstances, then – setting aside psychological complications, hesitations, lack of will, insincerity, etc. – they deny that mercy is a good thing in the given circumstances, and thus modify the principle by limitation.

The propositions of the hypothetical-deductive theory, which are justified axiomatically, are not, however, dependent on statements of fact in this way; they are linked to empirical reality, not through subalternation, but through interpretation. If an act considered moral in a given community falls under Kant’s concept of a moral act, then that community serves as a semantic model for Kantian ethics – otherwise, it is not such a model, or is so only approximately; yet Kant’s system, as a hypothetical-deductive theory, retains its formal validity.

Thus, the distinction between axiological and deontological moral norms is a special case of a very general distinction: theories constructed either from the bottom up – empirical – or from the top down – hypothetical-deductive. This distinction recurs in various forms across many fields of scientific research; it is useful to note that it also manifests itself in ethics.



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The structure of independent ethics

1. The concept of independent ethics emerged in European philosophy in connection with the development of freethinking movements, which primarily criticized three characteristics of religious ethics, i.e. that a) it is authoritarian, as it imposes ethical norms through commandments based on the authority of a divine legislator, b) it is confined to the community of followers of a given religion, and c) it covers a very wide range of social relations, encroaching upon the realm of politics and the private lives of the adherents. Independent ethics aims to free itself from the constraints in all three of these respects, that is, to replace the authoritative source of ethical norms with their rational justification, to formulate universal ethical norms applicable to all people regardless of religious differences, and finally to separate the realm of morality, governed by ethical norms, from the realm of law, customs, hygiene standards, and other areas governed by the precepts of religious ethics.

2. Alongside religious ethics, philosophical ethics emerged as early as antiquity, linking ethical norms to ideological premises. Contemporary ethics has emerged from the body of knowledge comprising philosophical systems and stands alongside other similarly distinct branches of philosophy, such as logic, psychology, and others, becoming a fully independent discipline; like any science, it is also bound by the duty to justify its claims and define its concepts.

3. Ethical theories have been built upon two fundamental concepts: the concept corresponding to the predicate 'good', from which the abstract

term 'goodness' is derived (just as 'beauty' is derived from 'beautiful'), and the concept of moral duty. Axiological ethics is based on the concept of goodness, whilst deontological ethics is based on the concept of duty; in the former, duty is defined by goodness, and in the latter, goodness by duty. Axiological ethics defines as obligatory conduct that aims to maximize good things, i.e. goods; in deontological ethics, conduct consistent with duty is morally good.

4. The point of departure for axiological ethics is axiological empiricism, which provides premises in the form of individual elementary judgements such as 'this or that is good'. Such judgements are analogous to perceptual judgements, differing from them in that they assert not the existence, but the value of the object being judged. These are generalized: the observation, across a series of cases, that objects receiving the same judgement share a common attribute forms the basis for the generalization that every object possessing this common attribute is subject to a judgement of the same kind, i.e. that it is good or that it is not good. This common feature becomes the criterion of goodness. Such a criterion is always some empirical property, whereas the value established in the judgement is not such a property (it belongs to the so-called modes of being *modi entis*, such as existence, necessity, possibility, etc.). Another type of generalization of elementary judgements consists of sentences along the lines of 'if A is valuable, then B is valuable', where B stands to A as means to an end or part to a whole; B is then good because of A; this is how relative and absolute goods are distinguished, i.e. those which are good not because of some other good, but solely because they fulfil the criterion of goodness.

5. Deontic ethics is often structured in a manner analogous to a hypothetical-deductive axiomatic system. Its fundamental proposition is an axiom defining a moral obligation. Unlike axiological ethics, it is linked to the empirical realm: it employs a method of analytical description, the generalizations of which are not inductive laws, but axiomatic definitions. In deontic ethics, this method serves to construct a model (referred to as abstract or ideal) of a moral community in which relations consistent with the model prevail and to which empirical communities more or less approximate; the transition from theory to empiricism occurs through the interpretation of theoretical propositions within a given empirical domain.

6. Axiological and deontological ethical systems differ, not only in structure, but also in the content of the norms they set out. Axiological ethics identifies goods as the goals of moral conduct; it therefore regulates behaviour directed towards objects or states of affairs that should be realized. Deontological ethics, by identifying duty, regulates interpersonal relations, since the concept of duty is a relative one; that is, a duty is an obligation towards someone whom the norm simultaneously entitles to receive the mandatory service. Deontological ethics is either egalitarian, if it grants equal rights to all, or elitist in the opposite case. A complete system of norms should encompass both deontological and axiological norms. In various ethical systems where only one type of norm is expressly mentioned, the norms of the other type are contained in them implicitly.

7. Ethical norms are verified by examining their applicability, which is hindered by conflicts arising when a norm is false. The norm states, 'one ought to do such and such'; if applying the norm leads to a conflict, then it is not true that one ought to act in that particular way. A conflict arises between a norm and an elementary judgement when the latter negatively evaluates the behaviour recommended by the norm in the given case; the norm must then be narrowed so as to exclude the given case from its scope. When two norms are in conflict, resolving the conflict requires limiting one or the other norm, so that the conflicting case falls under only one of the two norms. Particularly difficult to resolve are personal conflicts arising from competition in the pursuit of goods, where the claims of some competitors must yield to others. The only way to reach a just resolution is through a reasonable compromise, based on the egalitarian principle. Elitist ethics will not resolve the conflict; it will provoke a sense of injustice in the disadvantaged party and a reflex of objection, to which the privileged party will respond with the use of violence. Physical force, which is the antithesis of moral principles, will replace moral norms as a factor regulating interpersonal relations.

8. We arrive, in these considerations, at the scope of an independent ethics which would fulfil the postulates mentioned in point 1; it will derive its premises from axiological empiricism, delivering the criteria of the good as defined by generalizations of elementary judgements. As an axiomatic assumption, also based on empiricism, but derived by analytical methods, the principle of egalitarianism will be indispensable. This principle will lend independent ethics a universal character. The

separation of the field of ethics from other normative fields, meanwhile, will find its basis in the distinction between absolute and relative – that is, instrumental – goods. The standards of law, technology, and hygiene serve to ensure public order, prosperity, and health – that is, goods subordinated to the ideal of human life, however it may be defined, as the overriding goal. The actualization of this ideal is the task of ethical norms, which at the same time govern those other norms in the sense that the norms of law, technology, and hygiene cannot be incompatible with the norms of ethics. Thus understood, independent ethics is not static, but develops alongside the development of social relations, as the criteria of the good undergo change, constantly guided by an expanding axiological empiricism.

9. The independent ethics of Tadeusz Kotarbiński is a deontological ethics. The abstract model of a morally positive act is constructed within it on an empirical basis, using an analytical method and the concept of the 'reliable guardian': the moral value of the act depends on the extent to which the motives for the act derive from its defining characteristics. This ethics is an egalitarian ethics. The model of the reliable guardian is not an elitist model in any respect: a) it has no distinguishing privileges, b) the guardian's efforts apply universally, though they are directed primarily towards those in the immediate vicinity, c) guardianship is not an asymmetrical relationship; guardianship duties may therefore be mutual, as in a reciprocal friendship, obliging both to help in defending against evil and in striving for the good. What is good and what is evil is determined by empirical criteria of good and evil. The ethics thus combines deontological and axiological premises into a single framework amenable to multifaceted analysis.

10. What is required for the system of independent ethical norms to become a model for the global community? This will be facilitated by the spread of globalization and the associated cultural interdependence on an international scale, forming common ethical norms that only independent ethics can provide. A favourable circumstance is that various religions have developed ethical systems with content similar to one another and to what independent ethics might encompass. This common ethical heritage will ease the path to the consensus that independent ethics seeks to achieve.



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Fear and anxiety (a study in the classification of feelings)

The feelings we label as fear, terror, anxiety, and apprehension occur in two markedly different forms. The first is primal, more passive and causally determined, while the second is complex and more active – purpose-oriented.¹ Language distinguishes between them in such a way that verbs used to name the first form are used in the passive voice with a genitive complement (I am frightened by something), while the verbs ‘I am afraid’ and ‘I fear’, which express the second form of these feelings, are used in the reflexive form with an accusative complement or with a purpose clause (‘I am afraid of something’). ‘I am afraid’, which expresses the second form of these feelings, uses a pronominal form with an object in the accusative or with a purpose clause (‘I am afraid of something’, ‘I am afraid that...’).

The original form of the feeling we are interested in, which we will refer to in short as fear, arises under the influence of sudden and strong physical stimuli, which, in addition to visual, auditory, and tactile sensations, which are their proper stimuli, also cause certain systemic sensations related to disturbances in heart and respiratory function, weakness and trembling of the limbs, etc., as additional effects of these stimuli. Such stimuli include, for instance, a flash or crack of thunder, or a nearby blast of explosives, a sudden scream in one’s ear, a violent

¹ Translator’s note: the following grammatical explanation is true of the original Polish language here translated, but not of the English translation

blow or a movement-restricting grab, a fall, etc. Fear, like any feeling, is a complex experience that includes an intellectual (cognitive) element and an emotional element. The intellectual component is a set of sensory impressions, divisible into two groups: one consists of visual, auditory, tactile, and other impressions caused directly by the stimulus, the other consists of the bodily reactions mentioned above. The two together will be referred to as the psychological basis of fear. The emotional component is the unpleasantness that accompanies the psychological basis, coloured in a specific way by bodily sensations. In the psychological basis, the second group of sensations depends on the first (which is why some people, wanting to protect themselves from the fear of thunder, hide their heads under a pillow during a storm), and at the same time creates a necessary condition for the emergence of a feeling; where these bodily sensations are absent, there is no feeling: those who have, as they say, strong nerves, i.e. those who do not experience the said functional disturbances of internal organs, are not frightened by loud noises or other stimuli; whenever these bodily sensations occur, a feeling of fear arises even without external stimuli, as is the case with certain heart diseases or neuroses, and as happens with children and particularly sensitive people when they find themselves in the dark.

Feelings consisting of sensory impressions and the pleasure or discomfort arising from them are called sensory feelings and are classified as experiential feelings. These include, for example, the feeling of pain, which is based on the sensation of pain, the feeling of hunger or satiety, sexual feelings, disgust, anger, and others. Fear is also a sensory feeling, arising and passing along with a group of sensory impressions that constitute its essential component. A sensory feeling is not objectively directed, but has as its object an intentional experience that constitutes its psychological basis: for example, a pinch is a stimulus for the sensation of pain, and the feeling of pain, composed of that sensation and the accompanying discomfort, has as its object not the pinch itself, but the sensation of pain that is part of the feeling: it is the sensation that is unpleasant, not the pinch, because when there is no sensation of pain with the pinch, e.g. under anaesthesia, there is also no discomfort. Anyone who succumbs to fear in the dark is usually unable to answer the question of what they are afraid of; darkness is frightening in the sense that it causes fear, but it is the experience itself, not darkness, that is the object of fear, sometimes those who succumb to fear in the dark subsequently add objects to it in their imagination, such as ghosts, creatures, and spirits. A mentally ill person experiencing fear as a result of their illness similarly invents illusory suffering as the object of their fears. Also,

when fear is caused by the sound of an explosion or thunder, this stimulus is a contributing factor to the fear, but not its object, because it causes the feeling and then immediately passes and no longer exists when the fear continues. Nor is the expected next lightning strike during a storm the object of this feeling, because those who fear future events experience a different feeling – anxiety, which we will discuss further on.

Fear, like all sensory feelings, possesses a characteristic liveliness, insistence, or painfulness that is present in its actual experience, but disappears in memory. Just as pain experienced is acute, but when recalled no longer has this characteristic, so fear when recalled is completely different from the fear experienced; this difference does not exist, for example, in aesthetic feelings. Finally, fear is an instinctive reaction to an external stimulus, common to a wide range of humans and animals, leading to characteristic instinctive behaviour, i.e. a protective freeze or flight.

The second type of feeling we are interested in is different, and we use the term fear or anxiety to describe it. Fear has an external object, i.e. one that lies outside its psychological basis, and is therefore not a sensory feeling. It consists of new factors. One of them is representation, which makes the object of fear present. The second important component of the experience of fear is the belief that the object exists or may exist; hence, fear belongs to the category of beliefs. Moreover, the feeling of fear includes an evaluation that attributes evil, i.e. a negative value, to the object: fear is a feeling of value. Finally, it is a heteropathic feeling, as it is directed, not only towards the object, which is, say, the threat of death or suffering, loss or harm, but also towards the person who may be the perpetrator or harbinger of danger. Common to both fear and anxiety are their emotional quality and the aforementioned vividness or distress. Both moments have their source in a set of bodily sensations, which, in the case of fear, arise under the influence of a stimulus, and in the case of anxiety, are accompanied by a conviction that the object of the feeling exists, and by a negative assessment of that object. Another common feature of fear and anxiety is their guiding role in the behaviour of the subject of the feeling. Fear-driven behaviour is an immediate, instinctive reaction to a stimulus. Anxiety, on the other hand, which is a fully intellectualized, forward-looking, and anticipatory form of emotion, leads to conscious and deliberate behaviour, often calculated for the long term.

To summarise the above analysis, we can describe the structure of anxiety as follows: its psychological basis consists of two groups of experiences, as is the case with fear. The first group includes the presentation of the object of the feeling together with the conviction of the existence of that object (this may be, but does not have to be, a direct perception of

the object) and, as a specific element, a negative assessment of the object. This group (analogous to the group of visual impressions, etc., caused directly by an external stimulus in the case of experiential fear) is, when there exists an appropriate dispositional basis, a sufficient condition for the emergence of a group of bodily sensations, the second component of the psychological basis common to fear and anxiety, to which the unpleasant feelings that arise directly with them impart a characteristic colouring.

It is reasonable to assume that fear and anxiety are genetically linked, with fear being the primary emotion and anxiety its developed form. A form of fear that arises under the influence of a conditioned stimulus appears to be an intermediate form. In Watson's famous experiment, a child was shown a rabbit and then frightened by a sudden noise. After repeating this a few times, the child, who had previously enjoyed seeing the rabbit, began to show the same amount of fear at the sight of the rabbit as at the noise. The feeling has not yet transformed into an objective feeling in this case, so there is no basis to conclude that the child expected noise when it saw the rabbit: the sight of the rabbit, through simple association, not through the intellectual components that form the psychological basis of fear, triggered the other elements of the feeling, i.e. characteristic bodily sensations and distress.

For a feeling of fear to develop, it takes more than a simple association between the presentation of a conditioned stimulus and the response it triggers. Additional cognitive acts, beliefs, and evaluations must come between the presentation and the emotional response. It is not possible to trace the entire developmental process here: let us focus on just two moments. One is the generalization from the individual experience of a stimulus triggering an emotional response to a general representation of an object posing a threat. People who fear war, fire, or natural disasters are aware of the patterns that pose a threat, and this is one of the reasons for recognizing a given object (perceptual or otherwise) as something bad. The second moment is a generalization that goes in a different direction and is analogous to the phenomenon of sublimation of feelings, which is well known in the domain of emotions. Fear is directly related to stimuli of biological significance, threatening death or physical suffering, while anxiety arises not only in the face of danger threatening the body, but also as a fear of moral evil in the broad sense of the word. A child experiences fear under the influence of stimuli such as a raised voice, clapping hands, or an angry expression on their mother's face, but is then afraid of reprimands or bad grades at school. Humiliation, restriction of freedom, damage, and loss of all kinds of goods, and

everything that threatens them, becomes the object of fear, and thus its scope extends to the entire range of absolute and relative negative values. Whatever is judged negatively may arouse fear; fear, transforming into anxiety, develops at the same time into a feeling of value in the full sense of the word. It also becomes a heteropathic feeling, because the relationships between objects and phenomena, against the background of which fear transforms into anxiety, include the sphere of interpersonal relations. As a result, fear, which is directed at something bad that threatens or may threaten, is at the same time directed at the people on whom the infliction of harm may depend. These individuals are not the object of fear, even though we say 'I am afraid of John or Joseph' in the same way that we say 'I am afraid of disability'; for I am not afraid of John directly, but because of the harm he may cause or inflict, and the actual object of my fear is that harm itself. A heteropathic feeling connects the subject of the feeling, its object, and the person on whom the object depends in some way through a tripartite relationship.

What was said above about the contrast between fear and anxiety as two forms of emotion closely related in terms of similarity and origin can be applied to many other emotions that occur either as experiential emotions or as objective feelings of value. Sensual love and ideal love, not only in the sphere of interpersonal relations, but also encompassing all kinds of goods; the primitive joy of a sated savage and the joy of a full and rich inner life; childish sadness and the sadness of philosophical pessimism; blind rage in the struggle for the life of primitive man, and anger conscious of its object, driving just retribution; the disgust some people feel at touching a mouse or a beetle and the repulsion an honest person feels when forced to associate with criminals – these are examples of such pairs of opposing feelings. In each of the examples given, both parts of the pairing are bound by a common emotional quality that brings them together under a common name. This leads to the assumption that in the examples given, as in the case of fear and anxiety, the feeling of value arises as a secondary, developed form of the original experiential feeling. An additional argument for the similarity between experiential feelings and feelings of value is provided by the characteristic vividness, intensity, and affectivity of feelings of value, which bring them closer to experiential feelings, but are foreign to aesthetic feelings, and the guiding role that experiential feelings and feelings of value play in human behaviour – again joining them in their common opposition to aesthetic feelings.

The explanation for the aforementioned similarities between sensory feelings and feelings of value can be found in the statement that both

contain, in their psychological basis, a set of analogous bodily sensations, to which, in some cases, are directly added feelings of pleasure, and in others, feelings of discomfort. We are fully aware of the existence of these bodily sensations once we pay attention to them. We feel joy, sadness, admiration, love, hatred, and anger in our whole body, especially in our chest, where the lungs and heart are located: hence a number of expressions such as 'my heart is heavy' or 'light', and the old belief that the heart is the home of feelings. This state of affairs is highlighted by the James-Lange theories of feelings, which operate exclusively on observations in the field of sensory feelings and value feelings. These systemic impressions give feelings a specific colouring; they distinguish the unpleasantness of fear from the unpleasantness of anger or jealousy, the pleasure of joy from the pleasure of complete submission to admiration or respect. They make feelings of value as vivid and painful as feelings of sensation, and finally, they add to the feeling a drive that guides behaviour instinctively in the case of experiential feelings, and purposefully in the case of feelings of value.

Feelings of value differ from sensory feelings in that they are intellectualized and sublimated. The intellectualization of a feeling involves the development of its psychological basis; while the psychological basis of a sensory feeling consists of a set of sensory impressions without any distinct form; the psychological basis of a feeling of value includes the representation of the object of the feeling and the belief in the existence of that object. The intellectualization of a feeling of value makes it an objective feeling and, furthermore, provides a starting point for evaluating the object in terms of its value as good or bad. Judgement is a specific, indivisible element of mental life, similar in many respects to a belief. Just as a belief is an experience characteristic of a cognitive attitude, so a judgement is an experience characteristic of a practical or aesthetic attitude towards the external world. When viewed against the background of specific dispositions and with the appropriate mental attitude, the presentation of an object becomes a motive for the emergence of either a belief confirming its existence or a judgement confirming its value.

Attention is a cognitive mental attitude; in a state of attentiveness, perceptual images become a sufficient motive for the formation of perceptual beliefs, as do reproductive images for retrospective beliefs. A practical or an aesthetic mental attitude – there is no name for them in everyday language – makes the presentation of an object a sufficient motive for the assessment of its value. The belief in the existence of the presented object and the judgement of its value are independent of each other in the sense that each of them can occur regardless of the other: we

ascertain the existence of an object without taking its value into account, but we can also judge objects regardless of whether we have ascertained their existence.

Judgement, like belief, is of a dual nature: affirmative and negative. However, while belief affirms or negates the existence of an object, judgement affirms or negates its value. Like belief, judgement is either correct or erroneous. We determine the veracity of a judgement in the same way as we determine the veracity of a statement: a judgement is true only if it assesses a valuable object as valuable, or as worthless if it is not valuable; it is false in the opposite case. Value is not a feature of an object, it cannot be perceived by the senses, nor can it be represented in a representation, but it is determined in an evaluation – just as existence cannot be depicted in a representation, because it is not a feature of an object, but is established in a belief. Judgements are close to empirical beliefs in that they are, like the latter, individual and directly justified. The veracity of a judgement cannot be proved; it can only be verified – like an empirical belief – by repeating judgements under different conditions and comparing them with one another. Individual judgements are the starting point for generalizations analogous to scientific laws as generalizations of individual empirical beliefs. Generalized judgements state that things with certain characteristics are valuable; we call these characteristics criteria of value. The representation of an object, together with the belief regarding its existence and assessment of its value, takes the place of the stimulus that evokes the primary sensory feeling and arouses the other components of the feeling, i.e. bodily sensations accompanied by the emotional quality of pleasure or displeasure, whereby the statement of the existence of an object that we evaluate positively gives pleasure, while the statement of the existence of an object that we evaluate negatively gives displeasure. The roles of belief and evaluation are equivalent in that each is a necessary component of the feeling of value. The emotional quality will not appear either when there is no confirmation that the object of evaluation exists or when there is no evaluation of the object, even though we have confirmed its existence. The primary sensory feeling is exclusively biological in nature, as pleasure and displeasure are usually associated with the biological value of a stimulus. When the sensory feeling transforms into a feeling of value, judgement appears and the biological orientation ceases to be exclusive. 'Good' means something different from 'biologically useful', and the range of objects evaluated as good is not identical to the range of what is biologically useful, but as the subject matures, it expands to include more and more diverse objects. This shift within the range of valuable objects and the expansion of that range is called the

sublimation of the feeling of value: it is directly related to the introduction of judgement into the psychological basis of feeling.

The starting point for the above analysis was the classification of feelings taken from the Brentano school. This classification was based on two principles, and divided feelings first into those that are directed towards experience in their psychological basis, i.e. experiential, and secondly, those that are directed towards the object given in the representation underlying the feeling, i.e. objective. Objective feelings, in turn, are divided into aesthetic, or representational, in which the mere representation of the object, without asserting that it exists, is sufficient (while certain conditions are still met) for the feeling to arise, and into value or representational feelings, in which the psychological basis includes the assertion of the existence of the object of the feeling. The classification scheme is therefore as follows:

Feelings	
experiential	objective
aesthetic	value

In this scheme, experiential feelings and value feelings are separated from each other. Despite this, an analysis of fear and anxiety, the results of which can be extended to other pairs of experiential feelings and value feelings, shows, in my opinion, that they are genetically related and, moreover, similar to each other, especially in their active nature, which aesthetic feelings do not possess. This suggests another principle for the basic division of feelings, namely, their division into active and inactive or contemplative. This division is particularly clear among objective feelings, where value feelings are active and aesthetic feelings are contemplative. However, it can probably also be applied to experiential feelings: the feeling of a cat basking in the sun, the pleasure of a warm bath, or the pleasure of resting after a long walk would be such inactive experiential feelings. This results in a four-part division, which has the advantage of linking genetically related experiential feelings and value feelings in the group of active feelings, and it is possible that a similar genetic link could also be found among inactive feelings. Here is how it works:

Feelings			
active		inactive (contemplative)	
experiential	value	experiential	aesthetic

Fear and anxiety are, as has been said, motives for behaviour; they are powerful regulators of human conduct. But their role is not so overwhelming that they cannot be controlled by other, opposing motives. The path to controlling them leads through the development of an aesthetic character as the basis of fortitude. Ethical character, in turn, comprises two types of dispositions that are developed through upbringing and moral self-education: these include moral principles that indicate duties and a strong will as a disposition that inhibits motives contrary to moral principles. However, an analysis of the relationship between fortitude and fear and anxiety extends beyond the scope of these considerations.

1944–1956

SECONDARY SOURCES



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From Feelings to Norms

T. Czeżowski's Conception of Norms in the Context of a Brentanist Classification of Mental Phenomena

In the Brentanist tradition, scholars divided mental phenomena into four types: presentations, beliefs, feelings, and strivings.¹ This division

¹ Naturally, there were times when one or the other element of the classification was questioned. The most famous attempt was made by Brentano himself. In his book, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, F. Brentano adopted a three-part division of mental phenomena into presentations, judgments, and emotional experiences (the experience of love). From today's perspective, the first two parts do not raise any doubts. However, the third type of mental phenomena, the experience of love, has sparked debate and discussion. For Brentano, the reason for this reduction is the essential congruence between feelings and strivings that is experienced in internal experience when relating to reality. Brentano emphasizes that in a series of phenomena between willing and striving, subsequent phenomena gradually transition into the next (342–343). He argues that acknowledging qualitative differences among these phenomena would require recognizing each one as a distinct class. However, he concludes that the differences between them “are not as profound as between a presentation and a judgment” (343), and, therefore, it is better to consider them as belonging to a single class of mental phenomena. The unity of this class is also supported by the similarity of the class of feelings to the acts of judgment: “just as a thing can become the content of a judgment in so far as it is acceptable as true or worthy of

represents, to some extent, a return to the two intersecting divisions of mental acts common in the scholastic tradition: sensory-intellectual and cognitive-appetitive. In that case, we would have the following list of types of acts: cognitive-sensory (involving external and internal senses), cognitive-intellectual (rational activities, among which we would distinguish using concepts, making judgments, and reasoning, and, later, also defining and making distinctions), appetitive-sensory (involving feelings), and appetitive-intellectual (involving acts of will and decisions).² As can be seen, this first distinction differs from the traditional distinction mentioned above, as it questions the existence of purely sensory-cognitive activities. Instead, it points out that every cognitive sensory act has an intellectual component. The presented division of phenomena into four groups dominated in the works of Twardowski and his students,

being rejected as false, so too can it become the content of a phenomenon of this third fundamental class only insofar as it is, for us (in the broadest sense of the word), pleasant or suitable as good, or unpleasant or unsuitable as bad" (346). Brentano's views were critically examined by Twardowski. In the most general terms, Twardowski expresses his critical stance on Brentano's views on the combination of all appetitive phenomena in one group in his philosophical self-portrait, *W sprawie klasyfikacji zjawisk psychicznych* [*On the Classification of Mental Phenomena*], as follows: "it does not seem [...] correct to classify desires, strivings, and longings as manifestations of the will. They are usually considered a lower, while the will is considered the highest stage of their tension transitioning into action. The source of the error lies precisely in the fact that desires, just like acts of will, ultimately lead to certain actions. However, despite this similarity in effects, there is a profound psychological difference between desires and decisions. Decisions, despite appearances to the contrary, do not differ in intensity (similarly as it is the case with judgments). Besides, all desire can be decomposed into simpler factors, belonging to the previous groups of mental phenomena, namely: (1) the presentation of the object; 2) the belief that the object has no reality; 3) unpleasant feelings resulting from it; 4) the conviction that the actualization of the object would be connected with the feeling of pleasure. Therefore, desires should be considered as a combination of feelings and beliefs: as feelings arising from certain beliefs"; Kazimierz Twardowski, "W sprawie klasyfikacji zjawisk psychicznych" [*On the Classification of Psychic Phenomena*] (1900) in: Kazimierz Twardowski, *Myśl, mowa i czyn* [*Thought, Speech, and Act*], 137–139. In Twardowski's lectures (from 1903–1904), published in his *Wybór pism psychologicznych i pedagogicznych* [*The Selection of Psychological and Pedagogical Writings*], we can find an elaborate criticism of Brentano's position, often referring to von Ehrenfels's arguments; cf. Kazimierz Twardowski, "Psychologia pożądań i woli" [*Psychology of Desires and Will*] (lectures from 1903–1904), in: *Wybór pism psychologicznych i pedagogicznych* [*Selected psychological and pedagogical writings*] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne), 203–242.

² Stępień 1999, 171.

Ajdukiewicz, Witwicki, and Czeżowski. Twardowski's students considered this division to be unquestionable to some extent, so it was included in propaedeutic books.³ Since the characteristics of cognitive mental acts influence the analysis of feelings and the conclusions drawn from this analysis for Czeżowski's conception of evaluations and norms, I will now briefly present Czeżowski's findings regarding presentations and beliefs.

II. Cognitive mental activities: beliefs and presentations*

1) Beliefs

Czeżowski describes beliefs as thoughts expressed in declarative sentences. He mentions the following properties (moments or aspects) that make up beliefs:

- a) Quality of the belief: the affirmation or negation that takes place in the belief;
- b) Value of the belief: logical value, i.e., the truth (positive value) or falsehood (negative value) of the sentence expressing the belief, and emotional value (which is how we evaluate the belief);
- c) The (intentional) object of the belief, i.e., the object affirmed (or denied) in the belief (for instance, the belief that "it is no longer raining" denies that it is raining). This means that in the belief, we can have:

* Czeżowski places the distinctions concerning beliefs and presentations in the section *Psychology of knowledge* (analogously, in Ajdukiewicz's work, this section is called the *Psychology of cognitive processes*). This is in accordance with a certain pattern adopted in philosophy propaedeutics written in this tradition, which consist of three sections: on the process of knowledge creation, on the structure of knowledge, and on conduct. Accordingly, by applying Twardowski's distinction between acts and products, the considerations concerning propositions and names, as products of acts, are placed in the section devoted to logic, which is the science of the structure of knowledge.

³ Cf. Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, *Propedeutyka filozofii* [Introduction to Philosophy] (1938); Tadeusz Czeżowski, *Główne zasady nauk filozoficznych* [The Main Principles of Philosophical Sciences], 3rd ed. (Wrocław 1959). It is worth mentioning that many of the distinctions noted in these propaedeutics are also found in the textbook by Alojzy Hoefler, *Zasady psychologii* [Principles of Psychology], trans. Z. Zawirski (Lwów: Księgarnia Naukowa 1922, 2nd ed. 1927). (A copy of this book from Czeżowski's library can be found in the collections of the Kujańsko-Pomorska Digital Library, with the translator's dedication: "To my beloved colleague Dr. Tadeusz Czeżowski, with warm regards, the translator", Lwów 3.07.1926)

- d) An assertion (or a denial) of the existence of the object of the belief. This assertion or denial is the basis for determining the truth (or falsehood) of the belief;⁴
- e) in each belief, the following can be distinguished:
 - the action moment (the act of belief), that is, the act of thinking (or “the act of arousing and experiencing a belief”) and
 - the moment of content or the content of the belief (what I think or a thought). Czeżowski calls the act of belief – the act of judgment, and its content – a judgment.
- f) The foundation, i.e., the presentation of the object of belief; “In order to determine that it is raining, you must first know what rain is [...] In presentations, we represent objects, i.e., we make them present to ourselves; in our beliefs, we affirm or deny them [...] By making present to ourselves an object which we affirm or deny in the belief, the presentation as the basis of the belief is its necessary condition” (Czeżowski 1959, 9).

2) Presentations

A presentation is a mental phenomenon “in which we make an object present, that is, we get to know what it is like, without yet affirming or denying its existence” (Czeżowski 1959, 9). We distinguish the following types of presentations, according to how they can be made present to us (“according to how they arise”):

- a) ideas, which are intuitive presentations (they are called intuitive from Lat. *intueor* – I look). Their intuitiveness consists of their immediacy or directness, meaning that “in an idea, I make the object itself present to myself, and not the speech sign or another symbol representing it (...), the object itself, as it were, in its own person, stands before us in thought” (Czeżowski 1959, 11). Their intuitiveness also consists of their wholeness or totality, “meaning that the object of the idea becomes present in it at once in its entirety, as if in a single glance” (ibid.) and
- b) concepts, which arise “when we make objects or events present to ourselves differently, not as seen or heard, remembered or dreamed in fantasy, but as described in a description or defined in a definition” (ibid., 10). Concepts are a type of symbolic representation (because they are formed with the use of signs from

⁴ “This belief is true in which one affirms what exists or denies what does not exist; the belief is false in the contrary cases” (Czeżowski 1958, 8).

ordinary or symbolic language), and, in this sense, they are indirect representations. Concepts are also discursive presentations, i.e. their objects are not given in their entirety but are composed of parts. As Czeżowski sums it up, the symbolic nature of concepts is contrasted with the directedness of ideas, and the discursiveness of concepts is contrasted with the wholeness of the apprehension of the object in an idea. Additionally, one can state that concepts are the result of abstraction and, as such, have an abstract, non-concrete character, and, in this, they are contrasted with the concreteness of ideas (Czeżowski 1959, 35).

Within each presentation, we can distinguish:

- a) the act of presentation, or the act of making an object present to oneself. Acts of presentation are considered of the same kind when the object is made present in the same way, e.g., when I see the same object in two successive perceptive images. They are considered to be of different kinds when the object is made present in different ways, for instance, I perceive it one time and recall it another time (*ibid.*, 10);
 - b) the content of the presentation, i.e., what fulfills the presentation; it can be a view of the object of the presentation (in this sense, the content is one-sided); presentations with different content may have the same subject;
 - c) the object of the presentation, i.e., what I make present to myself in the act of presentation. While the content of the presentation exists in every presentation, its object does not always exist (e.g., there are no objects of those presentations about which I make true negative judgments, *ibid.*, 10).
- 3) Relationships between presentations and beliefs:
- a) Every presentation is a necessary condition for a belief, as it serves as its foundation. On the other hand:
 - b) a presentation is most often the motive for the emergence of a belief in which the existence of its object is affirmed or denied. In this sense, the presentation is a sufficient condition for the belief. This motive can be an idea (the motive for a perceptual, recollective, or imaginative belief) or a concept. In the latter case, "the concept becomes the motive for a belief in which we affirm that the object of the concept, if it exists, possesses the properties explicitly mentioned in the description or definition of the concept, or those that result from them indirectly" (*ibid.*, 41).

III. Appetitive Mental Activities

The second type of mental phenomena, distinct from cognitive phenomena, are appetitive phenomena. For clarity, it should be noted that Czeżowski does not use this term; he simply speaks of phenomena different from presentations and beliefs. He treats these phenomena as indefinable, offering instead a descriptive characterization of them that refers to phenomena known to the reader from inner experience.⁵ He distinguishes two types of phenomena here, in accordance with the Brentanist tradition: feelings and desires.

1) Feelings

According to Czeżowski, the defining characteristic of feelings is the pleasure or displeasure experienced in a given mental experience.⁶

- a) Feelings are mental wholes. In addition to their specific feeling elements (pleasure, pain),⁷ they also include cognitive elements

⁵ The classification of desiderative phenomena can be found (in the spirit of the School) in the third section of *Główne zasady* [*The Main Principles*], namely, in the part *On Conduct*. Czeżowski introduces the characteristics of feelings in the following way: "It is pleasant to drink a cup of water on a scorching summer day, and it is unpleasant to experience a headache. It is pleasant to find oneself in a bright, warm room, and unpleasant to take a walk on a rainy autumn evening. [...] These are examples of mental phenomena different from presentations and beliefs [...] we call them feelings" (Czeżowski 1959, 189). And it is similar with respect to strivings. "All strivings share a characteristic factor, which we call precisely the conative/desiderative factor: we know it from our own inner experience, but we are unable to analyze or describe it as it presents itself to us as something elementary" (ibid., 202).

⁶ Witwicki points out that the term *feeling* can refer either to a simple mental fact, namely the sensation of pleasure or pain, or to designate complex states in which pleasure or displeasure can be distinguished. It can also designate affective dispositions, which are the lasting conditions for the emergence of emotional states of a certain kind (e.g. a person's love for someone that lasts for years. In many dispositions, we can identify their somatic basis; cf. Witwicki 1963, 7–8). It is also worth noting that Witwicki devoted almost 300 pages of the second volume of his *Psychology* to the analysis of feelings (though this topic, including, also, the numerous classifications of feelings contained in the *Psychology*, is worthy of separate analysis).

⁷ It is interesting that members of the School did not analyze those most specific emotional qualities, namely, pleasure and displeasure, even though the very concept of pleasure is as old as philosophy itself. Brentano, as Chisholm, for example, shows, reduced pleasure and pain (displeasure) to sensory acts. Chisholm (Chisholm 1987, 60) points out that "Brentano says that sensory plea-

like presentations or beliefs. These cognitive elements are the psychological basis for the emotional qualities that accompany them.⁸

- b) Pleasure and displeasure, as emotional qualities, can occur with varying degrees of intensity. Unlike the qualities of beliefs, emotional qualities can also occur simultaneously, creating ambivalent feelings that are both pleasant and unpleasant at the same time.
- c) Every feeling has its intentional object, which is provided by the psychological basis of the feeling. If the intentional object of a feeling is its own basis (e.g., the sensation of touching soft, warm fur), then we are dealing with an experiential feeling (examples include sensory feelings and introspective experiences).

sure and sensory pain are acts of love and hate that are directed upon 'the appearance [*Erscheinung*]' of certain sense qualities, but not upon the qualities themselves. Stumpf, who could not accept this view, said that, according to Brentano, 'the agreeableness of an odor is a love, not of the odor, but of the smelling of that odor'. According to Brentano, then, we must distinguish three features of sensory pleasure and sensory pain: (i) the intentional act of love or hate; (ii) the act of sensing upon which this love or hate is directed; and (iii) the sense quality which is the content ('primary object') of that act of sensing". Therefore, the very concepts of pleasure and displeasure are referred back to acts of love (a turning toward) and hatred (a turning away from). Furthermore, Chisholm points out: "The sensory pleasure, Brentano says, redounds upon the nonsensory pleasure. Brentano is thus telling us something about psychical causation: that when we come to have a belief in the existence of something that we love or approve, this fact causes us to take pleasure in the experience of certain sense-qualities. I take him to mean that the believing together with the nonsensory love or approval causes us to have sensations involving sensory pleasure. What Brentano calls the nonsensory pleasure is not the sensory pleasure itself, nor is it the love or approval that is directed upon the object of the belief. The nonsensory pleasure consists in the love or approval one then has for the combined experience – that of contemplating the intentional object of the belief and having the resultant sensory pleasure" (ibid., 62). Various philosophical theories of pleasure are presented in a synthetic overview, for example, by W. Alston in the entry "Pleasure" in Paul Edwards' *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (vol. 6, 341–347).

⁸ "The psychological basis for the feeling of joy that comes from a past successful skiing trip is the recollection of that trip, which is composed of a group of reproductive ideas and recollective beliefs" (ibid., 190).

- d) Feelings that are not experiential are called objective feelings.⁹ We distinguish between aesthetic feelings (likings)¹⁰ and feelings of value (sentiments or emotions)¹¹ depending on whether the basis of the feeling is a presentation or a belief, respectively.
- e) Pleasant aesthetic feelings arise when we see beautiful things, and unpleasant ones when we see unpleasant things. At the same time, for an aesthetic feeling to arise, the mere content of the presentation is sufficient. These feelings emerge against the background of presentations, primary or derivative ideas, or from concepts in which we represent the objects of aesthetic feelings to ourselves.
- f) If, in the perception of an object, we focus exclusively on nothing but the content of the presentation itself and divert our attention away from all other properties the object possesses, the relationships it has, or its functions, we adopt an aesthetic attitude. In this sense, the aesthetic feeling is called a presentational feeling "because of the very fact that, in an aesthetic attitude, the presentation of the object towards which the aesthetic feeling is directed is a sufficient psychological basis for the emergence of the feeling" (ibid., 193).

⁹ In contrast to subjective/experiential feelings, objective feelings are evaluative; that is, their characteristic component is an evaluation (Czeżowski 1959, 197). An evaluation does not occur in the case of subjective/experiential feelings. This raises a question about subjective feelings: if pleasure and pain in objective feelings are the result of an evaluation, then what is the reason for the pleasure and displeasure associated with subjective feelings? It is not a reference to (or a recognition of) values.

¹⁰ Insightful analyses of aesthetic feelings can be found in Witwicki's work *Psychologia [Psychology]* (Witwicki 1963, 113–156).

¹¹ In his work *Strach i lęk [Fear and Anxiety]* (Czeżowski 1958), Czeżowski presented a more elaborate classification of feelings to replace Brentano's. Brentano's classification is carried out on a psychological foundation and encompasses experiential (subjective) feelings (directed toward the experience) and objective feelings (directed toward the object). The latter category comprises value feelings and aesthetic feelings. Meanwhile, Czeżowski's expanded classification of feelings is a two-tiered system. At the first level, he categorizes feelings into active and inactive (or contemplative). At the second level, they are divided into experiential and objective feelings. Then, among active feelings, we find experiential feelings and feelings of value, and among inactive feelings, we also find experiential (subjective) feelings and aesthetic feelings.

Value feelings (emotions or sentiments) include such feelings as love, joy, hatred, sadness, anger, indignation, pity, and envy. These feelings have the following common characteristics:

- a) They are more intense than likings (in this, they are more like sensory feelings, e.g. moral pain can be as acute as physical pain). "This refers to the displeasure that accompanies worry, and likewise the pain of sadness, despair, and jealousy, which can be as acute as the displeasure of sensory pain, whereas the displeasure of seeing an ugly sight never takes on such a character" (ibid., 196).
- b) The difference between feelings of liking and value feelings is not a difference in intensity but a difference in quality (analogous to the difference between a reproductive and a perceptive idea).¹²
- c) Sentiments are accompanied by bodily changes that do not occur with likings (e.g. a change in breathing, muscle tension, or a change in heart rate).¹³
- d) Feelings of sentiment are belief feelings. This means that for their formation, a mere presentation of the object of a feeling is not sufficient. Instead, it is necessary to affirm that the object of the feeling actually exists. "Anger and indignation will not arise in me, even if I were to present outrageous things to myself as accurately as possible, until I form the conviction that such a thing exists (or at least could appear in the future)"¹⁴ (196).

¹² It seems that reproductive images are pretty "pale" in comparison with perceptive images, and it would be analogous to compare likings and sentiments. This is likely the result of the fact that we may have a liking based solely on a presentation, without an accompanying judgment regarding the existence/non-existence of the object.

¹³ Witwicki notes that it is rather difficult to imagine an aesthetic attitude in which we have aesthetic feelings but experience no emotion, which is to say, to find feelings of liking devoid of desire. He states: "If we wanted to talk about the experience of beauty only where no desires arise in a person toward the object that pleases them, the question is whether we would find such states at all. In any case, we would have to exclude from the realm of aesthetic experiences a great many such states that we consider and want to consider to be typical aesthetic experiences" (Witwicki 1963, 114).

¹⁴ In Czeżowski's words, we can talk about "objective feelings whose intentional object is constituted by an external object of a representation or judgment. The latter are, in turn, divided into aesthetic feelings and feelings of value. An objective feeling is a whole that comprises the representation of the object of the feeling and the judgment evaluating this object as beautiful or good: this judgment requires an appropriate attitude, either aesthetic or moral, as the necessary and sufficient condition of its formation. In the feelings of value, apart from an evaluating judgment, there is a realizing judgment which asserts the reality,

- e) According to Czeżowski, intellectual feelings, also called feelings of knowledge, belong to one type of feelings of value. Their object is knowledge – we value knowledge, and the ascertaining of our possession of knowledge is accompanied by satisfaction, and thus pleasure. Social feelings (e.g. attachment and respect for the products of collective life) have a similar character (*ibid.*, 199).¹⁵

(2) Strivings are the fourth type of mental phenomena. As Czeżowski writes, they encompass various phenomena, including desires, longings, wants, and decisions.¹⁶ He states: “All strivings share a characteristic factor, which we call precisely the desiderative/conative factor: we know it from our own inner experience, but we are unable to analyze or describe it as it presents itself to us as something elementary” (Czeżowski 1959, 202). Strivings have an active character, as they push us to “realize or preserve valuable objects and remove what we evaluate negatively” (*ibid.*). They seem to be similar to those movements that Brentano called acts of love or hate.¹⁷

actual or potential, of the object of the feeling: the necessary and sufficient condition of the formation of this judgment is attention, i.e. the cognitive attitude that helps ascertain the existence or possibility. These cognitive elements, a representation and the two judgments, are complemented by an emotional tinge in the form of comfort or discomfort to form the whole of a feeling” (Czeżowski 2000, 191).

¹⁵ Hoefler introduces a division of feelings into those based on presentations and those based on judgments (belief feelings). He then divides the latter into feelings of knowledge and feelings of value (Hoefler 1927, 110). In contrast, Witwicki considers intellectual feelings not as a type of feelings of value, but as a separate class of feelings. He defines them as “pleasant and unpleasant states, connected with and related to the activity of cognition – that is, judging and reasoning – regardless of what the object of cognition might be, and regardless of whether the judgment is affirmative or negative” (Witwicki 1963, 156).

¹⁶ For Hoefler, phenomena of this type are called appetitive phenomena. Hoefler defines an appetitive phenomenon as “that mental element which is common to decision and wishing, striving and resisting, and to cravings and aversions, as well as whims and lusts, etc.” (Hoefler 1927, 139). The appetitive phenomena are characterized by quality (cravings and aversions), intensity, and temporal determination: “with the attainment of its ‘goal’, every appetitive state as such comes to an end” (*ibid.*, 140).

¹⁷ Since our goal is to show how to get from the theory of feelings to the theory of norms, we will omit a further characterization of the appetitive phenomena.

3) Evaluations and evaluative attitudes

Both in feelings of liking and feelings of value (emotions or sentiments), the basic component is an evaluation of the object of feeling. A positive aesthetic feeling is one whose object we evaluate positively as beautiful, just as a positive feeling of value is one whose object we evaluate positively as good. Czeżowski writes: "An evaluation is an affirmation or a negation, just like a belief; we also sometimes call evaluations evaluative or valuing beliefs. However, evaluations differ from beliefs [...] in that they do not concern the existence of objects. In a belief about a certain object, we affirm or deny its existence; in an aesthetic evaluation, we affirm or deny its beauty, that is, its aesthetic value" (ibid., 194). Similarly, an evaluation of value is a component of a feeling of value (emotion or sentiment), "but it is an evaluation of a different kind than in the other case. We consider the object of love, joy, or admiration valuable, precious, and good, and we ascribe a positive value to it; we call the object of anger, indignation, or sadness bad, and we ascribe a negative value to it. The object of an emotion is never indifferent, worthless, or neither good nor bad. All of the listed determinations, and others like them [...], we encompass by means of the general term 'value'"¹⁸ (ibid., 197). And thus, we categorize feelings of value into positive and negative ones. Positive feelings of value arise when we affirm the existence of an object with a positive value or the non-existence of an object with a negative value. Negative feelings arise in the opposite cases [when we affirm the existence of an object with a negative value or the non-existence of an object with a positive value].

As Czeżowski emphasizes in his analysis of perceptual beliefs, attention is a necessary condition for perception. As he explains, "this term denotes an attitude (an attitude of the mind) that is characteristic of the act of perceiving and fades with it, an attitude, as it were, of tension [...]. The action of attention can be compared to the action of a focusing lens; it narrows the scope of consciousness and focuses it in such a way that the object on which attention is directed comes, as it were, into full light, while all others remain, as it were, outside the field of vision" (ibid.,

¹⁸ Two points come to mind here: a) It might be consistent to speak of evaluative (valuing) beliefs in the sense that just as in "ordinary" beliefs we affirm the existence of *being*, so in evaluative beliefs we affirm the existence of the beauty or the good of an object; b) Czeżowski, contrary to common usage, understands the term "value" narrowly as "the good", which is why he classifies emotions as feelings of value. This is a somewhat too narrow an understanding, as we usually speak of "aesthetic values, ethical values", etc.

47–48). Attention enables the subject to transition from perceptual images to perceptions, or perceptual beliefs, in which we can affirm that what is given in them exists. As Czeżowski puts it: “to notice anything is the same as to perceive it, and to perceive is not only to make an object present to oneself, but also to affirm that this object exists” (45). Attention is also a sufficient condition for the formation of a belief in the sense that “a perceptual image that finds itself in the field of attention acquires a motivational force sufficient for a perceptual belief to appear” (Czeżowski 1989, 97). As Czeżowski points out, the manner in which axiological assessments are made is analogous. He states: “The motive for making an evaluation is a presentation of the evaluated object always and only when the evaluating person adopts a specific evaluative attitude – moral or aesthetic – toward the object” (Czeżowski 1989, 98), an attitude related to attention as a cognitive attitude. In evaluations, the presentation becomes a motive for the affirmation of value, just as attention is a motive for the affirmation of existence.

Based on the above analogy, we can draw the following consequences regarding the genesis of evaluations:¹⁹

- 1) aesthetic evaluations and value evaluations are singular, just like perceptual beliefs, because their object is an empirical individual;
- 2) evaluations – or, more precisely, evaluative sentences (evaluative judgments) – are (like beliefs) affirmative or negative, and true or false. An evaluation that affirms the value of an object is true when the object is in fact valuable;

¹⁹ In his lecture report, Czeżowski briefly summarized his view on the similarity between perceptual beliefs and evaluations: “Evaluations [...] show a striking similarity to perceptual beliefs, which, in accordance with the Brentanist tradition, we understand as existential statements”. Namely: a) the conditions for the formation of both are similar. In both cases, the motive of the formation becomes the perceptual image of an object against the background of an appropriate subjective attitude, either cognitive (attention) or evaluative; b) both are singular, affirmative or negative, accurate or erroneous. An analogous definition of truth can be created for both; c) both are intuitive in a specific way and unprovable; however, they can be verified by comparing them in different cases – one can also train one’s ability to evaluate, just like the ability to perceive; d) both analogously enter into emotional associations (perceptual beliefs into intellectual feelings, and evaluations into feelings of value); e) both can be generalized in an analogous way; f) both are similarly devoid of content; that is, both the existence that is affirmed in perceptual judgments and the good that is affirmed in evaluations do not possess representational content; instead, both of these concepts belong to what are called transcendentals in classical logic (Czeżowski 1950: 192–193), cited in (Konstańczak 2012, 554).

- 3) the comparison of values is usually made by ranking them as higher or lower. However, values can sometimes be incommensurable, meaning they cannot be directly compared (e.g. health and wealth – each of them can be singled out based on a different criterion);
- 4) the degree of a value is not directly related to the intensity of emotion or the degree of pleasure/pain. Czeżowski explains that “an emotion to whose object we attribute a high degree of value, is much weaker in intensity than the emotions whose objects are trivialities” (Czeżowski 1959, 200);²⁰
- 5) evaluations are justified in a direct manner, similarly to how perceptual beliefs are justified. “That is, in affirming the value of an object, we rely on a specific obviousness of the evaluation, which – again like a perceptual belief – cannot become the conclusion of a deductive proof” (ibid., 98).²¹ It is worth emphasizing at this point that the thesis regarding the empirical nature of ethics, which Czeżowski repeatedly stressed, is based precisely on the recognition of this analogy between the affirmation of existence in perceptual judgments (beliefs) and the affirmation of value in evaluative judgments. This analogy was challenged, for example, by Jacek Hołówka, who pointed out that postulating such an analogy constitutes a strong ontological commitment. According to Hołówka, “Czeżowski uses this parallelism to show that the world of value is as real as the world of natural objects. But he underestimates dissimilarities. Our sense data are vivid, irrepressible, overwhelming and testify in every respect to the existence of the external world”.

Our primary evaluations, on the other hand, are vague, non-representational, i.e. they are not replicas of the external objects, and although they are intersubjectively verifiable to some extent

²⁰ This remark suggests that emotions have the character of “detectors of values” and not of their “measuring mechanisms”, just as a perceptual judgment is a detector of the existence of an object.

²¹ Elsewhere, Czeżowski wrote: “Such evaluations are analogous to perceptual judgments. Just as perceptual beliefs arise based on the presentation of an object in perception when attention, as a perceptive attitude, is directed at it, so a primary evaluation also arises based on the presentation of the evaluated object when a specific evaluative attitude – analogous to attention and well known to moralists [...] – is directed at it [one could call this evaluative attitude, by analogy, an attentiveness to values – ML]. The ability to evaluate is developed through practice, just like the ability to observe” (Czeżowski 1976/1989, 163).

they are verifiable in a much lower degree than sense data. Moreover, sense data are transmitted by sense organs, while there are no sense organs for the primary evaluations. Finally, it is doubtful whether they appear before emotions. It is commonly believed that values ride 'piggyback' on emotions, not the other way round. Czeżowski gives no explicit argument for the opposite claim. All these reservations must make us suspicious of the Czeżowski's contention that values are as real as observable objects (Hołówka 1989, 199–200).

Łukasiewicz addresses Hołówka's criticism just mentioned (Łukasiewicz 2002, 288) and observes that a) the claim that primary evaluations are not as vivid or irresistible as sensory experience can be questioned (for instance, he says, "when I learn of the fact of child abuse by adults, my value judgment about this fact is no less vivid, clear, or irresistible than when, for example, I see grease stains on my sweater");²² b) although there is indeed no sensory organ that registers values, there is likewise no sensory organ "which would allow for the registration of complex numbers or strings or objects of a similar type. This fact, however, does not deprive physics of its character of an empirical science" (ibid., 288); c) Czeżowski discussed a certain equivalent of sensory organs in the field of axiology, which would be the disposition to make accurate evaluations; it would be a certain intellectual capacity (ibid., 289); d) and finally, Łukasiewicz notes the inaccuracy of the last of Hołówka's accusations, namely the claim that it is doubtful that evaluations precede emotions. (However, Łukasiewicz does not provide any substantive reasons to support his suggestion.)

- 6) Despite their obviousness, evaluations may be false (just like perceptual beliefs). False (erroneous) evaluations are eliminated through verification, that is, "by way of repeating the same kind of evaluations under different conditions and comparing them with one another" (ibid., 98).

²² It is, of course, debatable whether we are talking here about the vividness of the actually made evaluations (these may occur with different vividness in different people) or about a certain ideal of the evaluative attitude. As it turns out, no such problem arises when discussing the vividness of sensory perceptions. It seems that the difficulty pointed out by Hołówka is indeed a real one: values simply cannot be seen in the same way as objects given in sensory perception are seen.

- 7) Czeżowski emphasizes that we cannot adopt the subjectivist view according to which feelings are motives for evaluations. It is the other way around, that is, it is the presentation of the object that is the motive for evaluation against the backdrop of an evaluating attitude: “we will have neither aesthetic liking nor a feeling of value [...] without a more or less explicit evaluation. Therefore, evaluation should be considered a necessary condition for a pleasant or unpleasant liking or sentiment” (ibid., 99). In the case of likings, it would be the presentation of the object with along its aesthetic evaluation, while in the case of emotions – the belief affirming the existence of the object of emotion, independent of the issuance of an evaluation (an evaluation can also be made concerning a non-existent object). According to Czeżowski, what is important is that affective qualities such as pleasure or displeasure appear against the background of the evaluation that has been made.²³
- 8) Individual evaluations (just like beliefs) can be generalized. “Generalizations lead to the establishment of an evaluation criterion. If we observe in a series of cases that objects of evaluation possess a common feature, this becomes the basis for a generalization stating that each object having that common feature is subject to the same kind of evaluation, that is, that it is good, bad, beautiful, tragic, sublime, etc. The criterion of evaluation is always some empirical feature, while the value predicated in the evaluation is not an empirical feature of the object” (Czeżowski 1989, 99).²⁴
- 9) Values such as goodness and beauty that we identify in evaluations are analogous to existence that we affirm in judgments (beliefs). At the same time, as Czeżowski emphasizes, “these are not terms that would denote any objects or features of objects [...] Evaluations add nothing to the object’s description. [...] Existence, goodness, or beauty are not things that we identify in presentations as qualities of objects. Rather, we affirm them in beliefs or evaluations”. These are transcendentals, that is, modifications of being. Unlike categories, adding or removing them from among

²³ Cf. footnote 15.

²⁴ “We evaluate actions that bear the characteristics of theft, fraud, etc., as bad, and prudent, creative, or sacrificial actions as good. The marks of the first kind are criteria for badness, while the marks of the second kind are criteria for goodness. Analogously, beliefs are generalized to define criteria for existence. For example, the empirical criterion of existence is affirmed in the sentence, “whatever is an object of perception, exists”, while another sentence of this type is the metaphysical principle, “whatever acts, exists” (ibid.).

the determining traits of an object does not affect determination²⁵ (ibid., 100). It is worth noting here that the way we understand transcendentals influences the entire analysis of evaluative judgments. According to the traditional doctrine of transcendentals, for instance, its Thomistic version, we should make a distinction between the absolute transcendental properties of being, which are being, essence, non-contradiction, and unity, and the relative transcendental properties, which are truth, goodness, and beauty (Krapiec 1978). The latter are distinguished due to their subordination relation to the intellect and will, either separately or taken together. [Transcendental] Being considered in the subordination relation to the intellect is [transcendental] truth, expressed by the principle of sufficient reason. Being considered in the subordination relation to the will is the [transcendental] good, expressed by the principle of finality (teleology). On the other hand, following the tradition that goes back to Aquinas, beauty constitutes a joint subordination relation to both the intellect (cognition) and will (desire), and in this sense, it is a derivative of transcendental truth and the good.²⁶ In light of this conception, if we assume that ex-

²⁵ "According to the analogy with the modal statement, 'it is necessary that S is P', the statement 'it is good that S is P' means that the fact affirmed in the statement 'S is P' is 'good'. Therefore, the good is not the object of presentation, but of judgment; in this respect, the good is a concept analogous to existence, necessity, and possibility. The good cannot be represented, just as existence cannot be represented. Like existence, the good can only be affirmed. On the other hand, the criteria for what makes something good are representable" (Czeżowski 1989, 115). It is worth emphasizing here, as Łukasiewicz points out, that accepting a formal analogy between existence and the good is fundamental to proper understanding of the metaphysics of Czeżowski's moral realism. At the same time, for Czeżowski, existence is not a characteristic of an object because a) every judgment is reducible to an existential judgment; b) when we present an object to ourselves, we cannot determine whether the object of the representation exists or not; only a judgment can determine the existence of an object; and c) existence (and the good) is not a characteristic because, in natural language it is not symbolized by means of a predicate. As Łukasiewicz puts it, "The words 'good', 'beautiful', 'necessary', or 'true' are morphologically similar to predicates, but they are not predicates. Rather, they are logical operators: propositional (sentential) functors [with a sentential argument – ML's note] (Łukasiewicz 2009a, 159–161), cf. also Łukasiewicz 2009b, 666–667.

²⁶ If we were to call the complete human cognitive-appetitive reaction an aesthetic experience – or an experience of beauty – then such a primordial human experience would be something fundamental in the human psyche. And if such a primary human experience were the source of all further purely cog-

periences are subjective correlates of objects, the feeling of liking would be the culmination of human cognitive faculties, constituting, as it were, the fullness of human experience, containing both a cognitive and an appetitive (desiderative) component. Such an approach, however, is at odds with the established relationship between presentation and feeling of liking, and belief and feeling of emotion.

- 10) Czeżowski also points out another difference between aesthetic evaluations and evaluations of values. Value judgments, unlike aesthetic judgments, can be absolute or relative. This division is derived from the division of values into absolute, that is, those that are independent of other values (absolute evaluations are directly justified) and relative (i.e., those whose justification points to their relationship with some absolute value (for instance, the value of the ability to read is justified by its reference to the absolute value of knowledge) (Czeżowski 1959, 200).²⁷
- 11) From another perspective (the motive for the formation of evaluations), Czeżowski divides evaluations into primary and secondary. Primary evaluations are subjective reactions to the phenomena of the external world (just like beliefs). The motive for their formation is to make the object of evaluation present in the subject's evaluative attitude. As concerns secondary evaluations, they are the result of applying some previously established criterion to the evaluated case – the evaluated case is subordinated to an existing ethical law. This division of evaluations is fundamental due to the way ethical theories are built and function. Primary evaluations are formed spontaneously,²⁸ while secondary evaluations are

nitive or purely volitional experiences, then the experience of beauty would indeed be transcendental in relation to all further cognitive experiences" (Krapiec 1978, 209).

²⁷ It seems that we could distinguish both absolute and relative values also among aesthetic evaluations. An example would be the admiration for a painting's texture as related to the absolute value of the painting itself as a work of art. However, it seems that if we wanted to provide a sufficiently thorough analysis of the relationship between likings and emotions/sentiments, we would have to refer to the works of Witwicki (who also had extensive psychological, aesthetic, and art history knowledge, which can be seen in his works on art theory) rather than Czeżowski.

²⁸ Wiśniewski points out that for Czeżowski, "values that we perceive intuitively are absolute and objective contents. For Czeżowski, axiological absolutism and objectivism go hand in hand with intuitionism. We can only directly cognize those values which are absolute (non-relative). However, what is inter-

the result of reflection or are stereotypically applied automated results of previous deliberation. Both types of evaluations are something fundamentally different from an impulsive/instinctual reaction to events.²⁹ (Czeżowski 1949/1989, 100).

IV. Ethical laws and norms

The considerations presented so far can be classified as part of the broadly understood psychology of cognitive and appetitive acts (or states). However, what is most interesting in Czeżowski's project is the issue of the transition from the psychology of the acts of human mental life to the objective (objectified) theory of norms. The fundamental question here is: how do we derive an objective theory of norms from the psychology of (essentially) appetitive acts? Or: how can one transition from individual value statements resulting from evaluations to objective norms? Such a theory, rooted in psychology, would therefore have, to some extent, an empirical character, hence the titles of Czeżowski's works *Etyka jako nauka empiryczna* [*Ethics as an Empirical Science*] (Czeżowski 1949) or *Uwagi o etyce jako nauce empirycznej* [*Remarks on Ethics as an Empirical Science*] (Czeżowski 1960; both works in: Czeżowski 1989).³⁰

esting here is that this absolutism cannot be maintained in practice; instead, it is an absolutism of axiological assumptions that allows for limitations on the applicability of value judgments or principles in practical reality" (Wiśniewski 1999, 114).

²⁹ While primary and secondary evaluations are relatively easy to distinguish in theory, they are often difficult to separate in practice. This is because secondary evaluations modify our perception of the world. This is clearly visible, for instance, in Th. Kuhn's conception of scientific development. According to Kuhn's theory, a paradigm, which is shaped by a set of secondary evaluations, influences researchers' primary evaluations (regarding the truth or cognitive value of actions), even though this often occurs unconsciously. In fact, however, it is similar in the case of perceptions: the adopted paradigm determines what the researcher is even able to perceive (observe).

³⁰ It is worth quoting here what Konstańczak (Konstańczak 2012, 554) pointed out, namely, Ossowska's critique of such a conception of ethics as an empirical science: "This program of ethics, not supported by any example that could serve as a sample or a starting point for discussion, raises the most far-reaching doubts. And it does not seem to be a coincidence that no one in the course of many centuries of ethical inquiry has left behind such a construction, while there is no shortage of systems built *more geometrico*" (Ossowska 1983, 476); to which Czeżowski replied: "I am not presenting a program of ethics that is to be

The first step of such a transition is the generalization of an individual evaluation, as mentioned above. It occurs in a manner analogous to the generalization of an individual perception, where the result of the generalization is a perceptual belief. When we observe in a number of cases that the evaluated objects share a common feature, this provides the basis for a generalization stating that every object with that common feature is subject to evaluation of the same type. In this way, the generalization of individual evaluations is to constitute a criterion of evaluation in the form of a certain empirical feature, while the object of evaluation – the value that is stated in the evaluation – has an objective character. (Czeżowski 1989, 99).

General statements in which the criterion of evaluation is established are ethical laws. As empirical generalizations, those ethical laws are uncertain and changeable because a criterion established in one area of moral experience may prove uncertain in another (*ibid.*, 101). Another reason for the changeability of ethical laws can be a change in the meaning of the terms used to formulate them. Still another reason could be a change in social relations that requires adapting the criteria of evaluation to them.

The ethical laws thus characterized are hypothetical empirical laws that can be justified only by reductive reasoning whose premises are primary evaluations. In this sense, these primary empirical evaluations are the presuppositions of ethics (*ibid.*, 101).³¹ “In order to justify a proposition P formulated as a general statement, we refer to individual evaluations p which stand in a subalternation relation to it, and we assume as true not that p is the content of someone’s belief, but p directly, as in any case of justifying general propositions” (*ibid.*, 103).

Czeżowski points out various types of confusion as to the understanding of ethical laws. Generally speaking, the confusion was based on the failure to distinguish between the original individual evaluations and their generalizations that define the criteria of good, which manifested itself in the transfer (of the requirement) of intuitiveness from

supported by an example. Rather, I am analyzing ethical systems, and among them also those that are built *more geometrico*” (Czeżowski 1989, 108).

³¹ Czeżowski emphasizes that the situation turns out to be the reverse of what aprioristic views suggest: “According to this interpretation, moral laws engraved in human hearts, about which the apriorists speak, take on a dispositional character not for learning general ethical laws, but for making individual evaluations. The ‘moral sense’ is a disposition for making individual moral judgments, just as sight is for individual perceptions and shapes” (101).

individual evaluations (which are actually entitled to intuitiveness) to generalizations.

At other times, the confusion was caused by taking the opposite approach, in which the uncertainty characterizing general sentences was transferred to primary individual evaluations. In this context, as Czeżowski further observes, the question of the non-relative character of evaluations was raised: “Do all people evaluate in the same way, regardless of the differences in the conditions in which the evaluations are made?” (ibid., 102). The attempt to respond to these objections led Czeżowski to state that “the necessary condition for the construction of an ethical theory is therefore neither the assumption of objectivity nor the assumption of the absoluteness of norms, but something else. The point is that evaluations should be intersubjectively communicable and verifiable” (ibid., 102). These are the conditions usually accepted for the scientific nature of knowledge. The point is that researchers should be able to communicate with each other about how they evaluate and whether they evaluate in agreement!

The next step is the transition from ethical laws to norms.³² As Czeżowski suggests, the term “norm” is to be understood as “an expression of the obligation of a regulation or a binding rule” (Czeżowski 1970, in: Czeżowski 1989, 144). Depending on its structure, it can take two forms:

- a) obligation statements, or should-statements (‘one should act in such and such a way’); such an approach characterizes moral norms; or
- b) declarative sentences (‘one acts in such and such a way’); this is a formulation characteristic of legal norms.

Both types of sentences are propositions in the logical sense (i.e. they are either true or false); only true propositions can be recognized as a norm (ibid., 145). Czeżowski rejects the position that assumes that a norm is an imperative statement that recommends, commands, or prescribes, etc. Czeżowski remarks that “a norm itself is neither a recommendation nor a command; however, in order for a norm to be implemented, i.e., for someone to act in accordance with its content, it requires a decision as an additional factor of a volitional nature, motivated by a norm of either the moral or the legal kind. The decision is expressed in an imperative sentence [...] addressed to the one who is to implement this norm” (ibid., 144).

³² Works concerning different types of norms appeared later than works on ethical laws. D. Łukasiewicz (Łukasiewicz 2020, 290–291) analyzes changes in terminology regarding norms proposed by Czeżowski.

Czeżowski distinguishes two types of norms: those that refer to accepted rules and those that refer to evaluations. The latter, called axiological norms, derive their power from their connection to the good stated in an evaluative sentence. An individual evaluation "this or that thing is good", generalized through repetition into a generic evaluation, "things of such and such a kind are good", justifies the normative sentence "such and such should be done always and only if this or that thing is good" (*ibid.*, 147). However, some situations requiring normative intervention cannot be established based on a reference to the good; we deal with them, for example, when we deal with conventional objects or activities. In such situations, "the character of a norm is given to propositions of this kind by some external provision by which their truth is presumed. Hence, norms of this kind are called constitutive or thetical norms" (*ibid.*, 145). Established (or constitutive) norms can be compiled into an axiomatic deductive system, whereas norms that are binding by nature, that is, axiological norms, form an inductive empirical theory, as they are derived from axiological experience (*ibid.*, 147).

Czeżowski also analyzed the system of norms in his later publications, where he referred to the distinction between teleological and formal norms. This division is based on the distinction between the definitions of ethical conduct. As he explains: "According to the teleological norm, ethical conduct is that which aims to realize a moral good [...]; according to the formal norm, ethical conduct is that which acts in accordance with a moral norm. This distinction reveals yet another opposition: the teleological norm regulates conduct directed towards its goals, that is, towards states of affairs or objects that the conduct is meant to realize in accordance with the norm [...]. Formal norms include the categorical imperative in Kantian ethics [...] and the commandment to love one's neighbor in Christian ethics [...]. None of these formal norms mentioned here as examples indicates the purpose of conduct. Instead, they link moral conduct to their observance. They concern the relationship of the ethical subject with other people or even animals [...], so this feature should be considered characteristic of formal norms" (Czeżowski 1970/ Czeżowski 1989, 150).³³

³³ Czeżowski offers a different explanation of the distinction between teleological and formal norms when he further points out that teleological norms define an obligation through the good that the action is supposed to achieve, whereas formal norms, in contrast, recognize obligation as primary. When we consider formal norms, an act is good as long as the conduct is in accordance

Additional elements in the theory of ethics are the so-called principles of ethics. They have the character of a norm of a higher order, that is, a norm that is not teleological, but is “used to distinguish moral or immoral behavior in interpersonal relations according to whether it is consistent or inconsistent with it” (ibid., 111). These principles correspond to what Czeżowski later refers to as formal norms.³⁴

In other words, the principles of ethics determine the conditions that must be met by the norm prescribing moral conduct:

“A teleological norm, however, even when it directs the efforts to achieve the goal which has rightly been evaluated as good, may become antagonistic to another norm of the same kind or even to itself if, while being used by two persons, it leads them to a mutual collision [...]. Another norm is needed then, not a teleological one, which would regulate the use of teleological norms. Such a norm of the second degree, so to speak, does not itself dictate the conduct which would aim at a specific goal [...] but it only sets a condition to be fulfilled by the norm which dictates moral conduct” (Czeżowski 1963/Czeżowski 1991, 141). (Czeżowski 2000, 183–184)

Ethical principles do not have an empirical genesis; rather, they possess an *a priori* character, similar to the axioms of logic. Just as logical axioms alone “cannot provide statements about reality but serve as the principles of reasoning to distinguish truth from falsity – so those formal ethical principles themselves do not tell specifically how to act since such an instruction would have to specify the goal of conduct. Though they make it possible to distinguish a conduct which is morally right from one which is not” (ibid., 142). (Czeżowski 2000, 184)

Final summarizing thoughts

Czeżowski’s views on the division of mental phenomena do not significantly deviate from the model that, to a greater or lesser extent, is characteristic of Brentanist psychology. What was innovative, however, was the fact that Czeżowski used this conception of mental phenomena

with the norm. For this reason, Czeżowski calls teleological norms axiological and formal norms deontic (ibid., 151).

³⁴ It is worth noting that Czeżowski generally distinguishes between two types of ethical theories based on the criterion of “equal measure”: those that apply equal measure to all people (altruistic ethics) and those that single out one type of subject (egoistic theories).

to draw the basis of his ethical theories, relying on analogies between cognitive and appetitive phenomena.

The analogy between cognitive attention as the basis of valuable perceptual judgments and axiological attention as the basis of evaluative judgments is of fundamental nature here. These evaluative judgments, which state the existence of values, form, in turn, the basis for teleological norms, which are generalizations of the individual value judgments that have been repeated many times. Therefore, the system of teleological norms, supplemented by certain a priori ethical principles, is empirical in nature.

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Od uczuć do norm. Koncepcja norm Tadeusza Czeżowskiego w kontekście brentanowskiej klasyfikacji zjawisk psychicznych

Streszczenie

Artykuł rekonstruuje koncepcję norm Tadeusza Czeżowskiego na tle brentanowskiej klasyfikacji zjawisk psychicznych, rozwijanej w Szkole Lwowsko-Warszawskiej. Punktem wyjścia jest podział aktów psychicznych na przedstawienia, przekonania, uczucia i dążenia oraz analiza relacji między ich aktem, treścią, przedmiotem i podstawą psychologiczną. Szczególne znaczenie ma analogia między uwagą poznawczą, umożliwiającą stwierdzenie istnienia przedmiotu w spostrzeżeniu, a postawą oceniającą, dzięki której przedstawienie staje się motywem afirmacji wartości. Na tej podstawie Czeżowski ujmuje oceny jako prawdziwe lub fałszywe sądy wartościujące, podlegające intersubiektywnej kontroli i uogólnieniu. Uogólnienia ocen pierwotnych prowadzą do praw etycznych, a następnie do norm aksjologicznych, które nakazują urzeczywistnianie lub ochronę tego, co w ocenach zostało rozpoznane jako dobre. Autor omawia również normy tetyczne, teleologiczne i formalne oraz aprioryczne zasady etyczne, regulujące stosowanie norm teleologicznych. W tym połączeniu systemu norm teleologicznych z uzupełniającymi go apriorycznymi zasadami etycznymi ujawnia się swoistość projektu Czeżowskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: Tadeusz Czeżowski, Franz Brentano, Szkoła Lwowsko-Warszawska, klasyfikacja zjawisk psychicznych, psychologia uczuć, oceny aksjologiczne, teoria norm, etyka empiryczna

From Feelings to Norms. T. Czeżowski's Conception of Norms in the Context of a Brentanist Classification of Mental Phenomena

Abstract

The article reconstructs Tadeusz Czeżowski's conception of norms against the background of the Brentanist classification of mental phenomena as developed within the Lvov-Warsaw School. It begins with the division of mental acts into presentations, beliefs, feelings, and strivings, and examines the relations between their act, content, object, and psychological basis. Of particular importance is the analogy between cognitive attention, which makes it possible to affirm the existence of an object in perception, and the evaluative attitude, through which a presentation becomes the motive for affirming value. On this basis, Czeżowski conceives evaluations as true or false evaluative judgments that are subject to intersubjective scrutiny and generalization. Generalizations of primary evaluations give rise to ethical laws and, subsequently, to axiological norms, which prescribe the realization or protection of what has been recognized as good in evaluation. The article also discusses thetical, teleological, and formal norms, as well as a priori ethical principles governing the application of teleological norms. The distinctive character of Czeżowski's project emerges

from this combination of a system of teleological norms with the a priori ethical principles that supplement it.

Keywords: Tadeusz Czeżowski, Franz Brentano, Lvov–Warsaw School, classification of mental phenomena, psychology of feelings, axiological evaluations, theory of norms, empirical ethics



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Elzenberg and issues discussed about obligation

Introduction

Each system of deontic logic covers more or less openly certain philosophical assumptions.¹ This paper will show a system of deontic logic, both on the syntactic and semantic side, which is intended to correspond to the assumptions of the theory of moral obligation proposed by Henryk Elzenberg within the formal axiology. Elzenberg developed his project of formal axiology in the late 1930s and early 1940s, using only the means of philosophical analysis, and therefore it may be interesting to present his results in the modern form of modal logic.² This will be addressed in the first part of the paper. The second part will present Elzenberg's possible voice in several currently debated issues of moral philosophy. This will be possible thanks to the introduced system of

¹ Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, "Deontic logic and the Priority of Moral Theory", *Nous* 20 (1986): 179–197, Heikki-Pekka Innala, "On the Non-neutrality of Deontic Logic", *Logique et Analyse* 43 (2000): 393–410.

² Only a small part of Elzenberg's legacy has been translated into English. Unfortunately, none of them deals with formal axiology. For more on Elzenberg's axiology, see Lesław Hostyński, "The Axiological System of Henryk Elzenberg", in: *Polish Axiology. The 20th Century and Beyond*, ed. Stanisław Jedynak (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005), 179–212, Lesław Hostyński, Małgorzata Sady, "Formal Axiology of Henryk Elzenberg", *Dialogue and Universalism* 19 (2009): 19–38.

deontic logic, on the basis of which it is easier to note what is a thesis and what is not a thesis, following the assumptions that Elzenberg made in constructing his theory.

1. System outline

1.1. The ought of be

In the most general outline, an obligation for Elzenberg is a situation which, under the given circumstances, is assigned to be realized by a certain subject at a certain time.³ However, the basic condition for a situation to be an obligation for a given subject at a given time is that it ought to be at all. For the definition of obligation, the *proximus genus* is the ought of be.

The concept of the ought to be is the primary concept of Elzenberg's system of formal axiology. At the same time, it should be added at once, it is about the ought understood exclusively in the proper sense of the word. It is assumed that there are certain ought situations regardless of whether they serve anyone to satisfy needs or realize desires. They are ought in themselves, and not instrumentally, through preconceived conditions or goals. Thus, we refer to ought in the wrong sense when we say, for example: "war gas ought to be poisonous" or "a tyrant ought to be cruel", because war gas should be poisonous in order to eliminate the enemy's living force, and a tyrant should be cruel in order to be able to hold on to power. Ought here is conditioned by the fact that someone has the need to eliminate the living force of his opponent, and by the fact that someone wants to stay in power at all costs. In contrast, we can try to find oughtness in the proper sense in such sentences as "man ought to be reasonable" or "no living being ought suffer", insofar as being reasonable or not suffering of certain beings are ought situations not because they serve someone to do something. Of course, it is always possible to seek such an interpretation of ought situations that could play an instrumental role, but the examples with a tyrant or gas suggest that such a sense is present in our thinking, because talking about the oughtness of being poisonous or the oughtness of being cruel seems slightly

³ Henryk Elzenberg, "Zagadnienie obowiązku w aksjologii formalnej", in: *Pisma aksjologiczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński et al. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 109.

paradoxical. This shadow of paradoxicality comes precisely from the fact that no one ought, in the proper sense, be a tyrant, and no one ought, in the proper sense, create war gases to poison other people.⁴

An ought is expressed in sentences called norms of the general form "it ought to be the case that some object has some characteristic". We will want to further represent this type of norms in a certain formal language, which, in addition to the sentence letters $p_1, p_2, p_3 \dots$ representing states of affairs (simple situations) and the symbols $A, B, C \dots$ representing arbitrary situations, will include the unary modal operator of ought **oug**. Hence, we will write the norm "ought to be the case that A " briefly as "**oug** A ".

We already know that certain objects ought have certain characteristics. Now we can ask what if the objects actually have these characteristics and what if they do not have these characteristics? Let us take the first eventuality. If an object has some characteristic that it ought have, then it is a valuable object.⁵ When there is an ought in the proper sense, the object is valuable in the sense of perfect value. Otherwise, it is valuable in the sense of instrumental value. Perfectly valuable objects inspire reverence or respect, while instrumentally valuable objects are only useful because they satisfy needs or desires. Keeping in line with the example of a tyrant, it can be stated that a cruel tyrant is a valuable (good) tyrant. He is just what a tyrant should be, but of course in the sense of instrumental value, because no one who is cruel is the bearer of perfect value.

Now, what if an object does not have the characteristic, it ought to have? It is not valuable. Well, by virtue of its oughtness it demands those characteristic. And if there appear possible subjects who could make it become what it ought to be, then for these possible subjects, the obligation to act arises. And if, out of these possible subjects, the one best suited to the realization of the ought situation manages to stand out, and the moment in time best suited to the realization of the ought situation by this subject manages to stand out, then we have an obligation for this subject, at this moment of doing what ought to be. Therefore, the path to

⁴ Elzenberg justifying such a distinction unequivocally advocates one side of the naturalism *versus* anti-naturalism argument. Given that not all norms can be reduced to a contingent-instrumental sense, thus ought is not substitutable by some "natural" concept.

⁵ Henryk Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości i powinności. Tekst żemłosławski", in: *Pisma aksjologiczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński et al. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 135.

obligation leads from the ought situation (*Seinsollen*), through the ought realization of the ought situation for a specific subject (*Tunsollen*), to the ought realization of the ought situation by a specific subject at a specific moment.⁶

Let us take an example, if a car fell off the road and hit a tree injuring the driver, then of course there is an ought situation – medical help should be given to the injured person. And if there are any people in the vicinity of accident, these people ought make what ought to be, i.e. they should help the injured person. If it is one person, then that person ought help, and if there are several, then those who are in the best position to do so ought help. Maybe the person is a physician or at least a paramedic, or maybe the person is just the closest. In addition, this chosen person ought help at the best time to do so. Maybe as soon as possible, or maybe calling for an ambulance beforehand, or maybe preventing the threat of ignition of the spilled fuel first.

In order to express in our formal language the linguistic contexts in which obligation is referred to, we need to expand its expressive power. We introduce into the alphabet of this language a denumerable of unary modal action operators $s_1, s_2, s_3, \dots$. For any metalogical variable s , representing any action operator, the expression " sA " reads "due to subject s it is the case that A " ("the agent s makes it so that A "). Thus, we see that the letter s represents *de facto* possible subject of an action. Similarly, we introduce denumerable unary temporal operators $t_1, t_2, t_3, \dots$. For any metalogical variable t , representing any temporal operator, the inscription " tA " reads "at time t it is the case that A ", so the letter t can be considered a representation of a certain moment at time.

In the outlined formal language, we will further express the HE theory. To begin with, we will make some assumptions about the characteristics of the operators s and t . These assumptions will be elementary, as Elzenberg was not fundamentally concerned with their formal properties.

According to Elzenberg, a possible subject of an action is someone who can make a given situation occur, i.e. someone who can make a given object have a given characteristic.⁷ In this relationship, we will further exclude that anyone can be the perpetrator of a logically impossible situation by introducing an axiom:

⁶ Elzenberg, "Zagadnienie obowiązku w aksjologii formalnej", 104–109.

⁷ Henryk Elzenberg, "Zagadnienia związane z pojęciem wartości. Wykłady 1949", in: *Pisma aksjologiczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński et al. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 292.

$$A1 \quad \sim s(A \wedge \sim A).$$

Similarly, we will exclude that the logically impossible can occur at any time:

$$A2 \quad \sim t(A \wedge \sim A).$$

We also make the assumption for the simplest version of action logic, for which the attitudes of any subject of an action toward any situation can be two: perpetration or omission (the subject cannot be indifferent toward any situation).⁸ Hence, for any subject s and situation A , we assume

$$A3 \quad sA \vee s\sim A.$$

We make a similar assumption for the logic of time. No moment is indifferent to any situation, i.e., for any moment t and situation A :

$$A4 \quad tA \vee t\sim A.$$

If it is the case that A is due to the subject and it is the case that B is due to the subject, then it is the case that A and B are due to the subject. We will adopt the principle of agglomeration for the action operator

$$A5 \quad (sA \wedge sB) \rightarrow s(A \wedge B).$$

The adoption of agglomeration principle for time also seems to be unobjectionable,

$$A6 \quad (tA \wedge tB) \rightarrow t(A \wedge B).$$

If the subject s makes that A , it also makes all the logical consequences of A , hence we adopt the monotonicity rule for the operator s .

$$R1 \quad A \rightarrow B / sA \rightarrow sB.$$

If A occurs at time t , then all logical consequences of A also occur, hence we adopt the monotonicity rule for the t operator as well.

$$R2 \quad A \rightarrow B / tA \rightarrow tB.$$

With such an expanded formal language, the obligation operator can now be introduced definitively. We will say, following Elzenberg, that for a subject s at time t it is an obligation that A (abbreviated **obl**(s, t, A)) if and only if at the same time

⁸ As Segerberg writes, this is possible under the assumption that the perpetrator is always active, always doing something. Krister Segerberg, "Getting Started: Beginnings in the Logic of Action", *Studia Logica* 51 (1992): 350.

- (i) ought to be that A,
- (ii) ought to be that, due to the subject *s* it is the case that A,
- (iii) ought to be the case that at time *t* it is the case that due to the subject *s* it is the case that A.

In our formal language, we will now render these conditions by abbreviations

- (i) **oug**A,
- (ii) **ougs**A,
- (iii) **ougts**A.

Hence, the definition of obligation operator will now take the form

obl(*s*, *t*, A) iff **oug**A $\wedge$ **ougs**A $\wedge$ **ougts**A,

which reads: “it is an obligation for subject *s* at time *t* to make it is that A if and only if it ought to be that A and it ought to be that due to the subject *s* it is the case that A and ought to be the case that at time *t* it is the case that due to the subject *s* it is the case that A”. It is an obligation for subject *s* at time *t* to make a certain object have a certain characteristic, insofar as the subject should have this characteristic and should possess it through subject *s* and should possess it through subject *s* at time *t*. This definition is in line with Elzenberg’s postulates: an obligation it is a situation that ought to be realized by a certain subject and that ought also be realized by this certain subject at a certain time.

1.2. Meta-empirical will

Elzenberg was aware that talking about ought situations is troublesome because of the charge of arbitrariness.⁹ Does oughtness completely arbitrarily “fall from the sky” on certain situations, avoiding others? To defend against this he gave a kind of explanation of the source of ought. For this purpose, he introduced the concept of a meta-empirical will (in other words: autonomous will). Such a will is characterized by preferences based only on pure rational reasons. The meta-empirical will is directed toward what it finds stronger rational reasons for, and is therefore independent of impulses from the emotional and propulsive sphere. Hence, its preferences are universal, because, rejecting individual and

⁹ Henryk Elzenberg, “Podstawowe pojęcia aksjologii I. Wykłady toruńskie 1946-1949”, in: *Pisma aksjologiczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński et al. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 233.

species interests, it is guided only by universally valid considerations. And now, an ought situation is one that anyone endowed with a meta-empirical will prefers it to be rather than not be¹⁰. In other words, if ought situation is one in which a given object is endowed with a certain characteristic, it means that there are rational reasons for that object to have that characteristic rather than not to have it.¹¹ Obviously, we are referring to oughtness in the proper deontic sense as oughtness in the improper sense derives from the preference of empirical will, i.e. that which is guided only by what is beneficial or pleasing.

Of course, no one is endowed with a meta-empirical will, it is merely a mental construct to reflect this process that occurs when we ask how things ought to be. In seeking answers to such questions, we try to make our will more like an autonomous will. We scrap thoughts of our own possible benefits and pleasures, and seek universal rationales. Taking the example of an accident, we say that the injured person should be helped, because we find rationales for why the person should be helped rather than left alone. And this is regardless of whether we ourselves will have to make an effort to help the man or rather someone else, whether the sight of his blood disgusts us or rather attracts us, whether he is our friend or rather our enemy.

At this point, at the base of presented system, instead of the concept of ought, we place the relation of preference of meta-empirical will. This relation in our formal language will correspond to the binary preference operator **b**. We will read "**AbB**" as "from the point of view of pure rational reasons better when it is the case that A than when it is the case that B".¹² Given that this is a relation of a certain kind ordering situations into those more or less reasonably preferred, it seems reasonable to assume

¹⁰ Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości i powinności", 165–167.

¹¹ There are plenty of contemporary attempts to define meta-empirical will. For example, it is the will that is mutually agreed upon under ideal conditions of conversation (discourse theory) or from behind a veil of ignorance (theory of justice), or the will of someone who meets the conditions of an ideal observer (ideal observer theory), or the will of someone who has possessed all virtues, i.e. a perfectly fulfilled man (virtue theory).

¹² Inspiration for the presented HE system comes from the following studies: Frank Jackson, "On the Semantics and Logic of Obligation", *Mind* 94 (1985): 177–195; Lou Goble, "A Logic of Good, Should and Would. Part I", *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 19 (1990): 169–199; Lou Goble, "A Logic of Good, Should and Would. Part II", *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 19 (1990): 253–276; Lou Goble, "The Logic of Obligation, 'Better' and 'Worse'", *Philosophical Studies* 70 (1993): 133–163; Marek Magdziak, "The Ontologic of Actions", in: *Contemporary Polish Ontology*, ed. Bartłomiej Skowron (Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 219–243.

conditions of asymmetry and transitivity for the **b** operator. These conditions will correspond to the subsequent axioms of the system:

$$A7 \quad AbB \rightarrow \sim(BbA),$$

$$A8 \quad (AbB \wedge BbC) \rightarrow AbC.$$

Is it possible to include a strongly connected condition for **b** as well, thus recognizing the preference relation as a relation that linearly orders situations? Elzenberg rules out this possibility¹³. He argues that there is no common measure of evaluation for logically impossible and contingent situations. He says it is impossible to determine what should be more meta-empirically desirable, the most valuable of worlds or non-being. We will render this conviction in the next axiom¹⁴:

$$A9 \quad AbB \rightarrow \Diamond A \wedge \Diamond B.$$

We will assume a limited separability of the meta-empirical preference operator from the conjunction:

$$A10 \quad (AbB \wedge CbD \wedge \Diamond(A \wedge C)) \rightarrow (A \wedge C)b(B \vee D).$$

The full extensionality rule will also apply for the **b** operator:

$$R3 \quad A \equiv B / AbC \equiv BbC,$$

$$R4 \quad A \equiv B / CbA \equiv CbB.$$

With the meta-empirical preference operator, we can now define the ought operator, keeping with Elzenberg's findings in this regard:

$$\text{oug}A \text{ iff } Ab\sim A,$$

which reads "ought to be that A if and only if, by virtue of pure rational reasons, it is better when it is the case that A than when it is not the case that A". It is in the manner of ought that a certain object possesses a certain characteristic, insofar as the meta-empirical will finds better reasons for this, that rather than not the object possesses this characteristic.

In turn, the definition of obligation will now take the form:

$$\text{obl}(s, t, A) \text{ iff } Ab\sim A \wedge (sA)b(\sim sA) \wedge (tA)b(\sim tA),$$

¹³ Henryk Elzenberg, "Konstrukcja pojęcia wartości", in: *Pisma aksjologiczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński et al. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 86.

¹⁴ Hereinafter, a symbol $\Diamond$ will be used to represent the alethic possibility operator characterized by the system T. Brian F. Chellas, *Modal Logic. An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 135.

i.e. it is an obligation for subject s to make it so that A at time t if and only if, by virtue of pure rational reasons, it is better when it is the case that A than when it is not the case that A , and by virtue of pure rational reasons it is better when it is the case that A due to the subject s than when it is not so that A due to the subject s (in particular, is such that A by means of any subject other than s) and when by virtue of pure rational reasons it is better when it is the case that A due to the subject s at time t than when it is not such that A due to the subject s at time t (in particular, it is such that A by means of subject s at any time other than t).

1.3. Semantics

As can be seen, determination of what is ought or obligatory involves the rational activity of considering alternative possibilities and preferring one over the other, and therefore it seems obvious to determine the truth conditions of norms about ought and obligation in the semantics of possible worlds. Let the model of our formal language be the following relational structure:

$$\mathcal{M} = \langle \mathcal{H}, \mathcal{R}, \mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}, \mathcal{B}, v \rangle,$$

where $\mathcal{H}$ is a non-empty set of possible worlds (elements of $\mathcal{H}$ are denoted by consecutive letters $w, w_1, w_2, \dots$). The letter $\mathcal{R}$ denotes a binary reachability (accessibility) relation between the elements of $\mathcal{H}$. The expression " $\mathcal{R}(w, w_1)$ " reads "the world w_1 is reachable from the world w ". $\mathcal{S}$ is an infinite sequence $S_1, S_2, \dots$ of binary reachability relations relativized to the perpetrators. For any element of this sequence $S \subseteq \mathcal{R}$, the expression " $\mathcal{S}(w, w_1)$ " reads "the world w_1 is reachable from the world w by the subject s ". Similarly, $\mathcal{T}$ is an infinite sequence $T_1, T_2, \dots$ of binary reachability relations relativized to time. For any element of this sequence $T \subseteq \mathcal{R}$, the expression " $\mathcal{T}(w, w_1)$ " reads "the world w_1 is reachable from the world w at time t ". The letter $\mathcal{B}$ denotes a three-argument relation set on the elements of $\mathcal{H}$. This is a relation of relative preference, so the expression $\mathcal{B}(w, w_1, w_2)$ (or shorter $\mathcal{B}_w(w_1, w_2)$) means that from the point of view of world w , world w_1 is better than world w_2 . As for v , it is the valuation function of sentence letters.

In model $\mathcal{M}$, the truth conditions for formulas that are sentence letters or formulas consisting of sentence letters and logical conjunctions or the possibility operator take the standard form¹⁵. To express the truth

¹⁵ Chellas, *Modal Logic*, 5, 68.

conditions for the other formulas, let us introduce the following definition abbreviations:

$$|A|^{\mathcal{M}} \text{ iff } \{\mathbf{w}: (\mathcal{M}, \mathbf{w}) \models A\}$$

is the set of worlds for which it is so that A , i.e. $|A|^{\mathcal{M}}$ is the *de facto* propositional content of the formula A in the $\mathcal{M}$ model. Now

$$[\mathbf{w}]^{\mathcal{R}} \text{ iff } \{\mathbf{w}_1: \mathcal{R}(\mathbf{w}, \mathbf{w}_1)\},$$

it is the set of worlds reachable from world $\mathbf{w}$ due to relation $\mathcal{R}$. By analogy, we definitively introduce the sets $[\mathbf{w}]^s$ and $[\mathbf{w}]^t$ as the sets of what is reachable in the circumstances of $\mathbf{w}$ for subject s , and what is reachable in the circumstances of $\mathbf{w}$, at time t . Thus

$$(\mathcal{M}, \mathbf{w}) \models sA \text{ iff } [\mathbf{w}]^s \subseteq |A|^{\mathcal{M}},$$

i.e., in the model $\mathcal{M}$, world $\mathbf{w}$, it is true that due to subject s it is the case that A if and only if in all worlds reachable from $\mathbf{w}$ for subject s it is the case that A .

$$(\mathcal{M}, \mathbf{w}) \models tA \text{ iff } [\mathbf{w}]^t \subseteq |A|^{\mathcal{M}},$$

i.e., in model $\mathcal{M}$, world $\mathbf{w}$, it is true that at time t it is the case that A , if and only if in all worlds reachable from world $\mathbf{w}$, at time t it is the case that A .

$$(\mathcal{M}, \mathbf{w}) \models \mathbf{A} \mathbf{b} \mathbf{B} \text{ iff } |A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset \text{ and } |B|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset \text{ and for each } \mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2, \text{ if } \mathbf{w}_1 \in |A|^{\mathcal{M}} \text{ and } \mathbf{w}_2 \in |B|^{\mathcal{M}}, \text{ then } \mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2).$$

In model $\mathcal{M}$, world $\mathbf{w}$, it is true that it is better when it is the case that A than when it is the case that B if and only if, from the point of view of world $\mathbf{w}$, any world in which it is the case that A is better than any world in which it is the case that B , and at the same time there is a world in which it is the case that A and there is a world in which it is the case that B .

In the model thus defined, the truth conditions for norms about ought and obligation take the form of:

$$(\mathcal{M}, \mathbf{w}) \models \mathbf{oug} A \text{ iff } |A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset \text{ i } |\sim A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset \text{ and for each } \mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2, \text{ if } \mathbf{w}_1 \in |A|^{\mathcal{M}} \text{ and } \mathbf{w}_2 \in |\sim A|^{\mathcal{M}}, \text{ then } \mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2).$$

In the model $\mathcal{M}$, the world $\mathbf{w}$, it is true that it ought to be the case that A if and only if A is contingent and, from the point of view of the world $\mathbf{w}$, any world in which it is the case that A is better than any world in which it is not the case that A .

$(\mathcal{M}, \mathbf{w}) \models \mathbf{obl}(\mathbf{s}, \mathbf{t}, A)$ iff $|A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset$ i $|\sim A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset$ and for each $\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2$, if $\mathbf{w}_1 \in |A|^{\mathcal{M}}$ and $\mathbf{w}_2 \in |\sim A|^{\mathcal{M}}$, then $\mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2)$

and $[\mathbf{w}]^S \cap |A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset$ i $[\mathbf{w}]^S \cap |\sim A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset$ and for each $\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2$, if $\mathbf{w}_1 \in [\mathbf{w}]^S \cap |A|^{\mathcal{M}}$ and $\mathbf{w}_2 \in [\mathbf{w}]^S \cap |\sim A|^{\mathcal{M}}$, then $\mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2)$

and $[\mathbf{w}]^T \cap [\mathbf{w}]^S \cap |A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset$ i $[\mathbf{w}]^T \cap [\mathbf{w}]^S \cap |\sim A|^{\mathcal{M}} \neq \emptyset$ and for each $\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2$, if $\mathbf{w}_1 \in [\mathbf{w}]^T \cap [\mathbf{w}]^S \cap |A|^{\mathcal{M}}$ i $\mathbf{w}_2 \in [\mathbf{w}]^T \cap [\mathbf{w}]^S \cap |\sim A|^{\mathcal{M}}$, then $\mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2)$.

In the model $\mathcal{M}$, world $\mathbf{w}$, it is true that it is obligatory that A for subject $\mathbf{s}$ at time $\mathbf{t}$ if and only if, from the point of view of world $\mathbf{w}$, any world in which it is the case that A is better than any world in which it is not the case that A , and at the same time A is contingent, and any world in which it is the case that A due to the subject $\mathbf{s}$ is better than any world in which it is the case that A due to the subject other than $\mathbf{s}$, and it is contingent for it to be the case that A by means of subject $\mathbf{s}$, and any world in which it is the case that A due to the subject $\mathbf{s}$, at time $\mathbf{t}$, is better than any world in which it is the case that A due to the subject $\mathbf{s}$ at time other than $\mathbf{t}$, and it is contingent for it to be the case that A by means of subject $\mathbf{s}$ at time $\mathbf{t}$.

The HE system is satisfied in the class of models $\mathcal{M}$ satisfying the following conditions, for any worlds $\mathbf{w}, \mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2, \mathbf{w}_3$:

W1 $[\mathbf{w}]^S \neq \emptyset$,

W2 $[\mathbf{w}]^S \subseteq |A| \vee [\mathbf{w}]^S \subseteq |\sim A|$,

W3 $[\mathbf{w}]^T \neq \emptyset$,

W4 $[\mathbf{w}]^T \subseteq |A| \vee [\mathbf{w}]^T \subseteq |\sim A|$,

W5 if $\mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2)$ and $\mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_2, \mathbf{w}_3)$, then $\mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_3)$,

W6 if $\mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2)$, it is not true that $\mathcal{B}_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{w}_2, \mathbf{w}_1)$.

According to conditions W1 and W2, for any world $\mathbf{w}$, there are its worlds reachable due to any subject $\mathbf{s}$, and at the same time, the totality of such worlds reachable due to subject $\mathbf{s}$ uniquely determines any situation A . In other words, W1 rules out the possibility of so-called dead ends due to causation, and condition W2 rules out the possibility of situations indifferent due to causation (any subject either makes A or omits A). According to W3 and W4, every world has accessible worlds due to moment $\mathbf{t}$, and at the same time, for any moment $\mathbf{t}$ and

any situation A , at moment t is such that A or at moment t is such that not- A . This excludes the possibility of the existence of so-called dead ends due to time and situations indifferent due to time. Conditions W5 and W6 express the conditions of transitivity and asymmetry of the relative preference relation between worlds, thus it establishes a partial order between them.

As can be easily seen, axioms A1 and A3 are satisfied in the class of $\mathcal{M}$ models due to conditions W1 and W2, while axioms A2 and A4 are satisfied due to conditions W3 and W4. In turn, the fulfillment of axioms A8 and A7 depends on the presence of conditions W5 and W6 in the model. The fulfillment of inference rules does not require additional conditions. Therefore, it turns out that every theorem of the HE system is satisfied in the class of $\mathcal{M}$ models. It can also be shown that any formula that is not an HE theorem is also not satisfied in the $\mathcal{M}$ model. Thus, every formula satisfied in the class of $\mathcal{M}$ models is an HE theorem. Hence, we obtain a completeness theorem, which proves that our syntactic and semantic approaches are characterized by the same set of logically true formulas. Such a model can be the canonical model

$$\mathcal{M}^* = \langle \mathcal{H}^*, \mathcal{R}^*, \mathcal{E}^*, \mathcal{F}^*, \mathcal{B}^*, v^* \rangle,$$

where $\mathcal{H}^*$ is a non-empty set of worlds, which are now understood to be consistent maximal extensions of the HE system. The non-emptiness of this set follows from the fact that the HE system is consistent, as can be seen by constructing the translation function φ , which assigns to each formula of the HE language a formula of the language of classical sentence calculus. If

$$\varphi(p) = p, \text{ where } p \text{ is any sentence letter,}$$

$$\varphi(\sim A) = \sim \varphi(A),$$

$$\varphi(A \wedge B) = \varphi(A) \wedge \varphi(B),$$

$$\varphi(\Diamond A) = \varphi(A \vee \sim A),$$

$$\varphi(\mathbf{s}A) = \varphi(A),$$

$$\varphi(\mathbf{t}A) = \varphi(A),$$

$$\varphi(\mathbf{A}\mathbf{b}B) = \varphi(A) \wedge \sim \varphi(B),$$

then it turns out that the function φ to each thesis of HE system assigns a tautology of the sentence calculus.¹⁶ Therefore, it is not possible for a formula and its negation to be both HE theses.

Relation $\mathcal{R}^*$ is characterized as usual:

$$\mathcal{R}^*(\mathbf{w}, \mathbf{w}_1) \text{ iff } \mathbf{w}_1 \subseteq \{A: \Diamond A \in \mathbf{w}\}.$$

In turn, $\mathcal{S}^*$ and $\mathcal{T}^*$ are sequences of binary relations given on the set $\mathcal{H}^*$ such that for any elements of these sequences S^* , T^* and for any worlds $\mathbf{w}$, $\mathbf{w}_1$ we have

$$S^*(\mathbf{w}, \mathbf{w}_1) \text{ iff } \{A: sA \in \mathbf{w}\} \subseteq \mathbf{w}_1,$$

$$T^*(\mathbf{w}, \mathbf{w}_1) \text{ iff } \{A: tA \in \mathbf{w}\} \subseteq \mathbf{w}_1.$$

The three-argument relation $\mathcal{B}^*$ is defined as follows

$$\mathcal{B}_w^*(\mathbf{w}_1, \mathbf{w}_2) \text{ iff there are formulas } A, B \text{ such that } \mathbf{w}_1 \in |A|^{\mathcal{M}^*} \text{ and } \mathbf{w}_2 \in |B|^{\mathcal{M}^*} \text{ and } A \mathbf{b} B \in \mathbf{w},$$

where $|A|^{\mathcal{M}^*} = \{\mathbf{w}: A \in \mathbf{w}\}$.

The valuation function of sentence letters now takes the form of: $v^*(p) = \{\mathbf{w}: p \in \mathbf{w}\}$, where p is any sentence letter.

The model $\mathcal{M}^*$ is a model of the HE logic language because it satisfies conditions W1–W6. $\mathcal{M}^*$ is also the model we are looking for because the fundamental theorem for the canonical model holds for it, i.e., for any formula A and any $\mathbf{w} \in \mathcal{H}^*$, $(\mathcal{M}^*, \mathbf{w}) \models A$ iff $A \in \mathbf{w}$.

2. Issues discussed about obligation

2.1. Kant's principle

Elzenberg's attractiveness of the presented theory of moral obligation will be tested by answering the question of whether satisfactory answers can be given to contemporary theoretical problems concerning moral obligation within this theory.

In contemporary moral philosophy, the problem of validity of Kant's principle, briefly expressed by the maxim "ought implies can", is widely discussed. The question is how does ought relate to the possibility of

¹⁶ For other logical conjunctions, the conditions look analogous.

its realization? Are there ought situations that no one is capable of realizing? For example, can we say that it is an ought to stop world starvation? Or can it be a obligation for someone to do something he cannot do, such as saving a drowning person for someone who cannot swim? The answer is not inconsiderable, because if we answer both questions in the affirmative, we face the threat of excessive moral demands. On the other hand, if we answer in the negative, moral requirements will lose all their recommending power.¹⁷ Either we will be overburdened with requirements beyond our strength, or we will avoid any, because we can always evade the requirements, making ourselves incapable of fulfilling them.

On the grounds of Elzenberg's system, we can find a solution to this dilemma. The answer depends on what kind of ought is in question. After all, if one considers an ought relativized to time and person, then the answer must be in the affirmative. For obligation, Kant's principle applies, as is made clear by the presented genesis of obligation. An obligation falls on a person at a given moment when he or she is in the best position at that moment to realize the ought situation. Assignment to a person thus presupposes that the person can realize the ought. The rationale decides. This resolution is reflected among the statements of HE system, where we find Kant's principle for obligation on several levels:

T1 $\text{obl}(s, t, A) \rightarrow \Diamond A,$

T2 $\text{obl}(s, t, A) \rightarrow \Diamond sA,$

T3 $\text{obl}(s, t, A) \rightarrow \Diamond tsA.$

Only such a situation can become an obligation for a certain subject s at a certain moment t , which is itself logically possible, and is logically possible for subject s , and is logically possible for subject s at moment t (subject s has the ability and opportunity to realize it¹⁸).

However, if the allocation of the ought to a given subject at a given moment as his obligation is to be real, based only on pure rational reasons, then not only the ought must be possible for a given subject at a given moment, but also the avoidance of the ought for a given subject at a given moment must be possible. This too is reflected among the theorems of HE system.

¹⁷ Peter B. M. Vranas, "I Ought, Therefore I Can", *Philosophical Studies* 136 (2007): 167–168.

¹⁸ Vranas, "I Ought, Therefore I Can", 169–170.

T4 $\text{obl}(s, t, A) \rightarrow \Diamond \sim A,$

T5 $\text{obl}(s, t, A) \rightarrow \Diamond \sim sA,$

T6 $\text{obl}(s, t, A) \rightarrow \Diamond \sim tsA.$

Therefore, it turns out that necessary and logically impossible situations are neither obligatory nor forbidden for any subject at any time.

It can be asked where the intuitive certainty about the validity of Kant's principle for obligation comes from. As Elzenberg writes, since an obligation is a ought assigned to a specific subject and set in time, it is therefore a ought that is due. This means that if it is omitted, the subject is sanctioned with a negative moral evaluation.¹⁹ Thus, Kant's principle imposes here as self-evident, an obligation must presuppose the possibility of its fulfillment, because it would be absurd to impose sanctions on someone for something he could not fulfill.

The case is different for the ought itself.²⁰ This situation is an ought for which there are better rationales for it to be rather than not to be, completely regardless of whether anyone and ever will be able to fulfill it.²¹ The ought is no longer due because it is not assigned, and so no one faces sanctions for failing to do it. Hence, it is right that among HE's theses there are no formulas

$\text{oug}A \rightarrow \Diamond sA,$

$\text{oug}A \rightarrow \Diamond tsA.$ ²²

Only the thesis of HE system, which associates ought with logical possibility, may seem troublesome in this context:

T7 $\text{oug}A \rightarrow \Diamond A,$

¹⁹ Elzenberg, "Zagadnienie obowiązku", 108–109.

²⁰ Henryk Elzenberg, "Kilka uwag aksjologiczno-etycznych w związku z fragmentem rozprawy Pricharda", in: *Z historii filozofii*, ed. Michał Woroniecki (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1995), 400–401.

²¹ A similar resolution of the Kantian principle problem through the distinction between *prima facie* and all-things-considered obligations is found, for example, in the papers: Norman O. Dahl, "Ought Implies Can and Deontic Logic", *Philosophia*, 4 (1974): 487, Wayne Martin, "Ought but Cannot", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society. New Series*, 109 (2009): 113.

²² As Morscher notes, this version of Kant's principle is already a purely ethical principle, difficult to accept on the grounds of deontic logic. Edgar Morscher, "The Definition of Moral Dilemmas. A Logical Confusion and Clarification", *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 5 (2002): 487.

T8 $\text{oug}A \rightarrow \Diamond \sim A$.

However, the presence of this thesis is not surprising in light of axiom A9, allowing comparison in terms of rationality only of what is logically contingent. Thus, as we can see, only contingent situations can be subject to deontic qualifications: ought and obligation. Ought and obligation are similar in this respect.

As Martini wrote that moral consciousness is organized around infinite ideals, demands on us that we know we cannot fulfill.²³ We already know that one must agree with this insofar as ought is concerned. Obligation is less restrictive in this regard. What is necessary is the subject's ability and opportunity for a given ought to become its obligation. Thanks to the precise distinction between the concepts of ought and obligation, the problem of Kant's principle finds a solution on the basis of Elzenberg's system.²⁴ Nevertheless, this solution raises further questions related to moral philosophy. What if a subject is faced with two options for action that are possible for him, each of which is an ought, but for which the realization of one involves the omission of the other? Is it his obligation to meet both oughts at the same time? Or is it a obligation for a given subject to fulfill a ought that he can, admittedly, fulfill at a given moment, but at a cost that qualifies as heroic? Simply put, by settling the dispute over the validity of Kant's principle in Elzenberg's system, we raise questions about the possibility of moral dilemmas and the issue of supererogatory acts. Two further issues discussed in the contemporary deontological debate.

2.2. Moral dilemma problem

In modern moral philosophy, the problem of possibility to allow the existence of moral dilemmas on the basis of a consistent ethical theory is discussed. By moral dilemma is meant two ought situations or two obligatory options of action for the same subject at the same moment, such that the realization of one implies the omission of the other. Examples of dilemmas express such questions as: Should one be good-natured or sophisticated, or just or merciful? Should one help the hungry or the ex-

²³ Martin, "Ought but Cannot", 103.

²⁴ Of course, a number of objections have been given against the validity of Kant's principle for obligation. Notable responses can be found, for example: Vranas, "I Ought, Therefore I Can", 173–196, Michael J. Zimmerman, *The Concept of Moral Obligation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79–96.

cluded, insofar as one lacks the means and time to help both at the same time. Should one die rather than step up to cannibalism in a situation of chronic starvation?

Opponents of the possibility of such dilemmas argue that, on the basis of a sufficiently rich ethical theory, any conflict of obligations is all in all resolvable, while the fact of dilemma is due in each case to some cognitive limitation of the subject, which prevents him from seeing which of the options involved has greater validity. Proponents, on the other hand, believe that there is something in the very essence of conflicted duties, some symmetry or incommensurability between them, which makes such a conflict inconclusive on the grounds of any rich ethical theory.

To advocate either side of the argument is of considerable practical importance. If we consider that ethical theory can allow for dilemmas, it turns out that morality can demand too much from us, for more than we can do. It may impose two obligations that we will not be able to fulfill at the same time. In turn, if we reject the possibility of dilemmas, our theory becomes so distant from everyday practice, where we actually experience dilemmas, that it may even be considered unnecessary, because it will be useless precisely when it would be most needed. How can this problem be dealt with on the ground of HE system?

It turns out that, as in the case of the question of validity of Kant's principle, the answer to the question of allowing dilemmas on the grounds of HE system depends on whether it is a question of the oughtness or obligation of both options, and whether it is a question of the logical impossibility of their occurrence at the same time, or rather only the physical impossibility of finding the right subject or the right moment to realize both options.

After all, if it is considered that the dilemma presupposes two ought situations that are logically exclusive, i.e., if we attach the dilemma conditions to the HE system:

$$\text{oug}A, \text{oug}B, \sim\Diamond(A \wedge B),$$

then, on the grounds of this system, the oughtness of being A and B at the same time does not arise, because the thesis is not a full agglomeration principle for oughtness, but only a weaker version of it²⁵:

²⁵ Such a limited agglomeration principle for a theory that admits dilemmas is discussed by Goble. However, he rejects it as leading to paradoxical consequences. It is impossible to reproduce these difficulties on HE grounds. Lou Goble, "A Logic for Deontic Dilemmas", *Journal of Applied Logic* 3 (2005): 467–468.

T9 $(\text{oug}A \wedge \text{oug}B \wedge \Diamond(A \wedge B)) \rightarrow \text{oug}(A \wedge B)$.

Moreover, with the dilemma conditions, the thesis is that it ought not be the case that A and B at the same time, i.e. $\sim\text{oug}(A \wedge B)$, as Kant's principle applies:

$\sim\Diamond(A \wedge B) \rightarrow \sim\text{oug}(A \wedge B)$ ²⁶.

What if we weaken the dilemma conditions and consider that we are dealing with two oughtness that, although logically possible, it is physically impossible to find a perpetrator for both at the same time, such as in the case of mercy and justice (although it actually happens that the implementation of one of these oughtness always translates into the omission of the other, there is nothing logically impossible for them to occur at the same time). If the following conditions are attached to HE

$\text{oug}A, \text{oug}B, \sim\Diamond(A \wedge B)$,

then the ought of being for both options at the same time, $\text{oug}(A \wedge B)$, already arises.

As can be seen, in neither of these two dilemma options does the HE system fall into inconsistency. In the first case, there are only two oughts in conflict, but the combined oughts of which the system rejects. The cumulative ought of two ought options separately arises only when there is just no physical possibility of their realization. This is in line with what we have established about ought following Elzenberg. Ought is determined only by rationale, regardless of whether anyone will ever be able to realize it.

Will it be different for obligation? If we add dilemma conditions to the HE system

$\text{obl}(s, t, A), \text{obl}(s, t, B), \sim\Diamond(A \wedge B)$ or $\sim\Diamond s(A \wedge B)$ or $\sim\Diamond ts(A \wedge B)$,

then also, although we will not get an inconsistency, the aggregate obligation to realize what is obligatory separately will not arise, and this is regardless of whether it is a logical impossibility or only a physical impossibility to realize both options at the same time. The principle of

²⁶ Contradiction in ethical theory with dilemma conditions is obtained not only by the agglomeration principle and Kant's principle, but also by the principle of deontic consistency, in various forms, $(\text{oug}A \rightarrow \sim\text{oug}\sim A)$ with the obligation execution principle $(\text{oug}A \wedge \sim\Diamond(A \wedge B) \rightarrow \text{oug}\sim B)$. David O. Brink, "Moral Conflict and Its Structure", in: *Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory*, ed. Harold E. Mason (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 111–113. The principle of execution obligation is not an HE thesis.

agglomeration applies only to such obligations that can in all respects be realized simultaneously:

$$\text{T10 } (\text{obl}(s, t, A) \wedge \text{obl}(s, t, B) \wedge \Diamond(A \wedge B) \wedge \Diamond s(A \wedge B) \wedge \Diamond ts(A \wedge B)) \rightarrow \text{obl}(s, t, A \wedge B).$$

An obligation can arise upon a person at a given moment, provided that that person can make at that moment what it ought to be. Otherwise, the obligation does not arise. While the HE system allows the appearance of conflicting obligations, it does not force the offender to perform them simultaneously.

To sum up, oughts and obligations can be conflicted and this does not lead to unpleasant consequences on the grounds of the HE system. If the conflicting options are not logically possible to occur at the same time, then there is no ought to be at the same time and consequently no obligation to be fulfilled at the same time. This is justified on the basis of Elzenberg's system on the grounds that only contingent situations are subject to the qualification of ought and obligation. The difference arises when the options in conflict are not possible at the same time in the weaker sense as the impossibility of finding a perpetrator or moment to realize them. Then, despite this impossibility, there is a cumulative ought of two options, but not a cumulative obligation to carry them out. This finds its explanation on the basis of Elzenberg's system in the fact that in order for something to be an ought the rationale decides that it is better than not. In turn, in order for such an ought to turn into someone's obligation at a certain moment, additional rationales must be found for assigning to that very subject at that very moment that ought to be realized. One such rationale is that this subject at this very moment can realize it at all.²⁷

²⁷ Note that such a resolution of the problem of dilemmas on the grounds of HE is in line with many voices in the discussion of a question about the acceptability of dilemmas, which distinguish between *prima facie* obligation and all-things-considered obligation. It is said that dilemmas can occur at the level of the former, but not the latter. Dilemmas would arise from the fact that there is no conclusive rationale for selecting from the many *prima facie* obligations the one that would become the individual obligation that overcomes all others: Brink, "Moral Conflict and Its Structure": 113–116; Terrance C. McConell, "Moral Dilemmas and Consistency in Ethics", in: *Moral Dilemmas*, ed. Christopher W. Gowans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 170.

2.3. Supererogation problem

Contemporary moral philosophy also discusses the problem of the possibility of adopting supererogatory acts, i.e. acts that qualify for heroism or saintliness, on the grounds of ethical theory. This is a particularly acute problem within the systems, such as Elzenberg's, that link obligation to maximization, i.e. where obligation is, in one way or another, about doing what is best. The question is, after all, as to how acts are possible that, although they satisfy the conditions of obligation, as they are the best option for a given subject at a given moment, are not due, because if they are not fulfilled, the subject is not negatively evaluated morally.

Let us consider some examples. If a grenade falls into a trench, is it the obligation of any of the soldiers there to cover it with their own bodies so that others can survive the explosion? How do you qualify the act of someone who sells the car he conveniently uses to commute to work in order to donate the money to charity? Is the sole witness to a blazing fire in an apartment building morally obligated to save the people inside?

The answer to this problem is also of considerable importance for the role of morality in human life. For if supererogatory acts belong to the class of obligations, then morality becomes very demanding, imposing the requirements of heroism on every human being. If, on the other hand, supererogatory deeds are placed outside the requirements of morality, they will become the incomprehensible extravagance of certain oddities, and morality itself will lose all its power to set great tasks for man.

In order to give an answer to this problem within the HE system, let us first turn our attention to the partition of all possible actions for a given subject s at a given moment t due to deontic qualification. To do so, let us introduce the following definitional abbreviations for, in turn, prohibition and optionality.

for(s, t, A) iff **obl**($s, t, \sim A$),

opt(s, t, A) iff $\sim \text{obl}(s, t, \sim A) \wedge \sim \text{obl}(s, t, A)$.

And now, by virtue of the HE system thesis,

T11 $\sim(\text{obl}(s, t, A) \wedge \text{obl}(s, t, \sim A))$,

evaluation of an arbitrary situation A , for a given subject s at time t can be threefold:

T12 $\text{obl}(s, t, A) \vee \text{opt}(s, t, A) \vee \text{for}(s, t, A)$.

As can be seen, any action of the subject *s* at time *t* is either obligatory or forbidden, or is neither one nor the other, i.e., it is optional. Let us check whether supererogatory actions can belong to any of these three possibilities.

Saving comrades from grenade shrapnel, carrying someone out of a burning building, assisting the needy through a generous donation – all of these are situations that are better when they occur than when they do not, and are therefore ought situations. Therefore, supererogatory acts are certainly not considered to belong to the sets of forbidden or optional acts for any subject at any time. Are they obligations? The premise of the question is based on the fact of the subordination of ought to obligation, as expressed in the HE thesis:

T13 **obl**(*s*, *t*, *A*) → **oug***A*.

Out of several soldiers who can throw themselves on a grenade to save the others, can you find the best one to do so? Are there any distinguishing rationales for just this person and not another to assist the charity, or are there any conclusive rationales for doing it just now and not some other time? Are there any conclusive rationales behind this very moment for the one person who witnesses the fire to throw himself into the flames to save others when the fire has already spread so much? There are no such rationales in these cases. There are no conclusive rationales either for this subject and not another to undertake what ought be done, or for this very moment and not another. Therefore, it turns out that the fulfillment of supererogatory acts, although morally ought, is not an obligation. The general of ought situations can be divided according to how many addressees can be found for it to be fulfilled. If one, we have an obligation, while if there are many, as in the example with the grenade, or if everyone is an addressee, as in the case of charity, then no obligation arises.²⁸ Likewise with time: there may be a fixed moment for a given subject, and then we are dealing with an obligation, but there is no longer an obligation if the moments are many, or even if each one is equally good, as in the case of helping the needy, or when there is no such moment at all, as in the case of helping with a raging fire.

²⁸ Similarly, Dorsey: a supererogatory act is an act that is particularly valuable but rationally not required. It is not rationally required because the entity does not find conclusive practical reasons to undertake it, given the non-trivial sacrifice it would have to make in performing it. Dale Dorsey, "The Supererogatory, and How to Accommodate It", *Utilitas* 25 (2013): 371.

As can be seen, the resolution of the problem of classifying supererogatory acts on the grounds of HE system, as in the case of two previously discussed problems of moral philosophy, depends on the proper distinction between ought and obligation. Supererogatory acts are not obligations, but their implementation is an ought.²⁹ We find an explanation of this on the basis of Elzenberg's system. They are not obligations because there is no sufficient rationale to designate unambiguously the subject or the time of performance. Hence they are not due, and there is no sanction for failing to fulfill them. Where, then, does praise or merit come from for their fulfillment? Precisely from the voluntariness of some subject to undertake them at an unspecified time. In addition, the degree to which we will call a given act heroic will depend on the voluntariness of taking the action in the face of a high degree of risk, difficulties to be overcome, the importance of the matter, the urgency of its occurrence, the extent to which others evade the notion of this action.³⁰

Conclusions

The paper outlines Henrik Elzenberg's system of formal axiology in terms of ought-obligation concepts. At the core of this system is the preference relation of meta-empirical will, i.e. such a will that considers only pure rational reasons. The ought is that which is preferred by such a will, namely, what is better to be than not to be for the sake of pure rational reasons. If such an ought occurs, then we have a value, and if it does not occur, then it falls as an obligation on the best, again, for the sake of pure rational reasons, subject, at the best, for the sake of pure rational reasons, moment.

²⁹ Kaniowski agrees with the presented classification of supererogatory acts but believes that in addition the fulfillment of obligations can also bear the signs of supererogation. The cases in question are those where obligations are fulfilled under very difficult conditions or where a multitude of obstacles to their fulfillment are overcome (Andrzej M. Kaniowski, *Supererogacja. Zagubiony wymiar etyki* (Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 1999), 400). For us, such cases will be ought situations, for which the level of effort needed to perform them will weaken their power to bind the given entity to perform them. Therefore, this will not be a separate category of supererogatory acts.

³⁰ This is confirmed by Zimbardo, who considers the voluntariness of the act and the high risk to the perpetrator as the basic characteristics of heroic acts. Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect. Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (New York: Random House, 2007), 466.

Elzenberg's theory has turned out to be strong enough to provide possible answers on several issues of moral obligation currently under discussion. Of course, these are not original answers. Each of them has already been proposed somewhere in the literature, as I have pointed out in the relevant footnotes. However, what is important is that these answers find their rationale on the basis of transparent assumptions of Elzenberg's system. Crucial to the proposed solutions turned out to be the precise distinction between ought and obligation as well as the characterization of their formal structure in the HE system.

In the course of discussion, it turned out that Kant's principle applies to obligation, because obligation is an ought assigned to a certain subject at a certain moment. Assignment occurs through rationale – such an individual is burdened with the obligation of realization as is best suited to it. Assignment presupposes the ability and opportunity of that person at that moment to realize what ought to be done. Otherwise, the obligation does not arise at all. Hence, the obligation is due – the subject can and should perform what ought to be done, and in the case of failure to do so, a negative moral evaluation falls on him. Unlike for ought, here the Kant principle does not apply. The ought does not imply the possibility of its realization. A situation is an ought insofar as the meta-empirical will finds better rational reasons for it to be rather than not to be, completely regardless of whether a possible subject and a possible moment can be found for it.

The same with the adaptability of moral dilemmas. It cannot fall on anyone to realize situations that, although they are obligatory separately, it is not possible to realize them at the same time. This is different in the case of two ought situations, which, although they cannot be realized at the same time, are both logically possible. Nothing prevents the adoption of ought to be at the same time.

As for the problem of adopting supererogatory actions, it turned out that on the basis of Elzenberg's system, these are ought situations, but not obligatory. While there are sufficient rational reasons to consider them ought, there are insufficient rationales to assign them for implementation to some possible perpetrators, at some possible time due to their level of difficulty. The merit of the subject comes from undertaking them voluntarily, despite awareness of the risks.

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Summary

The paper presents the most important assumptions of Henryk Elzenberg's formal axiology concerning the concepts of ought and obligation. For this purpose, the formal language of deontic logic was used. In this language, the HE theory was presented, which was characterized both from the syntactic and semantic side. Using the HE system's theses, possible ways of resolving three currently debated issues related to moral obligation were shown: the question of Kant's principle's validity, the possibility of adopting moral dilemmas and supererogatory acts on the grounds of ethical theory. As it turned out, the key to all the resolutions was the precise distinction between the concepts of ought and obligation.

Keywords: deontic logic, ought, obligation, meta-empirical will, Kant's principle, moral dilemmas, supererogatory.



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Henryk Elzenberg – Stacker of Tables of Values

Henryk Elzenberg was once described as a “stacker of tables of values”, a characterization he readily embraced. To him, values were both fundamental and intrinsic both to everyday life and philosophy. His philosophical approach found its fullest expression in what he termed the “general theory of values”, or general axiology. He immersed himself in the work on formulating and developing the main theses of this theory in the early 1930s. General axiology was meant to substantiate the notion that these theses were not merely Henryk Elzenberg’s beliefs, but that he was right with his claims.

His dedication to creating a cohesive philosophical system distinguished him within the Polish philosophy of the time. Eschewing metaphysical inquiries, he focused on a value-based theory centred on general axiology, which was divided into two primary branches: formal axiology (philosophy of values) and substantive axiology, which was further divided into aesthetics and ethics. While Elzenberg never completed his works on the system of general axiology, his published works largely address issues within substantive axiology. These articles, when considered together, form a coherent framework that outlines both ethical and aesthetic systems. However, reconstructing and interpreting Elzenberg’s philosophy of values, presents certain challenges, which arise primarily because the system of formal axiology was left incomplete, and his main

theses and their justifications existed only in manuscript drafts and scattered notes.

Despite these obstacles, a close examination of Elzenberg's drafts and scattered reflections enables a tentative reconstruction of his systematic views on values. In his framework, Elzenberg distinguishes between two types of value: utilitarian value, which in this context cannot be associated with hedonism, and perfective value. According to Elzenberg, utilitarian value is defined as "a kind of appropriateness between the nature of the thing being evaluated and a given desire or need experienced each time".

Utilitarian value encompasses a set of meanings. In general, value in this sense refers primarily to that which is both desirable and attainable, capable of fulfilling a specific desire. Examples include a drink for a thirsty person or a ball for a team wanting to play a match. Notably, utilitarian value does not imply an immediate desire, but may refer to something desired at times. For instance, tobacco may hold utilitarian value for smokers, even if they are not currently inclined to smoke. There are theoretical possibilities for approaching these values from other perspectives. For instance, one might exclude the attainability criterion, thus focusing purely on the desirability of an object. In such a case, as Elzenberg suggests, "for an ambitious amateur, value may mean winning the long jump at the Olympic Games".¹ Conversely, what is needed also holds value. This includes "that without which a sentient being is harmed – that is, without which it suffers, ceases to exist, or at the very least experiences a depletion of its existence, such as sunshine and fresh air for someone living in confinement, or food for any living being".²

Analysing the examples provided, it becomes clear that what is needed can also be desired, though need and desire can exist independently of each other. This distinction allows for two closely related yet distinct meanings of value. The divergence between these meanings becomes more pronounced when considering the extension of the concept of "need" to inanimate objects, which is theoretically plausible. For instance, one might say that fur requires naphthalene for preservation over the summer or that a crystal requires dry air to maintain its condition. In this context, naphthalene and dry air are essential for the sustained existence of fur and crystals, respectively.

¹ Henryk Elzenberg, "Pojęcie wartości i powinności. Tekst żemłosławski", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne* (Lublin, 2002), 124.

² Ibidem, 125.

The idea of attributing the term “need” to inanimate objects requires further clarification. When we speak of the needs of inanimate objects, it is essential to recognize that this type of need represents an objective state of affairs. Conversely, in the case of human needs, there is also an objective state of affairs, which may or may not include subjective elements.

This raises the question: does the scope of the term “need” align with that of “value”? In other words, is everything that is needed also valuable, and vice versa? This question demands resolution. Essentially, there are two primary perspectives here, represented by Meinong and Elzenberg. Elzenberg’s concept appears to be more fundamentally sound in this debate. Meinong seeks a single universal term for value and thus contends that the scope of that which is needed is narrower than that which is valuable. He argues that there are valuable things that are not strictly necessary and that not everything of value results in suffering if we do not possess it. Examples he provides include luxury goods and works of art.³

Elzenberg offers a markedly different perspective, grounded in the fundamental distinction between two types of values: absolute and objective perfective values, and relative utilitarian values. According to Elzenberg, necessity can serve as the defining characteristic of utilitarian value, while anything not meeting this criterion may be categorized as perfective value.

A key question arises as to whether there are any needs that are not closely tied to utilitarian value. If such “non-valuable” needs existed, it would challenge the validity of defining utilitarian value through need. Interestingly, while Meinong initially questioned the legitimacy of defining value through need, he ultimately conceded that it is difficult to prove the existence of need without corresponding value.

However, the definition of utilitarian value cannot be reduced to mere necessity. While need is indeed a critical component of such value, it is not the sole defining factor. In attempting to articulate “utilitarian value”, concepts such as “pleasure” and “desire” in addition to the term “need” emerge as relevant.

Elzenberg aptly observes that “[...] utilitarian value cannot be defined in terms of “need” in all cases”. It would be appropriate to add that “utilitarian value” sometimes also includes that which is pleasant.

³ Cf. Alexius Meinong, *Zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Werttheorie* (Graz, 1923), 18.

Elzenberg identifies four interrelated categories of meanings associated with utilitarian value:

1. **Desire** (value as the actual or implied ability of an object *P* to satisfy the subject's desire):
 - a) that which is currently desired;
 - b) that which is sometimes desirable;
 - c) that which is both desirable and attainable;
 - d) that which is desirable but unattainable.
2. **Need** (the absence of which results in harm to someone or something):
 - a) that which, if lacking, causes suffering;
 - b) that without which someone or something cannot exist;
 - c) that without which existence is "diminished".
3. **Pleasure.**
4. **"Augmented Existence".⁴**

Utilitarian values, defined by desire and need, are inherently negative in nature; they can only neutralize or alleviate certain states of condition, but do not generate positive states or additional goods. Conversely, utilitarian values defined by pleasure and augmented existence can contribute positively, constituting a certain type of good. In his attempt to clarify these four dimensions of utilitarian value, Elzenberg concluded that all such values could, in principle, be reduced to desire, need, pleasure, or "augmented existence". However, he did not specify which of these concepts should be privileged, or serve as the foundational basis for defining utilitarian value, though he saw the greatest potential in "need".

For Elzenberg, the defining characteristic of utilitarian value is its intrinsic relativity; it is "always a value for someone (or something), such that an object may hold value for one person who desires, needs, or finds pleasure in it, while it may not hold the same value for another".⁵ The question then arises: do utilitarian values, understood in this way, meet the criteria required of values in the axiological sense? In other words, can utilitarian values be considered genuine subjects of axiology? First, it must be determined whether they are capable of eliciting rational and affective positive responses – such as approval, respect, reverence, or love. Elzenberg's answer is negative, rooted in the very nature of utilitarian value: its relativity – the fact that it is always a value for someone

⁴ Cf. Henryk Elzenberg, "Rękopisy etyczne (I) Do kwestii potrzeby i pożądania", *Etyka* 24 (1988): 263–264.

⁵ Elzenberg, *Pojęcie wartości i powinności. Tekst żemłostawski*, 126.

or something. Since emotions (desires, pleasures, needs) vary and often conflict among different individuals, affirming that “A should be” would necessitate conceding that “B (opposed to A) should not be”. This precludes the possibility of making a universal judgement that “A is useful, therefore it should be”. Second, the relative nature of utilitarian values precludes them from providing directives for situations requiring axiological choices. So they do not meet the second condition either. As for the condition that beauty and goodness are varieties of value, utilitarian values do not inherently fulfil this either. According to Elzenberg, utilitarian values do satisfy the final criterion: the existence of a counter-value to utilitarian value can be established. **However, the failure to meet all axiological criteria implies that utilitarian values cannot be considered values in the full axiological sense, as only those values satisfying all foundational criteria qualify as true axiological values.**

Although utilitarian values do not form a core component of Elzenberg’s philosophy of values, his emphasis on identifying and understanding their essence was intended to serve an important role. Throughout the history of philosophy, many axiological systems have been founded on utilitarian values; however, Elzenberg argued that this does not imply that all human judgements are fundamentally utilitarian. Elzenberg firmly rejected the premise of utilitarianism which posits that valuing equates to balancing pleasures and pains. He engaged critically with hedonism – one of the most developed examples of utilitarian value theory – highlighting its limitations. For Elzenberg, identifying the shortcomings of such systems marked the beginning of a deeper search for value in the true axiological sense, a type of value upon which a coherent philosophy of values could be built. This is not to suggest that Elzenberg dismissed the significance of knowledge derived from utilitarian values. On the contrary, he acknowledged its essential role in human life, while asserting that it does not qualify as axiological knowledge; its foundations are primarily biological (need) and psychological (desire and pleasure). According to Elzenberg, disciplines such as hygiene, medicine, economics, and technology deal with utilitarian values. While no distinct field of study exclusively addresses these values, Elzenberg proposed the need for such a field, suggesting naming it “**theoretical biotechnology**”. However, he never developed this concept further, and the pursuit of a comprehensive theory of utilitarian values lay outside his primary scholarly interests.

The Concept of Perfect Value and Ought

Since utilitarian values do not satisfy the criteria Elzenberg established for value in the axiological sense, they cannot form the foundation of a philosophy of value (formal axiology) in the strict sense. Unlike relative utilitarian values, the values sought in Elzenberg's framework should be absolute and objective, allowing for a sound and universal judgement of reality.

To fully grasp the essence of this type of value, it is essential to reconstruct the reasoning that led Elzenberg to his concept of value in the perfectionist sense. Elzenberg's starting point was the analysis of the phrase "Spirit is worth more than matter". Here, the question is not whether the statement is true or false; what matters is that it was sincerely expressed, and the speaker believed it conveyed a meaningful judgement. According to Elzenberg, this phrase qualifies as a value statement due to the expression "**worth more**", which implies "**more valuable**". This is not a matter of utilitarian value; it does not imply that someone desires spirit more than matter or that spirit brings more pleasure than matter. The terms **spirit and matter** are not evaluated as they are in judgements of utilitarian value (spirit and matter are not a value for someone or something). They are terms that capture values in absolute isolation, values in an absolute sense. Consider another example: the statement that the pleasure derived from reading a poem is "worth more" than the comparable pleasure of eating a dozen oysters. While one may desire to read a poem or to eat oysters to different extents, one cannot desire or need the pleasures provided by these activities more, because we have assumed that they are quantitatively equal. Similarly, one might assert that a human being is more valuable than a dog, a dog more valuable than an earthworm, and civilization more valuable than a state of savagery.

According to Elzenberg, the value judgements cited above are comparative, though their comparative nature does not define their essence. For instance, the notion that a dog holds less value than a human but more than an earthworm does not arise simply from comparison, but rather from the dog's intrinsic worth – distinct from utilitarian value. In seeking to clarify this new concept of value, Elzenberg suggested juxtaposing it with its partial synonyms, such as **nobility**, **dignity**, or **respectability**. Thus, one might say that spirit is nobler than matter, or that the pleasure of reading a poem surpasses in nobility that of eating oysters.

As in the case of utilitarian value, Elzenberg faced the problem of giving a name to the value so understood. He found that the terms "nobility", "dignity", and "respectability" were insufficient for a technical

designation. Instead, he selected the Latin term *perfectio* – “perfection” – as the most fitting, and coined the term **perfect value**. Values in the utilitarian and perfect sense, as Elzenberg saw them, are fundamentally different kinds of values, as there is no identifiable overarching concept that would encompass both usefulness and qualities such as dignity, nobility, or perfection. These are entirely distinct categories. Consequently, the disciplines studying these values are separate fields.

According to Elzenberg, the knowledge of perfect values and objects of perfect value is in a different situation from theoretical biotechnology. “By adopting this terminology, we effectively claim exclusive possession of the revered, commonly understood, term “value” – a term elevated by years of intellectual effort – and subtly imply that only ‘our’ concept of perfect value is **genuine** (value par excellence), while all others are mere pseudo-values”.⁶

Thus far, explanations of perfect value – primarily based on the analysis of examples – have proved insufficient. Similarly, referring to terms that are only partial synonyms of the term “perfect value” falls short of capturing its essence. The fundamental question Elzenberg raises is whether defining perfect value is even possible.

His stance on this matter of definability of the term is decidedly affirmative; however, he acknowledges significant challenges that necessitate preparatory considerations before any formal definition is formulated. These challenges stem from two main issues:

- first, the definition itself would necessarily include complex terminology, which might not fully clarify the concept in a universally compelling way;
- and second, the definition could be misunderstood due to the use of words that the audiences are not accustomed to in such a context.

To address these issues, Elzenberg sought to make the concept more accessible by employing alternative explanatory approaches before attempting a formal definition of perfect value, which he formulated with similar caution and consideration. This careful methodology reflects his intent to ensure that the final definition aligns consistently with the foundational ideas presented in his initial analyses. “To accomplish this”, Elzenberg writes, “we will introduce an intermediate concept that maintains, on one hand, a clear connection with the idea of perfect value, while also pointing toward the defining formula we intend to propose.

⁶ Ibidem, 131.

This concept will thus serve as a transitional link, facilitating the movement from *definiendum* to *definiens*. This intermediary is the concept of **approval**".

Elzenberg argues that, in common understanding, all positively valued states are met with approval, while negative states are disapproved of. To clarify potential ambiguities, he defines what he means by "approval": it does not refer to an emotion felt by the person making the judgement. Rather, it indicates that the judgement of the value itself is an expression of endorsement, an approval. Thus, to approve and to value positively in terms of perfection are, fundamentally, the same. The only distinction lies in approval's inclusion of a particular dimension of the act of valuing. Elzenberg elaborates on this point, stating: "Every perfect value judgement is an approval, and every approval is a perfect value judgement. There are no instances of approval other than positive judgements of perfection: approval is exhausted in a value judgement, just as a value judgement is exhausted in approval". Elzenberg introduces the concept of "approval" as a bridge toward defining perfect value due to its unique nuance of meaning, which he describes as aligning with some inherent standard or requirement. He further reduces this notion to the phrase **"as it ought to be"**. In other words, something that meets a set requirement is precisely as it ought to be. Having adopted a definition of approval as an intermediate concept on the road towards constructing a definition of perfect value, Elzenberg arrives at a definition of perfect value: **"An object of value, in the sense of perfection, is an object as it ought to be"**.⁷

In the definition of perfect value, the concept of "ought" is foundational. For Elzenberg, "ought" serves as a central category in his theory of value. He argues that one of the aims of axiology is to address the question: how should one act, both in specific life situations and across all possible circumstances? Elzenberg emphasizes that axiology is not a prescriptive guide through life, nor does it provide a detailed list of possible duties for every individual. Rather, it is meant to offer "some very general, binding rules of conduct – rules of reason – within which the choice of specific actions would be shaped by factors beyond the scope of axiological analysis".⁸

From these reflections, Elzenberg infers that the varied uses of "ought" in conditional-utilitarian statements – whether probabilistic,

⁷ Ibidem, 135.

⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, "Konstrukcja pojęcia wartości", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne* (Lublin, 2002), 72–73.

imperative, or stipulative – are enabled by the unique, specific deontological essence of the term. According to Elzenberg, this assumption is possible owing to a shared element that links these distinct applications of “ought”. He describes this common element to be consistent with deontological meaning: “[...] namely, that when something is “as it ought to be”, it is somehow “in accordance with the law”, with the rule (and if it is not, there is a conflict with the law or rule); it is then “in order”, and if it is not, it is not. This subtle aspect is present to varying degrees across all interpretations of the term”.⁹

After identifying the deontological dimension of “ought”, Elzenberg considers whether it is feasible to define “ought” in the same way as “valuable” has been defined. He maintains that it cannot be categorically asserted that a term cannot be defined. He suggests a methodical approach: examine all proposed definitions, reject those that prove inadequate, and, through a process of elimination, arrive at the tentative conclusion that formulating a satisfactory definition may be elusive. Even then, Elzenberg advises caution in making absolute statements, as there can be no certainty that each attempted definition is entirely unsound. This caution is particularly relevant, as Elzenberg observes, because the claim that “ought” is a simple concept that eludes thorough analysis holds considerable significance for certain philosophical frameworks.

He dismisses, from the outset, any interpretations that restrict the concept of “ought” solely to human obligations. Furthermore, he pays some more attention to the justificatory interpretation, which he views as a misunderstanding rooted in the attempt to base ethical terms like “goodness” and “ought” – and indeed the entirety of ethics – on quasi-logical relations. In the justificatory interpretation, something that “ought to be” is only valid when it is justified by some rational reason. For example, the statement: “The judge ought to be fair” is interpreted as equivalent to, “There is a rational reason for the judge to be fair”. Without delving further into the meaning of the terms “justified” and “rational reason”, it is intuitive to conclude that if the first of these sentences is true, then the second should also be true. Do the two sentences have the same meaning? Elzenberg argues they do not concluding that the justificatory interpretation fails to capture the essence of “ought”. Justification, he asserts, is merely a function of “ought”, not its essence. In this context, Elzenberg introduces the distinction between the “ought” of being and the “ought” of doing, Elzenberg’s concept of “ought” pertains to an intrinsic **“ought of being”**, which

⁹ Henryk Elzenberg, *Pojęcie wartości i powinności. Tekst żemłostawski*, 157.

applies to things and states of affairs in themselves. This “ought of being” is considered a fundamental, intrinsic state. When this intrinsic state – what ought to be – can potentially be realized, it gives rise to the “ought of doing”, although this “ought of doing” remains initially unspecific and unaddressed. Only through substantive axiology, particularly ethics, does this “ought of doing” become concrete. Thus, in line with Elzenberg’s reasoning, one must assert that there can be no “ought of doing” without an underlying “ought of being”. To further explain this understanding of “ought”, Elzenberg introduces a conceptual construct known as **“meta-empirical will”**, distinct from **empirical will**. He describes it as follows: “[...] it is conceived as a type of will in man that ‘is not subject to motives’ (from an emotional standpoint), but only to reasons; it would be ‘autonomous’, unchanging, and identical across different individuals. This will stands in contrast to our motive-dependent (‘heteronomous’), fluctuating, and highly individual will”. Thus, when one says, “I ought to”, it is as if one is expressing a desire for “that other will”.¹⁰ Rephrasing slightly, one might argue that a state of affairs that “ought to be” is one that each individual would want to realize if endowed with an autonomous will. But what is autonomous will? In Elzenberg’s framework, autonomous will is a construct designed to rationalize our intuitions about the objectivity of values rooted in the “ought of being”. In other words, autonomous will, as Elzenberg sees it, is a will driven solely by rational considerations.

Elzenberg ultimately struggled to resolve the definitional entanglement between the concepts of ought and perfect value. The challenges posed by this association led to a theoretical impasse in the late 1940s, evident in the notes from his Toruń lectures during the 1948/1949 academic year. He writes: “One can try to reverse the relation and define “ought” by perfect value. This fails (in my opinion); but again: the possibility of such an attempt sheds light on the concept of ought. (They explain each other). [...] What is unsatisfactory here is that only two concepts are introduced in relation to each other, which exposes the insufficiency of the system”. Elzenberg came close to resolving this issue by moving away from defining value through “ought” or vice versa. Instead, he approached their relationship as an axiom, suggesting that both concepts are fundamental and mutually characterizing.

The development of Elzenberg’s theory of value was most profoundly shaped by the philosophies of Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, and Nicolai Hartmann. Like Windelband and Rickert, he held that value

¹⁰ Cit. after: Bogusław Wolniewicz, “Myśl Elzenberga”, *Studia Filozoficzne* 12 (1986): 61.

judgements are inherently cognitive acts. Additionally, they contain a distinct “practical” element, meaning that each judgement is expected to align with and affirm a certain value. Thus, cognition itself involves valuation: it is the act of approving positive values and disapproving negative ones. In Rickert’s theory, this view of cognition is closely tied to a doctrine of a **transcendent “ought”**, allowing him to argue that all cognition involves recognizing an “ought”, so that a true judgement is a judgement that should be acknowledged. Elzenberg’s theory was also influenced by Nicolai Hartmann’s claim that “[...] the essence of every value includes an ought; it must therefore be inherent in the ideal mode of existence”. This notion of *Seinsollen* – a duty intrinsic to value – initially appealed to Elzenberg, but later raised doubts. By 1966, while compiling a collection of his earlier writings, he expressed concern that this interpretation overlooked an essential feature of value: its gradation within a hierarchy.

Within the framework of formal axiology, Elzenberg does not resolve ontological problems of value. He attempts to do so only when analysing the concept of “aesthetic value”, but then he encounters complexities that seem to invite interpretations of value aligned with Plato’s objective idealism.

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Henryk Elzenberg – Stacker of Tables of Values

Streszczenie

Henryk Elzenberg to najwybitniejszy polski aksjolog, który za cel postawił sobie zbudowanie systemu filozofii wartości. System ów opierał się na trzech filarach. Pierwszy z nich stanowi zdecydowane rozróżnienie dwu pojęć wartości: utylitarnej i perfekcyjnej. Drugi filar to definicyjne związanie pojęcia wartość perfekcyjna z pojęciem powinność. Trzeci to rozumienie powinności jako powinności bytu i przeciwstawienie powinności czynu. Celem Elzenberga

nie była analiza słowa wartość po to, aby rozpatrywać wszelkie jego znaczenia w języku, ale przede wszystkim określenie i analiza znaczenia terminu wartość perfekcyjna. Podstawą ogólnej teorii wartości uczynił wartość estetyczną i wartość etyczną. Piękno i dobro są odmiennymi aspektami wartości perfekcyjnej.

Henryk Elzenberg – Stacker of Tables of Values

Summary

Henryk Elzenberg is the most prominent Polish axiologist, who set himself the task of building a system of philosophy of values. This system was based on three pillars. The first is a firm distinction between two concepts of value: utilitarian and perfectionist. The second pillar is the definitional link between the concept of perfect value and the concept of duty. The third is the understanding of ought as the ought of being and the opposition of the ought of doing. Elzenberg's aim was not to analyse the word value in order to consider all its meanings in language, but above all to define and analyse the meaning of the term perfect value. He made aesthetic value and ethical value the basis of a general theory of value. Beauty and goodness are different aspects of perfect value.

Keywords: utilitarian values, perfect values, ethical value, aesthetic value, ought, ought of being, ought of doing, beauty, goodness

RUCH FILOZOFICZNY

PART III:
EXISTENTIAL AXIOLOGY
AND AXIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY:
A DIALOGUE
ON THE HUMAN CONDITION

SOURCE TEXTS



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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Henryk Elzenberg as a theoretician of ethics

Henryk Elzenberg's reflections on ethics crystallized in his two books published at the end of his life: *Value and Man* and *Attempts at Contact*.¹ Remarks on ethical topics are also scattered throughout the non-poetic parts of both books and in his previously published collection *The Trouble with Existence*;² the essay *Marcus Aurelius*,³ on the other hand, belongs to the history of ethics.

Elzenberg's view of the world was bleak. When he was a young man, he was struck by "an almost overwhelming thought of death as absolute annihilation": this was accompanied by other "worries as old as human thought [...] the transience of everything, the impending destruction

¹ *Value and man, dissertations on humanities and philosophy*, Scientific Society in Toruń, 'Works of the Faculty of Philology and Philosophy', vol. XVIII, issue 1, Toruń 1966; chapters - I. The concept of perfect value; II. On the difference between beauty and goodness; III. Moral beauty; V. Aesthetics as a valuing discipline; XII. The ethics of renunciation, what it is and how it is justified; XIII. Duty and command; XIV. Against hedonism; XV. Practical realism in ethics and the fundamental values of human life; XVI. The ideal of salvation on grounds of pure ethics. *Attempts at contact*, essays and critical studies, Znak Publishing House, Krakow 1966; chapters - 1. Concern and thought (on the beginnings of my philosophizing); 7. Brutus, or the curse of virtue; 8. Ahimsa and pacifism, a thing about Gandhism; 9. Gandhi in historical perspective.

² *The Trouble with Existence*, aphorisms in chronological order, Znak Publishing House, Krakow 1963.

³ *Marcus Aurelius, from the history and psychology of ethics*, Philosophical Library edited by W. Heinrich, published by Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego, Lviv and Warsaw 1922.

of humanity, the powerlessness of the human spirit in the cosmos, the meaninglessness of human life in such conditions"; "The world itself has no meaning and is hostile to all sense";⁴ in this alien and hostile world, man is alone.⁵ The path towards overcoming this pessimistic attitude, Elzenberg finds in ethics, which he understands "as a war waged on the world by an individual".⁶ For even if "the world itself has no meaning and is hostile to all meaning, one can still shape oneself, and in particular one's inner content, to be able to oppose it as something that will always be meaningful and preserve its value".⁷ In this sense, ethics is the science of courageous behaviour towards existence.⁸ Ethics, writes Elzenberg,⁹ is a discipline based on axiology that deals with the question of how we should behave. It considers value-creating characteristics in terms of the reasons why knowledge of these characteristics can influence our behaviour in one way or another.

Hence, the most important question for ethics is what value is and how we come to know it. Let us again refer to the text, which states: "The terms 'value' and 'valuable' are used, as a closer look reveals, with two completely different meanings: In one of them, a 'valuable object' is an object that corresponds to someone's desires or needs, or more generally to desires, needs, tendencies, aspirations, abilities, or even the conditions of existence and permanence of someone or something [...]. Value thus understood is relative by definition; it is always a value for someone or something, and if it is for someone, it does not mean 'in someone's eyes' or 'in someone's opinion', but whether for someone or for something, it always indicates a certain adaptation, a certain usefulness. If it were possible to free the term 'utilitarian' from its hedonistic connotations, it would be the most convenient term for describing value as understood here; however, it cannot really be avoided. Other terms have been tried: for example, J. Laird [...] speaks of elective values, i.e. 'by choice'. [...] The situation is different with the second meaning of the word 'value', which must be clearly distinguished from the first. The author of *Letters to Lucilius* had this in mind centuries ago when (LXXI, 33) he distinguished and contrasted two categories of good things: those that have *pretium* (are valuable) and those that have *dignitas* (dignity); he also added that

⁴ In the essay *Concern and thought*, in: *Attempts at contact*, p. 129.

⁵ *The trouble with existence*, in: *Attempts at contact*, p. 235 et seq.

⁶ *Attempts at contact*, p. 130

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *The Trouble with Existence*, p. 143

⁹ *Value and Man*, p. 24

we do not grant dignity to what is *necessarium* (necessary) or *in diem utile* (currently useful). Have we been able, since Seneca's time, to articulate this contrast more precisely? The words perfection or nobility, like the word *dignitas*, can only serve as a preliminary orientation [...]. In Polish, one could perhaps [...] say '*szacowność*' (respectability), but the best purely technical term – emotionally neutral and unbiased – would probably be the 'perfect value'. However we express it, one fact is clear: judgements about perfection – whether dignity, respectability or perfect value – are certainly not the same as judgements about utilitarian or elective value".¹⁰ The author states further that perfect values are more important than utilitarian values, at least in two respects. 1) They are absolute, while the latter are relative; 2) "...there is a relationship between perfect value and that which is most authoritative *de iure* for human conduct, which we call duty or obligation, that clearly does not exist between the last-mentioned concept and the concept of utilitarian value". Value based on satisfying needs or desires will never in itself justify any obligation; needs and desires are often contradictory, and if we accept that one should be satisfied, then the other, which is contradictory to it, should not be; that is, we cannot say: 'it is necessary, so it should be'. Judgements of perfect value, on the other hand, serve as a fully sufficient justification for judgements stating that 'it should be this way' or 'it must be this way'. A given perfect value, whether it can be actualized or not, should in principle be actualized. For the time being, this obligation is, in itself, only theoretical; However, if a conscious agent is found who is capable of actually realising it, then for that agent (taking into account various real situational factors that complicate the matter) a specific obligation arises, in time and place, to actually achieve the desired state of affairs. Thus, "[...] human behaviour is entirely subject to norms resulting from the fact that perfect values do exist and are binding. And this is also the main advantage of the perfect value over the elective value".¹¹

The author distinguishes between two types of perfect value: beauty and goodness. The question of their mutual relationship is examined in the treatise *On the Difference Between Beauty and Goodness*.¹² In order to find the answer, the author first removes possible ambiguities regarding the use of both terms, "for nothing is more deadly to art than its subordination to points of view in the trivially social sense of the word 'ethical', and nothing more disastrous in life than judging events and people solely in

¹⁰ Ibid., chapter "The concept of perfect value", p. 9 et seq.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 10

¹² Ibid., p. 13-24

terms of their 'beauty', from which the aestheticism of defeat or crime so easily arises".¹³ Then, by eliminating various hypotheses about the construction of both concepts and their relationship to the concept of value, he concludes that there is no objective difference between them, but that they differ in "our own attitude towards value when we call it beauty or good. [...] We seem to call something beautiful, first and foremost, when we evaluate it as valuable and, at the same time, with a clear awareness of its value, contemplate it or experience it contemplatively. By contemplation, I understand a kind of prolonged observation, namely such in which we do not delve further cognitively into the object being observed, but rather maintain its previously recognized elements and characteristics in our field of consciousness; all other properties commonly attributed to contemplation, I would rather refer, in my terminology, either to an evaluative attitude, as partial aimlessness, or to certain forms or levels of contemplation, as self-forgetfulness and losing oneself in the object. Contemplative experience is the experience of all those emotional states that arise and develop in us as we contemplate an object and thanks to the fact that we contemplate it. It is with these two processes that the use of the word beautiful is connected. The further we move along the scale from simple prolonged observation, through contemplation, to contemplative experience and its peak intensities, the more forcefully this word comes to mind in place of the dry, factual term 'valuable.' The word 'beautiful' then means exactly the same as 'valuable', but at the same time it expresses my state of contemplation or contemplative experience; in addition to its semantic function, it fulfils a certain expressive and lyrical function – and this lyrical revelation of the contemplative state of the soul often finds its musical accompaniment, so to speak, in the intonation with which we pronounce the word".¹⁴ This specific use of the word 'beautiful' extends to cases in which contemplation is recalled in memory, or anticipated, or finally only recognized as possible. The term 'good' is related to desire: if, "as is inherent in the concept of value given here, it is true that some objects should be such and such, then it is also true (this claim is axiomatic for axiology and is the basis of its normative role) that a being capable of understanding this statement should – if it is endowed with will - want them to be such and such. A valuable object is therefore not only an object 'as it should be', but always also an object "as a rational being endowed with free will should want it to be" – except that the latter characteristic, as a derivative, does not need to be specified

¹³ Ibid., p. 12

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 19, 20

when defining value. This second property of a valuable object is not present *explicite* in our consciousness when we say that it is valuable, just as when we say 'sea' we do not have *explicite* in our consciousness that it is rough; however, we focus our attention on it and draw the attention of others to it, i.e. we emphasize it when we call it good. It is as when Homer, speaking of the sea, instead of simply saying *thalásse*, says *polýphloisbos thalásse*, with the difference that instead of adding a new word, we replace the original word with another, more complex one that fulfils both functions. However, we do not add any new features to the content covered by the term 'valuable', just as – assuming that every sea roars and that we know this – *polýphloisbos* adds nothing to the content of the noun. Therefore, we must not be tempted to say that 'good' means "valuable and such as a rational and volitional being should want it to be". Not at all; the difference between 'good' and 'valuable' remains subjective here: 'good' means 'valuable' and expresses focusing attention on the feature in question. [...] The term 'good' in deontological usage is fitting in ethics... The term 'valuable', on the other hand, should be used primarily when I simply make a positive judgement about something, i.e. I say that 'it is as it should be' and I do not claim or express anything else: in short, when my attitude is purely evaluative.¹⁵ When discussing the obligation to create culture as a set of valuable things, 'as they should be', the author asks himself: "[...] are such independent values something that really exists? If not, then the conclusion regarding their implementation collapses; and who knows, perhaps we will have to agree that such a negative answer is the one most commonly heard in philosophical circles today. However, despite everything that its supporters can cite in its favour, it seems that the affirmative answer has stronger arguments behind it. I cannot cite them here, nor, least of all, examine their strength; let me only state, as necessary for the continuation, that there is no question of any proof of the negative thesis, and that in the worst case the matter is merely doubtful. And that is quite enough for us, because – contrary to the well-known and otherwise reasonable principle of practical wisdom – doubt is sufficient grounds here to create what we are after: a command not to hold back, but to act. [...] If we make an effort, there is a chance of creating culture; if we hold back, there is no chance at all".¹⁶

The cognition of values differs from the cognition of specific sciences in the nature of fundamental propositions. "In science", writes the author, "these propositions are either perceptual-sensory, perceptual-in-

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 22 et seq.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 152

trospective, or, finally, *a priori*; in evaluative thinking – apart from this or that auxiliary axiom, which is *a priori*, but not a judgement – they belong to a completely different category, which does not fit into any of the three mentioned above. They are not *a priori*; on the contrary, in a broad sense they could be called empirical: on the basis of contact with a thing, they determine that it is such and such, good or bad, beautiful or ugly. However, they are not perceptual, in either of the two possible variants: values are not determined either by the senses or by introspection. There is nothing else left but to use a term that is unsatisfactory, but capable of providing at least some rough orientation, and call them intuitive. Intuition lies at the basis of valuation; establishing and strengthening the foundations of a valuation discipline means developing not observations or introspective data, or even – for the most part – *a priori* data, but intuitions. The principal activities of the mind, required in science on the one hand and in judgement on the other, are therefore different; and this difference is deepened by the numerous experiences accompanying thinking, which shape two independent, clearly distinct varieties, not only of intellects, but of people”.¹⁷ This matter is discussed in more detail in the chapter *Aesthetics as a value-judging discipline*, in which the author discusses, not only aesthetic, but also ethical valuation (i.e. “judging that this or that feature gives value to objects that possess it”¹⁸) and judgement (i.e. “judging that this or that object is valuable”¹⁹). The author argues that fundamental claims in the field of values are verifiable, writing, “What, then, is verification in the sense that I have in mind and which, as I see it, is possible in the field of evaluation? That, thanks to certain procedures, we learn whether a given judgement is true or false? Not necessarily; it is enough for us to learn whether, and to what extent, it is more justified than its negation. Therefore, in order to be able to say that a certain type of judgement is verifiable, it seems that only two things are needed: that it is possible to meaningfully speak of its greater or lesser justification, and that its degree of justification can be determined by some additional measure. And so, contrary to the doubts of some, the ‘evaluative aesthetician’ – let us add that this also applies to the ethicist – assumes that judgements of value meet both of the above requirements. First and foremost, he considers it untrue that one value judgement cannot be more justified than another. It can be justified to a similar extent as an observational judgement. As with ob-

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 154

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 33–42

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 34

servational judgements, where the degree of justification depends on whether the conditions under which they were made were more or less favourable, the same applies to value judgements. If two witnesses give different numbers for a passing car, the judgement of the one who was standing three steps away is, *ceteris paribus*, more justified than the judgement of the one who was standing thirty steps away; likewise, if two judges issue conflicting assessments, the judgement of the one who, presumably, was impartial and unbiased and examined the subject thoroughly is, *ceteris paribus*, more justified than the judgement of the one who examined it superficially and, moreover, was biased. And although both of them may well be wrong, we have a reasonable reason to opt for the informed judgement of, say, John rather than the capricious opinion of James. This is more or less how an aesthete understands the fulfilment of the first requirement. However, in his opinion, the next requirement is also fulfilled: because the conditions that come into play, such as impartiality or in-depth knowledge of the subject, are facts that are sometimes easier and sometimes more difficult to ascertain, but essentially always verifiable. This result, it must be admitted, is modest. An opponent, not without some justification, will point out that even the most justified judgement of value within these limits is still so weakly justified that it is better to withhold one's approval. One could question this, but that is beside the point. But, an aesthete would say, we know of higher and more perfect degrees of justification that can be achieved here. How many of our beliefs, even in science, are based on that 'final authority' we argue about, on the agreement of observations made by all, without exception, independent observers working under appropriate conditions. In the event of such agreement among all independent judges of value working under appropriate conditions, would we not have a reasonable reason to accept their observations as our own? But this very agreement, an opponent would say, we have never been able to establish. That is true, because we have never tried to place a certain number of observers in the right conditions and compare the results obtained. Hence, if one wishes to be scrupulous, one must not say that verification is impossible; one may only say that it has never really been carried out. [...] Incidentally, it is not even necessary to establish full consistency. A serious justification would be the reduction of discrepancies as the conditions for passing judgement approach the appropriate ones; to some extent, this reduction is already supported by our ordinary, unsystematic, everyday observations. These observations – no one denies – require the strictest scrutiny. However, as things stand, it can be

said with absolute certainty that we have not only no clear evidence, but also no serious argument against this assumption. Contrary to the absurd proverb and the scepticism of those who are reluctant to believe it, it seems that honest discussion, leading gradually from ill-considered to well-considered judgements, also leads from inconsistent to less inconsistent ones; and it is largely to this fact, and not only to the thoughtlessness of sociological processes, that we owe such phenomena as the gradual elimination of many works of art, initially considered beautiful, the establishment of a good opinion of others, and the creation of a certain hierarchy, subject to constant revision, but not capricious. All these revisions, rehabilitations, etc. should be viewed from a broad perspective as moments in a great discussion that has been taking place throughout history. All this would be utterly insufficient if it were to justify the claim to equate evaluative aesthetics with disciplines that offer a high degree of certainty. Meanwhile, it suffices to refute the accusation of unverifiability in itself. In fact, all we have here is the verification of less than perfect results. This criticism can be directed not only against evaluative aesthetics, but also against a multitude of inquiries that are completely untouched by this plague of evaluation; and yet we pursue these inquiries and find progress in many of them".²⁰ At the end of his argument, the author offers a beautiful characterization of aesthetics and, more generally, of an evaluating and judging axiologist, as opposed to a 'positivist' scholar: "He knows very well that he faces hundreds of pitfalls; that his personal chances of failure are greater than his chances of success; he is acutely aware of the uncertainty of his results, their constant threat from the criticism of others and himself, in short: the constant risk. This risk is, in fact, his joy, because, as a psychological type, he has and must have something of the adventurer in him, and his attitude towards the 'positivist' is a little like that of a sailor who knows that he can go down at any moment, as opposed to a landlubber, who faces no such threat. In its own way, this is also satisfying, but it is not what determines his behaviour in matters of cognition; what determines it is that he does not want to go down. And that is why he is, before all else, and quite naturally, cautious. [...] He knows well that his subject is vague and elusive, and that what he discovers in it eludes adequate definition. So although, as I said, he is a *sui generis* rationalist at his starting point, it is easy to find a trait in him that is contrary to strict rationalism: a tendency to treat concepts and judgements as merely a vari-

²⁰ Ibid., p. 39 et seq.

ation of highly imperfect symbols of a reality that resists human thought. Therefore, he does not offer anyone the chiaroscuro in which he sees things as full light, nor does he commit himself to this or that verbal formula, or even to this or that discursive expression of his intuition. He has – yes, he! – something from the spirit of empiricism in the sense that he understands his progress into the depths of a subject as a series of attempts and reversals, as coming into contact, as gradually becoming familiar with reality. Consequently, he is characterized by criticism of his own achievements, conscious smoothing of the edges of his assertions, readiness for change and correction, and, above all, restraint and, once again, restraint”.²¹

The two types of values, utilitarian and perfect, correspond to two types of normative ethics: hedonistic and perfectionist. Elzenberg offers detailed analyses of both. He formulates the hedonistic thesis in the following words: “People should be guided in their conduct solely by hedonistic values, that is, by pleasure (in the sense that they should strive to increase its sum in the world) and by pain (in the opposite sense: that they should strive to reduce its sum). This is so that the overall balance is as favourable to pleasure as it is unfavourable to pain”.²² This thesis is derived from another, more radical axiological thesis, namely: “there are no values other than hedonistic ones, or, to elaborate, there is no other ultimate positive value than pleasure, nor any other ultimate negative value other than displeasure, or possibly suffering as a higher degree of displeasure; and there is no other positive instrumental value than the property of something that contributes to the realisation or maintenance of some pleasure, or to the prevention of some displeasure, or possibly its cessation once it has arisen”.²³ This thesis is justified by a hedonic reduction, which states: “[...] we make judgements that seemingly assign non-hedonic values to people or things, but the value assigned is really always and in all cases hedonic. The person making the judgement succumbs to a kind of illusion; a closer analysis dispels this illusion”.²⁴ The author argues against this view by analysing its various possible meanings and shows that it cannot be justified in any of them. He concludes with the remark: “Certain results in the polemic with hedonism seem to have been achieved. However, this is not a victorious conclusion, not only of some general campaign against hedonism, but even of the dis-

²¹ Ibid., p. 41 et seq.

²² Ibid., p. 119

²³ Ibid., p. 119 et seq.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 121

cussion on the hedonic evaluation itself. For [...] it can be argued that non-hedonic evaluations are indeed being made, but that they are [...] meaningless, because it is not known and we are unable to explain what the non-hedonic value postulated in them would be (what its ontological status would be). But here the discussion shifts, and with it the front line of battle: the thesis of the meaninglessness – or, in a less aggressive version, the non-predicative nature – of non-hedonic judgements is shared by hedonists, axiological nominalists, nihilists, and some subjectivists. What concerns only classical hedonists in the matter raised ends here”.²⁵

This line of thought is continued in the reflections entitled *Practical realism in ethics and the fundamental values of human life*.²⁶ The position of practical realism in ethics, represented by Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Elzenberg characterizes as follows: “When I have more than one course of action to choose from, the reasonable choice is always the one that prevents or averts some kind of evil. However, if at least one [...] of the alternative choices would be one that would bring about some good, then (this conclusion is inevitable) the choice to introduce some good is not a reasonable choice. Since there is no situation in life in which there is no evil to be fought within our sphere of influence, this rule applies, in principle, to all moments in life in which we have a choice; in this sense, therefore, it is universal. The only exceptions are, so to speak, moments or hours of desired respite [...], outside of which a reasonable person will devote oneself exclusively and completely to the fight against evil. In the context of practical realism, ‘evil’ is destruction, illness, physical pain, misery, dilemma, feelings of impairment, any kind of defeat, i.e. everything that, from a subjective point of view, we commonly refer to as suffering”.²⁷ The author’s criticism of this position points to the paradoxical consequences for life and culture resulting from underestimating the ethical significance of the creative realisation of positive cultural values.

The author devoted a historical monograph on Marcus Aurelius to perfectionist ethics, which is linked to reflections entitled *The Ethics of Renunciation: What It Is and How It Is Justified*, and a study entitled *The Ideal of Salvation on the Grounds of Pure Ethics*. The same topic is also addressed in the essays *Ahimsa and Pacifism and Gandhi in Historical Perspective*. In the final chapter of the monograph²⁸, the author provides a general characterization of Marcus Aurelius, while also approving of

²⁵ Ibid., p. 127 et seq.

²⁶ Contained in: *Value and man*, p. 129 et seq.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 130

²⁸ *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 95 et seq.

his Stoic ethical traits: “[...] as a living manifestation of inner strength, his energetic asceticism and merciless, beyond measure, eradication of emotions are admirable. Through them, the Stoics created one of the most complete, exemplary and unrivalled forms of life known to cultural history. It is difficult for anyone not to agree with such guidelines as courageously enduring suffering, practising endurance and continuous readiness for suffering; not attaching importance to material goods and getting by without them, calmly accepting disappointments, and at all times being prepared for the possibility of not being able to fulfil one’s desires. Finally, and above all [...], the cult of good for good’s sake, belief in the self-sufficiency of values with its contempt for pleasure and pain, indifference to results and indifference to permanence, [...] great ethical exaltation, finding its highest tension in the rejection of all rewards. This is something that cannot be overestimated, an ethical trait which, when encountered in life or in the world of theory, shocks a person most powerfully and most directly [...], bringing them face to face with the whole meaning of their existence. It is this contempt for reward that brings something of beauty to the dryness of Kantian ethics, illuminates Spinoza’s rationalism, and, in the Indian Bhagavad-Gita, where it reigns undividedly, makes it perhaps the most sublime ethical work of all nations and times. Thanks to it, the Stoic doctrine ceases to be a mere, albeit differently weighted, balance of losses and gains, equivalent to Epicureanism, and becomes something fundamentally different and higher. And in this superiority of Stoicism, Marcus has his full share”.

The author’s interest in renunciation as a constituent of morality is reflected in his reflections, in which he classifies different types of renunciation according to their content, objects, and goals; he then seeks an answer to the question of how the imperative of renunciation tends to be justified, emphasizing that this concerns logical reasons rather than psychological motives. As such reasons, the author lists five alternative judgements of value: 1) The reason is a negative judgement, a) the object is bad, b) possession is bad, c) pursuit is bad, d) desire is bad; 2) the reason is a positive judgement, e) renunciation is good. Each of these reasons is then discussed in detail.

In the study *The ideal of salvation on the grounds of pure ethics*, a particular type of perfectionist ethics was analysed; the author refers to salvation from moral evil in a strictly ethical sense, omitting both any metaphysical and religious connections and hedonistic moments. The author calls this moral attitude a soteric attitude. *Homo ethicus* is a person with ethical will who desires to realise good in himself and avoid evil; he may adopt one of two attitudes: melioristic, when he is primarily

focused on realising good in himself, or soteric, when he primarily aims to avoid evil. Both attitudes are essentially equal; the analogies and differences between them are the subject of detailed analysis.

To conclude this – admittedly exhaustive – paper, I would like to draw attention to the author's arguments concerning the relationship between norms and commands.²⁹ The author shows that in cases where duty seemingly arises from a command, it is in fact not the command itself, but certain accompanying values that are the source of duty.

Henryk Elzenberg was not a prolific writer. He did not seek publicity and believed that anything intended for publication should be thoroughly researched in every respect; as a result, many of the fruits of his intense intellectual labour remained in his notes, while others may never even have been written down. However, what did appear in print is impressive in terms of the breadth of knowledge, depth of analysis, precision of expression, accuracy of reasoning, and wide horizons, and will remain a lasting achievement in philosophical research.

Henryk Elzenberg As A Theoretician Of Ethics

Summary

The article exposes the main theses of the ethical theory of Henryk Elzenberg (1887–1966), an eminent Polish philosopher and ethicist. The author outlines Elzenberg's conception of ethics, the two types of values he differentiated, namely the "perfective" and the utilitarian, and the two ethical systems, the perfectionistic and the hedonistic, which characterize these two values. Finally, the author discusses the differentiation between goodness and beauty as the two perfective values as proposed by Elzenberg.

²⁹ *Value and man*, p. 113 et seq.



Henryk Elzenberg

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The Ethics Of Renunciation

Its Nature And Justification

The question which this paper seeks to address is: how is the imperative of renunciation, found in certain ethical systems, justified? In other words: what rationale and arguments can be put forward in favour of renunciation? Consideration of this issue necessitated prior agreement on the meaning of the terms “renunciation” and “ethics of renunciation” – hence the first part of this discussion, devoted to defining concepts. Its intentions, as far as I can see, should leave no room for ambiguity. The second part is perhaps a little different. Given that there are a whole range of possible reasons, and that I have tried to exhaust at least the most obvious ones in my list, a certain – albeit deliberately not entirely correct – classification of systems of renunciation ethics has emerged, wherein the principles of renunciation provided by these systems have become the basis for division. However, I emphasize most strongly that it would be wrong to assume that I considered classification to be the goal and chose the closest reason as the principle of division among many other equally possible principles. My aim was to become aware of the reasons; classification was only a means to ensure that I did not overlook any of the closest possible arguments, and my interests were rather theoretical. However, since I can expect that only a few readers will have similar interests in this particular issue, I would like to point out that my topic may also be of interest to historians or, by extension, to any researcher who takes a descriptive approach to ethics. Questions about where to place a given ethical view and how to present its often implied

justification arise at every step for such a researcher, and as far as the ethics of renunciation are concerned, they are undoubtedly significant given its great importance in the history of culture. Analyses such as the one given below, provided they combine logical correctness and a sense of reality in reasonable proportions, might facilitate the answer to such a question.

The Concept of Renunciation and the Ethics of Renunciation

1. *A formal definition of the ethics of renunciation.* By the ethics of renunciation in the historical sense, I mean ethics containing the precept: "man ought to renounce" and, in the systematic sense, this precept itself together with the whole set of imperatives (i.e. commands and prohibitions) derived from it. Should this definition be narrowed down by listing certain additional conditions? I think so, but to a lesser extent than one might assume at first glance. Therefore, according to my understanding of the term, the system of ethics of renunciation does not have to be based on the axiology of renunciation, i.e., on the statement: "renunciation is the ultimate value"¹ (and even less so: "the only ultimate value"): limiting the term to such types of systems would be inappropriate, as the nature of a given ethic is not determined solely by its axiology. Thus, we will include in the ethics of renunciation those systems for which renunciation is a derivative value, in which the precept of renunciation is not self-standing, but dependent on another precept. Nor will we limit the term to those systems in which the imperative of renunciation is universal, that is, which say: "man should renounce everything"; such systems do exist, but they are few in number, and among them none are commonly regarded as classic examples of the ethics of renunciation. On the other hand, however, we can only call a system ethical if its implementation gives life a certain specific character; this is impossible if the obligation to renounce applies only to trivial things, or even to things of some relative importance, which are very few in number. Therefore, it is necessary that the objects of renunciation be of a sufficient degree of importance, and if they are not quite so important, then the imperative must be quite

¹ With certain reservations – which I do not have space to discuss here – I understand ultimate value in a way that corresponds to the following definition: A has ultimate value if there is no non-A, whose value would constitute the reason for the value of A. I contrast the concept of ultimate value with that of derivative value.

universal. These are the additional conditions that must be met. Once we agree upon them, the line between the ethics of renunciation and what is not renunciation becomes blurred, and the renunciation character of various ethics begins to represent differences of degree, but this is precisely what corresponds most closely to common sense.

The substantive definition of the ethics of renunciation naturally depends on how we understand renunciation itself.

2. *The concept of renunciation: external renunciation.* The meaning of this word in everyday language seems to be twofold.

The first, more colloquial meaning, in a provisional and as yet too general formulation, would be as follows: "To renounce is to voluntarily give up of something, if we possess² it, or, also voluntarily, to stop (or possibly not to start) pursuing it,³ if we do not possess it, but are confident or have a chance of obtaining it". It is clear that "giving up a thing" is a higher degree of renunciation than "ceasing to pursue it" or "giving up the chance to obtain it"; but I will not consider this difference in degree (like many others) anywhere here, and in the future, when I say "give up things", I will always have in mind the unspoken addition: "or the chance of obtaining them".

As I said, this definition is too broad. Strictly speaking, we do not consider it a sacrifice if someone gets rid of something they "do not care about". It is not a sacrifice to get rid of old, unnecessary clothes or to give up your portion of cream with dessert if you do not like the cream. Renunciation is only giving up something we "care about", that is, something we desire to possess if we do not already have it, or to keep if we already possess it. Taking, as many moralists do, a somewhat broad view of the term "desire" (not only as the desire to possess, but also as the desire to keep, the so-called 'attachment'), we will therefore define "something we care about" as "something we desire". And recognizing desire as a necessary condition for renunciation, we will supplement our original definition as follows:

² The word 'possess' is used here in a sense that is, of course, quite different from 'own'. I would define this highly imperfect term, which corresponds to a not entirely clear concept, as follows: "to experience the effects of a given thing", to which one should probably add "to a degree exceeding a certain minimum and in a manner that is not too indirect". In relation to a good thing, possession understood in this way is enjoyment.

³ By 'pursuit', I do not mean a mental state, but an action aimed at achieving a specific thing.

"Renunciation is voluntarily giving up something we desire, if we possess it, or, also voluntarily, ceasing (or not beginning) to pursue it, if we do not possess it, but are confident or have a chance of obtaining it". In short: "voluntarily giving up something we desire or the chance to achieve it".

This definition requires one more comment. *Sensu strictissimo*, renunciation should be understood only as giving up something we desire at the moment of renunciation. However, the very possibility of such precise simultaneity may seem doubtful; it cannot be confirmed or denied by ordinary observation (and only such observation has determined the formation of the common concept of "renunciation"). Therefore, it is common to speak of renunciation even if someone desired a given thing before disposing of it. Accordingly, in this essay, I will not shy away from using the term to denote this type of renunciation in the first, stricter sense, as well as in the second, somewhat broader sense.

Renunciation thus understood is an act that puts an end to possession or pursuit, i.e. it changes the state of affairs not in our psyche, but in the external world: It can therefore be called external renunciation. A smoker who denies himself a cigarette; a rich man who bids farewell to the world to go to a hermitage; a soldier who volunteers for a deadly expedition – as long as they desire (or desired) the goods they are abandoning in this way – they are performing an act of external renunciation.

3. *Internal renunciation.* The concept of renunciation discussed so far is contrasted with another, slightly less common, but all the more important concept in the world of ethical and religious concepts. It is no longer about parting with a desired object, but about desire itself, and its definition (which I will not build up gradually, as in the previous case) would be as follows:

"Renunciation is, when possessing something, to destroy in oneself the desire to keep it, or, when not possessing it but having the chance to obtain it, to destroy in oneself the desire to obtain it". Employing, as in the previous paragraph, the term desire in a broad sense, one can simply say that "to renounce something is to destroy ('eradicate') the desire for it within oneself".

Renunciation of this type, as opposed to external renunciation, consists in a certain change taking place in one's mental life. In poetic and religious language, the term often used to describe it is "renouncing something in one's heart". We may therefore call this renunciation inter-

nal. A person who has forced himself to be indifferent to material goods; a sage who no longer desires to live or die and calmly surrenders to fate; or even the smoker I mentioned a moment ago, if he has overcome his passion, are performing an act of internal renunciation.

4. *Substantive definition of the ethics of renunciation.* If we now substitute the first and then the second meaning of the term “renounce” in the characteristic imperative of the ethics of renunciation, we arrive at the following two imperatives:

The imperative of external renunciation states: “man should rid himself of the things he desires”.

Whereas the imperative of internal renunciation commands: “man should extinguish his desires”. Any ethic that contains one of these two imperatives is, to the extent that it meets the conditions set out in the first paragraph, an ethic of renunciation.

However, not only any such ethic. Suppose that some ethic contains the precept: “a person should renounce all A” (without asking whether these A are desirable or not) – and it turns out that these A are indeed desirable, then for all those who desire these A, this ethic becomes an ethic of renunciation, even though it does not contain an explicit command to renounce. And we will have the right to call it “the ethics of renunciation” without reservation, as long as it commands the renunciation of things that the general public or a significant majority of people actually desire. Thus, we must add the following to external renunciation:

“The ethics of (external) renunciation is also any ethics that contains any sufficiently significant command to renounce, as long as the thing that is commanded to be renounced is desired by the general public or a significant majority of people”.

By speaking of a “significant majority”, we introduce yet another degree of fluidity between the ethics of renunciation and what is not. But extreme cases are clear and unambiguous. An ethic that prohibits engaging in rational investigations in the field of metaphysics (such systems have existed) is not an ethic of renunciation, as it affects the desires of very few individuals; but an ethic that commands the disposal of wealth or absolute sexual abstinence is, of course, an ethic of renunciation. Hence, the term “renunciation” itself is often used in colloquial speech in the wrong sense: “giving up something desired by the general public”, even if the one who gives it up never desired it.

5. *The ethics of external renunciation and the ethics of internal renunciation constitute, in practice, the same general ethics of renunciation.* However, this means that instead of one phenomenon corresponding to the term “ethics of renunciation”, we have two: should we therefore discuss each of them separately and talk not about one, but about two different ethics of renunciation? Admittedly, anyone who wanted to consider only formal logical considerations would do so. But there are also opposing considerations. Some of the arguments for external and internal renunciation are common, so that we would have to repeat many of them in both categories. In one very important case, the concept of renunciation in general is employed, encompassing external and internal renunciation as its types; we will examine this possibility in the appropriate place. Even if all these circumstances did not exist, there is still another, quite common circumstance that speaks against this formally valid method, namely that, in general, whoever prescribes external renunciation also indirectly prescribes internal renunciation, and vice versa. I say ‘in general’ because there is no necessity here, even practical. Each of the renunciations can, not only theoretically, but also in practice, occur without the admixture of the other. I can voluntarily give up an object that I continue to desire: go to a monastery without ceasing to desire worldly pleasures; allow myself to be killed while still wanting to live; not light a cigarette even though I feel like it: this would be purely external renunciation. And vice versa: I can cease to desire without ceasing to strive, cease to be attached without ceasing to possess. So: to become indifferent to cigarettes, and yet to smoke them in company; to wealth, and yet not give it away to the poor; to life, and yet defend it in war or in a duel; this will be pure internal renunciation. Seneca provided striking formulas for this in *De vita beata*.⁴ Hence, it is entirely logically possible to command one renunciation without the other; moreover, one may be commanded and the other directly forbidden – and such cases do indeed occur. A classic example of this is Krishna’s *Bhagavad-Gita*: Arjuna should not desire vic-

⁴ Unfortunately, they are drowned in personal apologia and torrents of superficial amplification, and an additional difficulty is that Seneca does not think in the terms we use here, but in the terms of Stoic teaching about *proegmena*. Nevertheless, a number of useful formulas can be extracted. Generally speaking, on commonly desired things: “*Ait [philosophiae studio- sus] ista debere contemni: non, ne habeat, sed ne sollicitus habeat*” – On life: “*Inter longius tempus et brevius nihil interesse iudicat* [and according to the Stoic, such a judgement automatically leads to a lack of attachment]: *tamen, si nihil prohibet, extendit aetatem*”. – On riches: “*Non amat divitias [...]; non in animum illas, sed in dornunt recepit [...]* *Non eiciet eas e domo [...]* *Quae, etiamsi apud me, extra me tamen sunt*”.

tory and dominion, and at the same time should not cease to fight for victory and dominion. I therefore insist strongly that there is no necessary connection here, nor any universal law. But instances such as those in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and even instances of the command to renounce one thing without – at least implicitly – the command to renounce another, are, after all, exceptions; in practice, we are most often dealing with combined commands to renounce both the external and the internal; and the conceptual distinction we have made here often remains unconscious.

This correlation stems from the fact that the direct command to renounce one thing entails the indirect command to renounce the other; this is because each of the renunciations, when taken separately, has certain negative aspects that can be removed by additionally renouncing the other.

For purely external renunciation, i.e. giving up an object without extinguishing desire, these shortcomings are as follows:

- a) giving up an object without extinguishing desire causes suffering;
- b) it exposes one to falling back into the former state, since unrooted desire can easily turn into renewed pursuit, which in itself is the end of external renunciation; moreover, the pursuit may be crowned with success, i.e. lead to possession.

Therefore, for external renunciation not to cause suffering and to achieve its goal in the long term, it is advisable to supplement it with internal renunciation. Then the suffering ceases and the danger of returning to the former state disappears.

Purely internal renunciation, i.e. the extinguishing of desire without disposing of the object, has the following drawbacks:

- a) constant contact with the object (in the case of pursuit rather than possession, this contact is imaginary) exposes one to the rebirth of desire;
- b) for outside observers always, and for the renouncer himself quite often (due to the great difficulties of good psychological self-knowledge), doubt remains in these instances as to whether the destruction of desire has actually taken place. Therefore, those who only renounce internally, without relinquishing the relevant objects, expose themselves to the accusation of hypocrisy, and may suspect themselves of it. External renunciation is therefore intended to serve as confirmation and proof that internal renunciation has taken place. Strictly speaking, it will never be proof, because, as we have stated, external renunciation can exist without internal renunciation. But the general public, which in its accusation

of hypocrisy proceeded from the mistaken assumption that “he who keeps, desires”, assumes here the equally mistaken assumption that “he who desires, keeps”, and therefore “he who does not keep, does not desire”. – and those who renounce succumb with immense force to the suggestion of these false assumptions. Thus, this argument, which is logically equal to zero, in practice plays an enormous role. Moreover, it can be mentioned that external renunciation, while not constituting proof of internal renunciation, is nevertheless a valuable test for the renouncer himself: for if desire is truly destroyed, then letting go of things should be easy and painless; if not, it should be painful and difficult. And this reasoning is very real, not based on any illusion.

To ensure that internal renunciation does not risk the rebirth of desire, that it is not questioned by the general public, and that the renouncer himself can assess its reality, it is advisable to complement it with external renunciation. Then the danger of desire reawakening is greatly reduced, the doubts of the general public disappear, and the actor himself sees clearly within himself.

Thus, even where direct reasons speak only for one kind of renunciation, it is most common for both kinds of renunciation to be required together: and in this purely practical sense, it is justified to speak of a single common ethic of renunciation.

6. *The ethics of renunciation and eudaimonism.* At this point, at the end of the general section, it may be worth recalling in a few words that the widespread belief that there is some incompatibility between the ethics of renunciation and eudaimonism or even hedonism is a misunderstanding. The ethics of renunciation may not be eudaimonistic, but it may very well also be such. Renunciation, in principle, can be directly considered a source of happiness or pleasure; in fact, it is often considered an indirect condition for them, in particular an indispensable factor for a favourable hedonic balance, as, for example, in Epicureanism, and all the more so in modern utilitarianism.

We have thus answered the first question in the subtitle: “what is the ethics of renunciation”. We may now move on to the second: “how is it justified”.

How Is the Imperative of Renunciation Justified?

1. *Introductory notes.* Moving on to the second part, I would like to make two quick comments.

Firstly, I am clearly referring to logical reasons, not psychological motives. These motives may or may not be identical in content to reasons, that is, what is evaluated positively or negatively by logical reasoning may or may not be the same thing that I actually want to achieve or avoid through the act of renunciation. An analysis of motives would be an important and very significant part of a comprehensive study of the ethics of renunciation, but it would be quite different from what I would like to present in this paper.

The second point is that, when listing the various possible reasons, I only intended to provide an exhaustive list of the most immediate reasons (or rather, those treated as the most immediate), and that I did not intend to take into account all the complications and ramifications that arise when, having given the closest reason, in turn, we ask about the reason for that reason. Therefore, the second-order reasons I have cited will, as a rule – I will not point out any possible exceptions separately – only serve as examples, and their selection will be guided solely by the philosophical, practical, or historical significance of the systems that put them forward.

I will now proceed to list the most immediate reasons.

2. *Reasons in favour of renunciation.* Any statement such as “a person should” is based, on its own merits, on certain value judgements. The same applies to the statement: “a person should renounce”. What value judgements can serve as reasons here?

Of course, this judgement will, in principle, always be: “renunciation is a positive value”, or, in shorter terms (within the scope of this essay, I treat these phrases as synonyms): “renunciation is good”. And, strictly speaking, immediate justification for the imperative of renunciation can only ever be this particular judgement. However, we can obtain several justifications if we treat the justification of this particular judgement as the immediate justification.

One type of justification would look like this: renunciation is good because it is positively good,⁵ whether as an ultimate value (“in itself”)

⁵ I say that A is positively good if it is either a positive ultimate value or a derivative value whose reason is the positive ultimate value of some *non-A*. –

or as a derivative. Beyond that, however, renunciation is an act with very serious negative consequences: it removes certain things from existence or does not allow them to exist. And this gives us the second type of justification: renunciation is good because the things it removes from existence or prevents from coming into existence are bad. This is a fundamental division.

What, then, are these things removed from existence? We have listed three: in the case of internal renunciation, desire; in the case of external renunciation, pursuit and possession. As a result, we have the following possible reasons: on the one hand, a positive judgement about renunciation as a positive good, and on the other hand, a negative judgement about desire, pursuit, or possession. Four reasons in total, one on the positive side and three on the negative side.

The above division is, by my intention, to be a systematically correct one. However, in order to adapt it to empirical reality – whose forms and natural boundaries must be carefully taken into account in historical sciences – we will now make a certain exception: in addition to the three negative reasons, we will introduce a fourth, which is in fact a further reason. This is clearly incorrect, but it will allow us to isolate, within the scope of systems of renunciation ethics, a certain group that is highly specific and whose specificity is empirically obvious. Namely: a negative judgement about desire, striving, or possession may, *inter alia* (based on the assumptions below), have its justification in a negative judgement about the object of desire, pursuit, or possession. If we now isolate all such cases into a separate group and place this group on an equal footing with the other three, we obtain not three but four negative reasons, resulting in the following final table:

- 1) The negative judgement is correct.
 - a) The object is bad.
 - b) Possession is bad.
 - c) Pursuit is bad.
 - d) Desire is bad.
- 2) The positive judgement is correct.
 - a) Renunciation is good (positively).

I have arranged these five judgements in such an order that each of them can be justified by one or more of the preceding ones. Possession, for example, may be wrong because the object possessed is wrong; pursuit because of possession; and so on. However, this relationship is not,

A negative good is always only a derivative value, namely one that has its reason in the negative ultimate value of some other thing.

of course, mandatory; otherwise, we would not be able to speak of five different independent reasons. So, an object may be good, but its possession may be bad; the object and its possession may be good, and the pursuit may be bad; the first three factors are good, and the desire is bad; finally, the object, possession, pursuit, and desire can all four be good, and renunciation may also be good. That all these cases actually occur in the ethics of renunciation will be demonstrated later, when considering each of the reasons individually. At this point, let us just note that the statements "a given factor is good" and "a given factor is bad" should always be understood as "good or bad enough to outweigh the possible value of other factors that speak to the contrary". It is not enough, for instance, that renunciation is good; it must also be better than what we are giving up, and there are more similar cases. I do not intend to discuss all the complications that arise from this; however, I will briefly mention some of them. I will completely omit the opposite cases, where not one, but two or more factors speak in favour of renunciation: they can be constructed mechanically from simple cases.

3. *Reason one: the object is bad.* (*Renunciation out of condemnation of the object*). If the object is bad, then both external and internal renunciation is required. External renunciation is based on an assumption that plays a kind of axiomatic role in ethics (not in the sense that it cannot be justified, but that it is actually accepted without justification): namely, that "possession of a bad thing is, as such, a bad thing (just as "possession of a good thing is, as such, a good thing");⁶ and if possession, then also the pursuit, not as a pursuit in general, but as the pursuit of that very possession: for in the latter sense and within those limits, every goal gives every means its own value, as a derivative, and the pursuit is precisely the sum of a certain kind of means (namely, actions) that have possession as their goal. Internal renunciation is commanded on the basis of the assertion, also treated as indisputable, that "the desire for evil is, as such, evil", whether as a manifestation of "evil will" or as the result of an erroneous judgement of good and bad. Furthermore, internal renuncia-

⁶ In the previous paragraph, I noted that possession can be bad, even though the object is good. However, there is no contradiction with what I am saying now, because in those cases possession is not bad as such (i.e. regardless of the circumstances accompanying it): See details in paragraph 4. As for the possible justification of the "axiom", I would like to note that I have defined "possession" of something as "experiencing its influence on oneself", and therefore "to possess something good or bad is to experience the influence of something good or bad on oneself".

tion can be treated as indirectly commanded by external renunciation, for desire has pursuit as its natural consequence; so if pursuit is evil, then so is the desire that leads to it. There is a theoretical possibility that possession, pursuit or desire as such, and independently of the object, would be things so good that their intrinsic value would exceed the negative value borrowed from the object; with regard to the pursuit in particular, it is often claimed that as a so-called action it has its own value, which is very high and independent of the goal. Of course, anyone who concludes from the condemnation of the object that there is a command to renounce it implicitly opposes all such claims.

An example of a clear ethic of renunciation of this type, with a very high degree of significance and universality, is the claim, which recurs quite often in Christianity, that "all earthly things are evil". But can such ethics become universal in the literal sense? Theoretically, undoubtedly, because it is entirely possible to claim that all objects are evil, and therefore to impose the imperative: "all objects must be renounced". Consistently applied – because one of the evil things is then life itself – such ethics leads to the imperative of non-existence, becoming the ethics of self-destruction. For this reason, its actual existence, and especially its prevalence among larger groups of people, could be considered impossible. That this consideration is not decisive, however, is proved by the Buddhist precept of nirvana, understood, if not always, then often, as something more than the suppression of all desires and the will to live itself: as actual annihilation. And although the judgement that "all objects are evil" is not the main or most strongly emphasized value judgement that makes Buddhism an ethic of renunciation, it undoubtedly plays a certain role in it as the source of the commandment of nirvana understood in this way.

Contrary to certain established oppositions, this view is perfectly compatible with eudaimonism or even hedonism. The negative value of each item individually, or of the world as a whole, may lie in the fact that they are a source of unhappiness or that, on balance, they give less pleasure than pain. This was the position of Hegesias of Cyrene in ancient times, and of Hartmann in more recent times.

4. *Reason two: possession is bad. (Renunciation due to the necessity of choice).* I move on to the second case, in which, as we have said, the object is good, but possessing it is bad. Not as such, of course, because possessing a good thing cannot be bad as such, but because of certain circumstances inherent in it (why I avoid the term "consequences" will be explained by the explanation of the state of affairs).

Let us suppose that object A is less good than object B, and that possessing A excludes possessing B and vice versa. Let us further suppose that I “must choose” between A and B, that is, at a certain moment I have the opportunity to come into possession of either A or B, but not both at the same time.⁷ I choose A. Since I could just as well have chosen B, by acquiring A I “deprive myself” of B, I “lose” B. My act of choice has indeed brought me into possession of a certain added value v , but by depriving me of B, it has deprived me of a greater value $(v + n)$, which means that I lost more than I gained, and the act of acquiring object A proves to be a bad deed,⁸ not as such, but owing to the circumstances inherent in it. If now, already possessing A, I have the further possibility of choice at any moment (now in the form of exchange) and I do not take advantage of this possibility, remaining in possession of a less good thing and deprived of a better one, then this continuing possession is as bad as the first acquisition. In this sense, it can be said that possession is bad. And choosing B at the expense of A will be mandated on the basis of the unquestionable assertion that of two good things, one should always choose the better. If I now desire A, then choosing B at its expense means renouncing it; that is, for those who desire A, the command to choose B constitutes, in relation to A, a command to renounce it – i.e. naturally an external renunciation.

Renunciations due to necessity of choice are, beyond all else, the most common thing in the world. For dessert, there is compote or pudding; one evening I feel like going to a concert and to the theatre; for the same money I can buy books or go to the seaside: everywhere, choosing one alternative, I have to give up the other, and these events are so commonplace that in this sense it is no exaggeration to say that life, being a series of choices, is also a series of sacrifices. When studying the genetic development of the instinct of renunciation, it would probably be necessary to look for the conditions of its origin. However, these acts of renunciation can be made on a case-by-case basis, according to the mood of the moment, without justifying them with judgements of value and not as compliance with certain permanently binding imperatives (today I choose A rather than B, tomorrow the opposite). They only take on an ethical character if we exchange once and for all certain objects or categories of objects that, when given a choice, must always be pre-

⁷ By “I must choose”, I do not mean, I emphasize, the compulsion to take possession of at least one of the objects, but the possibility of taking possession of only one.

⁸ Cf. further in this volume (*The Ideal of Salvation...*), p. 146.

ferred over others; this happens automatically when we establish any comparative scale of values. This is what every ethic does; but it only becomes the ethics of renunciation if the objects that it does not allow us to choose are generally desirable. This is very often the case, even where one would not expect it; to a certain extent, even Epicureanism is the ethics of renunciation, insofar as it requires us to deprive ourselves of some pleasures for the sake of others.

Ethical imperatives of this kind always state: "A person should renounce A if they have to choose between A and B, which is better than A". They are therefore always conditional, depending on one state of affairs or another in terms of facts; and for this reason, the relevant systems could be perceived as systems of ethics of renunciation in a secondary sense. However, this impression would not be entirely correct: these systems can achieve a high degree of universality and significance, and shape life in a direction of renunciation no worse than systems whose precepts are unconditional. Admittedly, they can never achieve complete universality, *ex hypothesi*. For while the command to renounce A is always justified in this case by the existence of some B that is better than A, such a command is impossible where A is the best object, or one of many best objects that are equal to each other. The maximum universality here is therefore: all objects except one, namely the best one, which provides a reason for renouncing all others. These limits are, as can be seen, still extremely broad. Let us suppose that a given ethic really mentions only one supreme good, and that the necessity of choosing between it and all others arises at every step: the whole of life is shaped by such an ethic in the direction of renunciation. Let us consider, for instance, the enormity of daily sacrifices resulting from, say, the much proclaimed principle that knowledge is the highest good: all ethics of this type, unless mitigated in some other way, are ethics of renunciation to a very high degree. Or consider the following example. In Christianity, the view that attributes a certain value to some earthly things seems to be more common than the view that considers all earthly things to be evil. However, this value is small compared to the value of one thing: salvation; and if a moralist assumes that one must choose between salvation and earthly things at every turn, then his conclusions will, in practice, be no different from those of someone who professes this second view.

However, these systems differ very clearly from the universal systems of the first group: those were pessimistic (their common position could be called objective pessimism); these are not. On the contrary: the stronger their imperative of renunciation, the stronger its roots lie in the praise of at least one value.

5. *Third reason: pursuit is wrong.* Renouncing the necessity of choice can take a slightly different form than the one discussed thus far. It may be the case that possessing the lesser good A does not preclude possessing the greater good B, but that striving for A precludes it. Let us say, for example, that the lesser good A is wealth, and the greater good B is poetic creativity. Those who possess wealth can create perfectly well, but those who do not possess it and, in their pursuit of it, devote their time and energy to it, cannot: possessing wealth does not preclude poetic creativity, but striving for it does. Therefore, possessing wealth is not a bad thing in the sense in which we used the term in the previous paragraph, but striving for wealth is; and I should not renounce the wealth I already possess, but I should renounce that which I can acquire through my efforts. Instead of poetic creativity, let us now substitute some value, say, a religious one, such as communion with God, and let us recognize that the pursuit of earthly things hinders this communion, and we will obtain a clear ethic of renunciation, although the mere possession of earthly things will not be considered evil. As in Sep Szarzyński's sonnet:

Oh power, oh delight, oh treasures of diligence,
Even if they were not free, they would still be harmful,
For they divert our greed from our own happiness
(which we call God).

Therefore, it is not the lack of wealth, power, or pleasure that deprives us of a higher good, but the pursuit (or "diligence") of them.

This case is only a variation of the one discussed above. But other cases are also possible. Striving for something good, for example, can be bad because of its unintended, but inevitable consequences. and it is not absurd to say that every action – and therefore every 'pursuit' – has some unintended consequences that are bad, and that unintended evil often, or always, outweighs intended good. Such a view, unless counter-balanced elsewhere, takes the form of "all pursuit is evil" and leads to systems that can be called quietistic. Renunciation of this type, like the previous one, is of course always, *ex definitione*, external renunciation.

6. *Reason four: desire is evil.* Desire can be evil because the object, possession, or pursuit is evil; however, it can also be evil even though all those things are good: this is our fourth possibility. "To renounce" here will mean "to free oneself from desire", that is, it will be about internal renunciation. There are countless forms of such renunciation.

First of all, there may be a renunciation of the necessity of choice. It may happen that neither possessing an object nor striving for it precludes possessing a more valuable object, but that desire precludes them. Moralists, for example, like to argue that sensual desire clouds the mind and prevents clear thinking and rational behaviour: therefore, those who value clear thinking and rational behaviour more than the object of sensual desire must suppress sensual desire. The following example may be more interesting. According to a certain classical theory in aesthetics, the aesthetic enjoyment of a beautiful object is only possible to the extent that we suppress our desire for that object. Therefore, those who value the aesthetic enjoyment of an object more than the object itself must suppress their desire. In systems of so-called ethical aestheticism, this point of view can play an important role, as it leads to the consequence that those who consider aesthetic contemplation of the world to be the highest good or one of the highest goods must renounce the world internally.

However, more numerous and historically more significant seem to be cases where desire is considered evil as such, regardless of the necessity of choice. In these cases, unlike the previous ones, the imperative of renunciation is absolutely universal. It is even achieved more often than in the case of renunciation based on condemnation of the object, because it is more difficult to distinguish between groups of desires than between objects, and therefore the conviction that "desire is evil" spreads quite naturally to all possible desires. However, there is a great danger inherent in such universality, as along with desires it removes all natural motives for action from life. To avoid this consequence, many moralists limit the universality of the precept by establishing certain groups of desires and condemning only those groups as "excessive", "unreasonable", etc. I will not discuss these distinctions here, as the universal commands themselves provide more than enough material.

Here are a few examples out of many. Desire can be considered an extremely ugly thing, as it destroys the harmony of the soul and reveals its shortcomings: in ethical aestheticism systems, this is enough to condemn it. It can be argued that it is inherently unstable and, by carrying us in ever-changing directions, introduces great evil into our lives: inconsistency. One could argue – and this is a more valid position – that those who desire are inclined to consider what they desire to be good, rather than what is truly good, therefore, by indulging in their desires, people fall into such a great evil as the inability to objectively distinguish between good and evil. However, there are two types of ethics that are of particular historical significance and deserve closer discussion. Both are clearly eudemonic, even hedonistic, in nature, although

the hedonistic nature of at least one of them, in its most classical form, is denied most vehemently.

7. *Desire as suffering.* The first of these doctrines briefly states that desire is suffering; it justifies this claim by pointing to the acute awareness of deprivation inherent in all desire. Assuming, on the other hand (a thesis that can already be considered moderately hedonistic) that suffering is evil, it concludes that desires should be discarded. This is Schopenhauer's position, as well as the fundamental position of Buddhism: for it is mainly in this sense that the second of the four "holy truths" (about the source of suffering) should be interpreted, and given the significance of this factor, the element of pessimism about the object, which we discussed above, becomes secondary. 5. However, this ethic necessarily requires, as a supplementation, the consideration of other factors, which, as we have noted, is sometimes unavoidable. For what if desire, which is evil in itself, leads to the enjoyment of a good whose positive value exceeds its own negative value? This possibility can be denied by our systems in two ways (unless they wish to invoke the complete unattainability of objects, which we will discuss in a moment). They can claim that the object is not bad, but that it is always a lesser good than desire is evil (this time a blatantly hedonistic claim: for if the object is a non-hedonic good, it means that no non-hedonic good can outweigh the hedonic evil that is desire).

Or they can say the same thing about the use of the object, the most interesting and typical form of which for these systems is the claim that it lasts for an infinitely short time, because once desire is satisfied, it instantly resurfaces, turning to a new object.

Doctrines of this kind could be called doctrines of subjective pessimism.

8. *The unattainability of objects of desire.* The second of the doctrines I mentioned has much in common with the first, but differs from it in one important respect. It states: "Desire is the source of suffering because it does not achieve its object; and such unattainability is always suffering". The difference is that in the former, desire was, at every moment, suffering, while here the cause of suffering is the ultimate unsatisfaction of desire, the realization of the unattainability of the object. In other words, desire is the source of suffering (and therefore evil) because it leads to painful disappointments.

In order for this thesis to be generally valid, i.e. "desire is always a source of suffering", it would have to be based on the assertion that "de-

sire never achieves its object", which is clearly false. And yet the imperative of renunciation, based on this, is sometimes taken quite generally. This happens as follows. It is a fact that desire often does not achieve its object; it is also accepted as a fact that in no particular case do we know in advance for certain whether we will achieve it or not. Therefore, we always expose ourselves to suffering; and if we do not want to expose ourselves, we should rid ourselves of desires. If this commandment is taken unconditionally, it contains the additional premise that we should never expose ourselves to evil – in this case, suffering. This premise implies a further assertion that the positive value of an object is always less than the negative value of the possible suffering caused by disappointment. Let us assume – again, this is a kind of ethical axiom – that the strength of a given command,⁹ that is, its ability to prevail over other commands, is determined solely by the value of the thing commanded. If the value of the object were greater, then with equal chances of achieving or not achieving it (and even more so with favourable chances), the command to strive for the object would prevail over the command to avoid painful disappointment. In fact, however, it is argued that one should not take risks, even when the chances are favourable; this means that the command to avoid suffering is stronger than the command to pursue the object; and so that the object (even the best one) has less positive value than suffering (even the smallest) has negative value.

The disproportionately high assessment of the negative value of suffering characterizes this position even more than the previous one. The above doctrine plays an important role in Stoicism; its classic representative is Epictetus. In its historical form, it is complicated by the fact that Stoicism establishes a sphere of objects (of a psychological nature) that are always attainable and therefore permissible to desire: condemnation of desire is therefore not universal in this doctrine. The fact that I did not hesitate to describe it as hedonistic will, I suppose, come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the intimate, sophisticatedly contradictory structure of Stoicism, especially late Stoicism, and the enormous role played in it by hedonism, at least in its negative form, i.e. that which considers suffering to be a great evil and the absence of suffering as a great good.

A variation of this doctrine is the thesis that replaces the "unattainability" of objects with their "perishability", i.e. the possible imperma-

⁹ Seen in isolation from the specific human beings to whom it is addressed, it is therefore a command of the type "man ought to".

nence of their possession as a result of their disappearance or loss. It is wrong, it is said here, to desire what may one day be lost. This argument gains particular force when it cites the death of the owner as the cause of the future loss of the object: for here the loss is not merely possible, but certain in relation to earthly goods: it is universal. An additional source of suffering is the tendency to imagine this loss in advance; and hence the old argument: “do not desire, for you are mortal” has drawn its main strength for centuries.

9. *Reason five: renunciation is good (positive). First variant: renunciation for the sake of renunciation.* The forms of renunciation ethics discussed up to now, which base their imperative on a negative judgement, are opposed by those which base it on a positive judgement, namely that renunciation is good in a positive sense, “good” without further reservations. Good and, of course, better than what we give up or put an end to: if it were not better than the object, the object should be kept; if it were not better than possession, pursuit, or desire, one should persevere in these states. The universality of the precept is possible here because renunciation can be the highest value, but it is not necessary because there may be values higher than renunciation. Two cases are possible here, depending on whether renunciation is to be the ultimate value or a derivative. Let us discuss each of them separately.

If renunciation is to be good “in itself”, that is, to be an ultimate value, then the question “why is it good?” means: what is the quality that makes it good? Assuming that we consider this question to be legitimate and want to answer it, we will encounter a type of justification that we have not yet encountered and a state of affairs that we have not yet considered. Thus far, we have treated external renunciation and internal renunciation simply as two meanings of one and the same term, without considering whether it might be possible to construct a broader concept that would encompass both as two varieties of the same kind. As it turns out, this is possible; the most commonly mentioned quality that determines the positive value of renunciation is precisely that which is common to both external and internal renunciation – with one caveat, however: that external renunciation is understood more narrowly and strictly as the abandonment of something we desire now and have desired before. Thus, we have here a variation of ethics that is not the ethics of external or internal renunciation, nor both in parallel on the basis of different reasons, but the ethics of renunciation in general, without distinction. This concept of renunciation in general, which includes both types of “giving up something desired” and “extinguishing of desire”, can be defined as

follows: "behaving towards a previously desired thing in a way other than that which would have occurred if our previous desire had determined it"¹⁰ – in short: "resisting one's desire", "overcoming desire".

This definition applies to internal renunciation based on the additional assumption that desire at the present moment has its natural continuation (*nisi quid obstat*) in desire at the next moment.

This overcoming of desire is, in turn, something more universal, namely self-overcoming in general. In addition to overcoming desire (which could be called negative self-overcoming), self-overcoming also includes a positive form, namely overcoming the lack of desire, or behaving as if one desires something even though one does not; in other words, forcing oneself to act. A common definition of both forms of self-overcoming would generally refer to behaving differently from what would result from our previous "desire relationship" (i.e., desire or lack thereof) for a given thing.

Self-overcoming is often considered a value, and a fundamental one at that. In particular, as one of the greatest possible efforts, it is recommended on the basis of the ethics of effort, ethics which, in a broad sense, borders on heroism; it is a good, as one of the most obvious and clearest forms of heroic behaviour. If, in addition, it is regarded as the ultimate supreme value, it will be one more possible reason for universal renunciation, the only one we have encountered that is devoid of pessimism or at least tinged with it. And perhaps that is why it is the one that, when brought to light with sincerity, appeals most strongly to outside observers and arouses the greatest sympathy for those who practice renunciation.

10. *Variant two: renunciation for positive purposes* – Renunciation as a derivative value is sometimes prescribed on account of its beneficial effects.

Of course, this effect, i.e., the thing for which we renounce, must be of greater value than the thing we renounce. For this reason, one might want to equate this variation with renunciation out of necessity of choice, because in that case, too, we renounced some less good A in order to achieve some better B. However, there is a difference in that there, A and B were two alternatives to choose from, meaning that anyone who wanted to achieve B had to renounce A, and A specifically, not anything else. Here, however, there is no such compulsion; there is no A whose possession would exclude the possession of B and would therefore be

¹⁰ This definition applies to internal renunciation based on the additional assumption that desire at the present moment has its natural continuation (*nisi quid obstat*) in desire at the next moment.

“bad” in the sense in which we used the term in paragraph four; on the other hand, among things less good than B, in order to achieve B, one must renounce any of them, not because it is an obstacle, but because the means to achieve B is the act of renunciation itself. This includes all “ascetic” positions in the etymological sense of the word, where renunciation is an exercise, gymnastics, discipline, and the choice of its objects is conditioned only by considerations of practical expediency. They are recommended for a variety of reasons: biological, social, religious, cultural, and others. They can even be recommended for eudaimonic or even hedonistic reasons, claiming that acts of renunciation lead to happiness or pleasure. Renunciation of this type, needless to say, can never be universal.

“Przegląd Filozoficzny”, 1925



Henryk Elzenberg

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The Ideal of Salvation on the Grounds of Pure Ethics

The following remarks touch upon the field of ethics in the strict sense to a very limited extent and rather tangentially, addressing the question of values – whether those of certain moral goals or the paths by which they are sought to be achieved. In principle, however, they do not aim to be either substantive or normative, limiting themselves to an analysis of a certain concept and a description of certain characteristic attitudes and experiences. If the ‘science of morality’ were not, so one-sidedly, concerned in practice with what is average, commonplace, universal, and most readily collective within the sphere of the phenomena it encompasses, it would be entirely appropriate to classify them as part of the science of morality. However, the concept under consideration, whilst having its place in ethics, cannot be regarded as commonplace, and the moral matters described are matters of life that are most emphatically individual in some of its manifestations – both higher and less easily grasped – so let us simply say that, on the one hand, this will be a contribution to the psychology of moral life, and on the other, to the analysis of moral concepts.

The concept under consideration will be that of ‘salvation’, albeit in only one of its possible forms.

The term ‘salvation’, when used without reservations or commentary, carries a connotation that is either explicitly religious or religious-metaphysical. In the Christian context, as we know, by virtue of centuries-old tradition, it evokes in the general public ideas that are so unspeculative

that they are almost mythological; however, there are also less common interpretations, whether among Christians or within other systems. There are people who experience their entire empirical existence as a form of semi-existence; they feel somewhat insubstantial, ephemeral, unreal within it; they yearn – as is often said in such cases – for the ‘realization of themselves’, an ontological fulfilment. And there are people who long for *nirvana*. Both groups will define the goal of their aspirations as salvation – a metaphysical salvation. We do not want to take this particular conception into account at all here. That it plays an enormous role in soteriological thought must be admitted without dispute; yet it is equally certain that this multifaceted, opaque, shifting concept of salvation takes other forms as well, independent of metaphysics: forms that are purely ethical. It was precisely in this ethical form that it appeared among the Greeks, in part even earlier than Christianity, within systems of practical philosophy that adhered most firmly and strictly to a positive foundation: not only in Stoicism, where a purely human yet ambitiously conceived purpose of life did, after all, invite justifications extending beyond the empirical, but also in the Epicurean ideal, conceived solely in earthly terms¹. And it is this concept of salvation – *soteria* or *salus* – in a sense where the ontological status of the human being is entirely irrelevant, that we wish to help elucidate through our analysis. However, even this limitation is not definitive. Even in this ethical variant, salvation is a heterogeneous concept, playing on at least two shades of meaning. For what man desires to be saved from is understood here twofold. On the one hand, it is misfortune, pain, torment, all forms of suffering – which is how the simplest-minded people tend to view ‘eternal salvation’; on the other hand, it is moral evil in the proper sense. In our consciousness, these two things, though so different, are often strangely intertwined. Yet in essence, they can and ought to be separated. For even if one were to believe optimistically that a life free from suffering is impossible without moral perfection, and that moral perfection necessarily entails a life free from suffering, these are, after all, two different goals, both of which may be conceived and proposed to the will separately. We shall make use of this opportunity and fulfil this duty by completely omitting the first, eudaimonic aspect and focusing exclusively on salvation in a strictly ethical sense: salvation from

¹ Given the date, I am not permitted to refer here to the words of Diogenes of Oenoanda, in which Epicurus’ teachings are described as *ta tes soterias phar-maka*. However, the idea – and, to some extent, the terminology – has been present in Epicureanism from the very beginning.

moral evil. Henceforth, therefore, the perspective taken will be, as in an axiology, free from hedonistic elements: any notion of happiness, bliss, pleasure, or well-being will be dismissed.

The second part of the argument, as mentioned in the introduction, will consist of a description of certain psychological facts. In the light of what we have said recently, its primary focus will be on that peculiar moral attitude – so different from those most commonly encountered – in which deliverance from moral evil comes to the fore as the primary goal. The soteriological attitude: that is what we shall call it. Its description and the analysis of the concept – two themes not entirely fused into one – are, however, conceived with the intention that one should explain and deepen the other; compositional clarity has been consciously sacrificed to the principle of gradually illuminating the subject from various angles and in various ways. In particular, the evaluative remarks that the argument will contain will find their place in it, not so much for the sake of evaluation as such, but as a starting point for a better final definition of the concept.

However, before going any further, we must take a step back for a moment and make some more general observations, which are necessary in order to place the issues discussed here within a broader context. Different people employ different frameworks for understanding moral facts; some are more inclined to use the concept of 'good' as a particular kind of value, whilst others use concepts such as 'moral law' or 'duty'. Meanwhile, the very act of thinking in so-called ethical terms is commonplace among people, and if we take the phrases 'moral good' and 'moral evil' in a broad sense – understanding them to also mean conformity or non-conformity with a norm, law, or duty – then it is reasonable to say that the vast majority of people in the world possess both concepts. Rare are those pessimists who would not also believe that, at least in part and provided certain conditions are met – conditions that may be quite difficult, but which can nevertheless be fulfilled – what they consider good is achievable, and what they consider evil – avoidable. Thus far, there is nothing peculiar about any of this. There are, however, many people who use moral judgement solely to turn praise or reprimand into a weapon in their struggles, to checkmate their competitors and opponents, to establish conditions within society that are advantageous to themselves, to impose obligations on others, and to bolster their own selfish claims. Among the vast mass of those who 'believe in good and evil', but are not always personally sensitive to them, only a certain portion – perhaps not the largest – possesses what might be called an ethical will: they seek to do good and avoid evil, even within themselves. Of these, however,

only a handful are inclined to make this the primary, or even merely an important, goal of their lives. Hence, this constitutes a distinct type or variety of human being, one worth singling out and reflecting upon. It would also be fitting to give it a name. In the absence of a better one, and drawing on a term known from economics, we shall – without insisting on it – refer to it for the time being as *homo ethicus*. This is not, of course, to be understood as a ‘moral man’ in contrast to an ‘immoral’ one, nor, even less so, as a ‘decent man’. The latter, in particular, although pursuing good in himself and in his actions, may not think of it *ante factum* at all, but only acknowledge it *ex post*, as and when necessary. *Homo ethicus*, on the other hand, is a person who cares deeply about morality and consciously strives towards it, precisely because that person does not feel entirely good about himself. This is the Stoic *prokopton*, though the emphasis is not on the progress actually made, but on the striving; an ‘aspirant’, so to speak, to morality. People like this are sometimes even subject to various accusations – in our view, unjustly; but even if one or other of these accusations were to stick, it is hard to deny such people a healthy inclination to take their own faith seriously and their own standards to heart. Therefore, in terms of the moral life of us, a humanity that is very lax in this respect, they do not, it seems, play a role that we would be justified in thinking of negatively.

It is only now that we can turn to the main subject. *Homo ethicus*, as we have said, strives to realize the good within himself and to avoid evil (or, of course, to rid himself of it once it has arisen – and it is the latter that will concern us). In strict terms, these two endeavours are directed towards a single ultimate goal, which can be defined as the greatest possible advantage of good over evil in life as a whole; of the two immediate goals (to realize good, to rid oneself of evil), neither is more important than the other for the achievement of the ultimate goal. However, one may conceive of these immediate goals and pursue them individually, which means that in one’s consciousness they may appear unbalanced, one very strong, the other barely perceptible. In fact, one usually predominates. The more common case, I suppose, is the predominance of concern for the good; to possess such or other virtues is the simplest ambition that drives the average person, sensitive to moral values, forward in his actions. Everyone would, in principle, wish to attain these virtues to the highest possible degree; yet everyone knows, and whether they like it or not must acknowledge, that the fullness of good is great, whilst one’s strength is limited; therefore, if one can come even a fraction closer to its full realization, becoming a slightly better person than one was when setting out on one’s path, that alone is con-

sidered a great victory. When the sixty-year-old Seneca began to sense an unspoken question from his friends – why, at such an advanced age and so close, no doubt, to the moment when he would have to leave this life, was he still striving so hard – he replied briefly: “To depart a better man”. “*Ut exeam melior*”: a powerful phrase, simple, yet of such poignant significance! And perhaps, to honour this man so burdened by sin, yet fighting so steadfastly for his soul to the very end – though primarily in connection with the programme defined by these words – it might not be out of place to divert a certain well-known, but in fact rarely used term from recent times from its original meaning, and to call the first of the two stances which the *homo ethicus* may adopt the melioristic stance.

The attitude of a meliorist² is marked by a high degree of positivity. To put it figuratively, one might say that, in two distinct ways, his conscious striving is a movement towards something rather than away from something, driven by attraction rather than repulsion. Firstly, it is a striving for something to be, rather than for it not to be; the conscious and subjective goal being pursued here is the existence of something – not non-existence, presence – not absence. Secondly, that for the meliorist, the image of the present state, the starting point, the entire constellation from which one wishes to depart, is outweighed by the image of the future state, the state one is moving towards; the consciousness here is dominated by a vision of the future, it is ‘prospective’. What, however, constitutes the most striking feature of the meliorist’s character – and one which, in a sense, encapsulates it – is his attitude towards evil, which is as cognitive as it is emotional. In principle, we can pass both a positive and a negative moral judgement on a given subject ‘directly’ in the sense that we do not derive it by reasoning from a judgement of the opposite sign. We judge courage to be a good thing not by first establishing that it is something ‘opposite’ (whatever we might mean by that) to the negatively valued cowardice, and hence concluding that courage is good. But cowardice too, if not *in abstracto*, then at least as a concrete, individual instance, we may judge as something bad, without thinking of it as the opposite of positively valued courage, but simply, ‘intuitively’.

² By ‘meliorist’ I simply mean a person who actually adopts a melioristic attitude – and likewise by ‘soteriologist’. I do not use these terms to refer to any particular psychological types in this field, although I do not deny their existence; these reflections are not intended to be typological. I fully accept the idea that a soteriological attitude and a meliorative attitude may be adopted alternately by the same person; I would merely argue that these are relatively stable attitudes and by no means merge into one another without strong resistance.

In practice, however, it appears that only some people are prepared to take advantage of this second option: owing to the natural and fundamental phenomenon in the realm of axiology that attention is directed primarily towards the positive pole of values, many tend to judge good directly as good, whilst for evil they seem to lack a 'sense', an intuitive faculty. The meliorist is exactly such a person. While paying attention to the good, having the good as his goal and striving towards it, he nevertheless finds that certain things within himself are an obstacle to this pursuit: the attainment of this or that value cannot be reconciled with their presence. Hence, naturally, he wishes to rid himself of them; and often invests all his passion in this endeavour. He knows them, almost solely from this perspective – as obstacles – and thus through a specific relationship between them and the good, and knows them as a result of his recognition of this specific relationship, that is, as a result of a process that is to some extent discursive. Hence, his emotional reaction to them is not particularly strong. The optimist does not feel an elementary dread of evil, the kind that comes from intuitive immediacy; he may even value what he considers to be evil, feel a certain fondness for it, and regret that the world is not organized in such a way that it can go hand in hand with unquestionable good. He is like a runner who, in order to reach the finish line, throws away everything that weighs him down, even though he knows there are treasures there. A classic illustration of this is his attitude towards sensuality. Sensuality is often mentioned among the major obstacles to reaching higher ethical levels; having experienced its influence first-hand, the meliorist regards it as something evil; yet this does not mean that he instinctively abhors it, but he may still admire its beauty and revere its charms. Yet he rejects this beauty and breaks free from its spell, for he wishes to reach a place which, as long as its power endures, will remain beyond his reach. Such would be the meliorist, and such would be his attitude.

We have already discussed the second attitude: it is the soteriological attitude, one that we are primarily concerned with. In a loose and broad sense, it is also positive: for just like the meliorist, so also the soteriologist strives for a positive, favourable balance in life when it comes to matters of value. But here the emphasis lies elsewhere: on the evil that is found within oneself, on its eradication, destruction, and uprooting. To characterize it, therefore, it is best to begin where we left off with the meliorist. Let us imagine a man who not only makes use of this ability to perceive concrete evil directly, but has an overwhelming inclination to do so: a man who is somehow particularly sensitive to it, and whose attention it attracts so persistently that the good – though ultimately still

determining his entire course – is, in his daily life, somehow pushed into the background of his consciousness. If he has moral aspirations, and this evil is his own, then this man will be a soteriologist. The soteriologist cannot grasp evil through his attitude towards good. It strikes him with its hideousness, it stings and blinds him; there are no means of escaping this image or softening it. Hence what was so alien to the meliorist: that characteristic sense of dread – not only in the face of one's own evil – which turns into some uncanny, despair-filled astonishment when it comes to the evil within oneself: 'Can I really be like this?' Now, evil (let it be sensuality once more, assuming that a given individual perceives it as a cardinal evil) is no longer an obstacle, no longer a burden: it is something man recoils from, a thing which, in its very content, in its very essence – regardless of whatever its consequences may be – is morally appalling. And consequently, the whole attitude takes on, at least at a first and superficial glance, certain features of negativity. For in both senses discussed here in connection with the meliorist, the soteriological pursuit is a movement away from something, not towards something, driven by repulsion rather than attraction. For one thing, there is no prospectivity here; consciousness is dominated not by an image of a future state, but by that which is now and from which one wishes to depart. The soteriologist is captivated by the sight of evil within himself; as long as it persists, it does not allow him to forget about it; unlike that runner who first seeks to reach his goal, and then, having encountered obstacles, overcomes them and makes a sacrifice, he is, in a sense, like a man who is covered in mud and filth and, having returned home, can literally think of nothing else, of no positive action, as long as this loathsome thing clings to him. This is not fascination, for in fascination the capacity to take countermeasures is lost; instead, it is the enslavement of attention.

Second, and as a consequence of the first: the goal that subjectively stands out here is no longer the presence of something, but its absence; not so much the acquisition of good as the discarding of evil, 'purification'. 'First let us wash away the dirt, then the rest.' Not 'to cultivate the good within oneself', but 'to remove one's shortcomings, blemishes and flaws' – this is a soteriological way of thinking.

On one very important point, however, this parallelism between the two attitudes – which has been valid thus far – is broken. The meliorist seeks less the attainment of total goodness within oneself – which practically no one can be expected to achieve – than, more modestly, its growth, advancement, and progress. This is understandable and natural: in the realm of positive values, even the smallest increment is worthwhile. However, anyone who wants to rid himself of evil as we

have presented it here – evil as an absolute, evil as a curse, a horror that corrupts the whole soul – will not find some minor reduction of it to be of any value: therefore, a ‘reduction of evil’ can by no means be defined as the goal of the soteriologist. In setting his goal, the soteriologist cannot avoid being a maximalist; he cannot help but seek to rid himself of evil entirely. And it is precisely this total, not partial, this complete ‘liberation from evil’ – to use the term classically applied here – that he terms salvation. An ‘absolute liberation from evil’: whether precise or imprecise, let us for now accept this formula as a definition; we shall see later what to make of it. And let us remember this: if salvation is defined in this way, one may approach it, distance oneself from it, find oneself closer to it or further from it, but partial attainment – having achieved some part of it, but not the whole – is not an option here; no partial attainment, *ex definitione*, is salvation; salvation must always be total.

That is more or less an overview of what can be said about both topics – the analysis of the concept and the description of the attitude – at first glance, as a sort of tentative assessment. One could go deeper; here, however, it would prove useful to introduce an element of judgement into the discussion, or more precisely: to take an interest in the judgements that might occur to someone when faced with the attitude described.

The soteriological stance is less common and – as is evident from my previous remarks – in a sense also somewhat less natural; consequently, it is more likely than the other to attract various criticisms. In particular, someone with a melioristic attitude, coupled with a touch of naivety, might easily latch onto the formula of ‘liberation from evil’ just mentioned and, taking it literally, use it to come up with a series of comparisons unfavourable to the soteriologist. Thus, above all, such a person will regard the positivity of his goal itself as his superiority: to wish to bring something into existence, and especially something that ought to exist – that is, he will say, clearly something more than when one wishes to prevent the existence of something. After this, however, he will no doubt wish to emphasize the ultimate and comprehensive nature of this goal. ‘What I, as a reformer, seek to achieve – that “good” – is precisely that, and that alone, which ought to be realized for its own sake; moreover, despite any reservations I may have regarding the achievements I personally expect, my aim is, in principle, absolute; it is the good in its fullness, and my contentment with my own modest, unremarkable progress is merely my reasonable self-criticism in judging my own capabilities. Your goal, on the other hand [‘you’ – meaning the soteriologist], is either merely instrumental, or must be regarded as partial. For according to your conviction, either the elimination of evil is a stage after which you

intend to proceed to the next stage, the pursuit of good, or it is not such a stage. If it is, then, yes, I can concede that as a human being you are all right. I will not argue with you about whether this stage is indeed necessary; if you are already so deeply mired in this apocalyptic 'evil' of yours that you cannot begin to do anything decent until you have dug yourself out of it, so be it. But then your salvation is, after all, only a means to an end, or, if you will, a preliminary, preparatory goal; and you, at best, are a decent candidate for a meliorist, and until you actually become one, you must acknowledge your inferiority to me. If, on the other hand, you do not treat your salvation as a stage, then your human substance is rather wretched. For then, by very definition, your goal becomes fragmentary, pitiful. It will be achieved when you rise from the realm of evil into a morally neutral realm, from sin into mediocrity; you must surely admit that this is rather insufficient! A complete goal would be to pass into the realm of good; by limiting yourself to mere liberation from evil, you give up what was essential; all you do is reach the threshold and stop. You are incomplete, or rather, nothing at all; this is not, as in my case, self-criticism, but a reprehensible lack of desire; in your very essence, you are a small-minded creature, devoid of aspiration. All this 'salvation' of yours is a programme for spiritual cripples".

That is how our critic, a somewhat naive moralist, might put it. We have generously bestowed upon him a lack of insight; nevertheless, we must deal with him somehow. That the soteriological attitude, viewed from a psychological perspective, contains some semblance or admixture of negativity is something we have emphasized ourselves; yet the rest of the remarks, particularly the very concept of salvation, miss the mark entirely. For when we use this word and reflect on its meaning, we all feel quite clearly, I think, that this is not something one speaks of 'merely' as an afterthought; that it is the ultimate goal, thoroughly positive in its very essence and, above all, imbued with a fullness against which scarcely any human goal would not appear meagre and faint. Such are the common intuitions, and this is how the soteriologist experiences it. For here is a paradox, which to mention at the outset of this discussion would be a premature complication, but which is fundamental to us at this point and determines everything: 'liberation from evil', by which we have provisionally defined salvation, presents itself to the soteriologist as the attainment, simultaneously with it and inseparable from it, of the very pinnacles of morality: perfection, holiness – everything that the most exalted moral ambition could dream of. But what does this inseparability entail? And how is it conceived by the soteriologist? This is what constitutes the conundrum and what now needs to be explained.

Of the two approaches that come to mind here, only one – the more difficult one – has the potential to reasonably satisfy us; however, it is worth mentioning the other, easier one, if only briefly, as it occurs to everyone and its unreliability needs to be demonstrated.

It would look as follows.

It has sometimes been argued in ethics that, unlike ordinary behaviour, every human act is either morally good or bad, and that there is no such concept as a morally neutral act; a thesis which – even if one were to define ‘act’ very narrowly – is manifestly false. However, a more cautious position is possible in this matter, one which, by being less exposed to criticism, one might defend: namely, that when a particular ‘area’ of conduct is subject to moral evaluation, then the above principle applies in that specific area. It is well known that people often find themselves in situations where, in the absence of a third alternative, they have to choose between telling the truth and thereby harming themselves, or lying and thereby gaining an advantage. According to an ethics that is strict on this point – applied in practice without enthusiasm, but widely propagated as a theory – a truthful statement in such a case would always merit a positive judgement, a false one always a negative one; whereas a neutral behaviour, such as silence, has no place here *ex hypothesi*. Therefore, evil may disappear from here, and thus, inevitably, good will emerge: whoever turns from falsehood to truth, in a single, indivisible act, is freed from the former and attains the latter; and whoever has undergone this change permanently, by virtue of the indivisible fact of that change, simultaneously ceases to be a liar – at least a liar of convenience – and to that extent also ‘evil’ and ‘immoral’, and becomes a truthful person – and to that extent enriched with a certain new morally positive trait. Under this thesis, the following example would be typical: in every morally assessed sphere, there would be no third alternative, and in each, moral progress would directly encompass both aspects. “Whoever has rid himself of moral evil has thereby attained moral good”: this statement would be generally true. Whoever, then, has rid himself of evil completely, that is to say, has attained salvation, has also attained good completely: and this would explain the positive, final, and complete nature of salvation as the goal of one’s endeavours.

Yet this entire interpretation falls short, and for the simplest of reasons: we have no right either to adopt the thesis put forward as our own or to attribute it to the soteriologist. To adopt it as our own – we cannot, for even in this moderate form we have given it, it remains at the very least dubious (anyone could see the artificiality with which we had to carve out and construct the above example, which was favourable to it);

it therefore cannot serve to explain the concept we are using: To attribute it to the soteriologist – we cannot, for soteriology is a spiritual attitude, not a theory, and no theoretical assumptions can form an indispensable part of it; it is true that, *ex post* and for the secondary intellectualization of experience, a soteriologist may frame it as we have explained here, but by no means must he. And so his understanding of salvation as that full, finite, complete, realization of which we are still speaking here also remains unexplained.

It seems that a meaningful interpretation must be sought elsewhere.

Namely, it is not true – or rather, it is only true in a somewhat unnatural meaning, which we must then ascribe to the word – that what we have accepted above is merely provisional and approximate: that salvation is complete liberation from evil and nothing more. ‘Complete liberation’, taken literally, can after all be understood as a momentary liberation, in which no evil is present in my actions, desires, or the motives governing me at that moment. Salvation is something far greater: it is the disappearance and end of the possibility of falling into evil at any time, a guarantee that one will never stray. To be truly able to think, “I am saved”, one would have to know not only that there is no evil within them today, but also that no evil will ever be able to take hold of them in the future.

This is no longer merely a present state, but – like predestination, like fate – a certain determination of what will be, right up to the moment when the very subject upon whom evil or good might be realized ceases to exist.

But with this understanding of salvation, something even more paradoxical than what we have recently stated here immediately becomes apparent: that, in fact, it is not salvation itself that is the most ambitious goal of all, but that the prior attainment of such a goal is one of its preconditions. For there is no salvation until a moral transformation has taken place, a transformation in human nature so profound that it may seem almost blasphemous to speak of it as a possibility.

To demonstrate this, however, we must return for a moment to our starting point. Namely, the *Homo ethicus* mentioned at the beginning, of whom both the soteriologist and the meliorist are variations, is not the sort of person who would simply wish to do good, for whom it would suffice that, by virtue of its consequences or its objective content – telling the truth, persevering in battle, a just judgement, an act of self-sacrifice – his actions would merit a positive moral assessment. When he begins to theorize, he will not accept – as is implied by certain positions in ethics – that if, for instance, a bandit, driven by envy towards his accomplices,

reports a crime about to be committed and thereby prevents that crime, then all is well within that situation. He does not wish to do good, but to be good; and to be good may mean many very 'internal' things, which it is not the place to mention here, but it certainly means wishing good – and for our further discussion, this good will suffice. Therefore, the soteriologist is not a person who simply wishes to rid himself of evil in his actions, but one who wishes to rid himself of ill will. 'To be free from evil' means for him 'not to want evil'; whereas 'to be liberated once and for all from the possibility of moral evil' means 'to become, once and for all and without any possibility of the opposite, impervious to evil will'. Once someone is liberated in this way, it means that we can now truly say of them: 'they will never desire evil in the future'. This is how the concept of salvation takes shape at this later stage; this amendment transforms it quite profoundly, but it should not, perhaps, present any difficulty.

Now, however, we come to a more complex matter; we will only be able to discuss it here in simplified and abbreviated terms. Speaking on our own behalf for the time being, without prejudging anything regarding soteriology, let us nevertheless express, without reservation, the following opinion: to will evil is in fact not merely to will harm, but also, when faced with a choice between two good things which are ends in themselves, to will the one that is less good, the 'lesser good'. If we assume this, we must also assume that the following will not be protected from desiring evil – that is, will not be "saved": – he who is threatened by a possibility of ever desiring it; and vice versa: the statement "I am saved" will also encompass the assertion: "it will never happen in the future that, of two goods, I will desire the lesser good". This must be taken strictly: it will never happen in the future that I shall be led, by any excess of any quality that renders an object truly desirable to me, to choose that object, if the alternative object proves to possess an extra measure of good, however slight. However, if – as the concept of salvation requires – it is to be true today that I will always choose the better of the two, if this is to occur each time in an infallibly predictable manner – then the only guarantee of such an infallibly predictable choice can be that I will choose it every time because it is better, that whenever there is a surplus of good, that will determine the choice. To put it in psychological terms: at every single moment in the future (as I may be faced with a choice at any moment!), my inclination towards the good will be stronger than any other inclination that might, at that very moment, draw me towards anything else. Using a term that is psychologically less unambiguous, yet conveys a greater sense of the gravity and magnitude of the matter at hand, this inclination is also sometimes termed 'love'. We shall therefore

say that, in order for me never to be threatened by evil intentions in the future, love of the good must reign within me from this day forward: ever-present, unshaken by anything, unchallenged, absolute.

This means, however, that already today I am capable of a certain kind of moral perfection. "A certain kind" only, of course, because perfection is potential and will only be actualized in specific future intentions; yet it is perfection, since I have sufficient predisposition for all those future good intentions: my whole "nature", as it were, is directed solely towards the good. It follows, therefore, that whoever is to be freed from the possibility of ever falling into evil – that is to say, whoever is to be saved – must, in this somewhat limited yet very strong sense, be morally perfect. The situation we have here is precisely the opposite of the one our naive moralist told us to accept: it is not salvation that constitutes a step in self-improvement and progress, but rather a certain form of perfection achieved beforehand that is the condition for salvation.³ The goal of the soteriologist, which encompasses this condition, is positive in the very sense that the other denied; by encompassing both potential perfection and its gradual realization throughout the rest of one's life, it is neither partial nor subservient, but as definitive and comprehensive as one could possibly imagine; it is fully ambitious, supreme.

And yet, if one takes this entire argument simply as a response to the objections levelled against the soteriologist, there is something else about this response that is fundamentally unsatisfactory. The critic of soteriology argued that the goal which the soteriologist sets for himself and which he subjectively holds in his consciousness is, for such and such reasons, meagre; and we, in our reply, stated that the goal towards which the soteriologist objectively strives is, in fact, not meagre. We accepted the thesis that desiring a lesser good is also an evil, and it binds us to all its further consequences, including the ultimate one: that perfec-

³ At least, that is how we must interpret the definition of salvation given here. One might, however, wonder whether the semantic intuitions associated with the term would not be better served by a slightly broader understanding of it, namely: salvation is the impossibility of falling into evil at any time in the future, together with the present state of affairs which guarantees this impossibility. An argument in favour of this concept is that the two do indeed form a whole, distinct in thought, but inseparable as the goal of our endeavours, and which also most often appears in the mind as this whole. Based on this understanding, potential moral perfection is no longer a condition of salvation, but a component. The matter is, in effect, a matter of wording; in the main argument, it was this approach that I adopted, as it seemed to me to lead to fewer complications in the formulation, whilst strongly emphasizing the central idea.

tion is the condition for salvation. And until the soteriologist accepts this thesis, any response will fall short of addressing the criticism: for it is he who must have perfection set as his goal, subjectively. In a sense, it is indeed difficult to see how he could reject this thesis, for it imposes itself on anyone who thinks in terms of the good (and he does so) and regards desires as one of the objects of ethical judgement (which may also reasonably be attributed to him). And yet there is a certain difficulty here. For isn't evil consisting in desiring not evil, but a lesser good, precisely that evil which is experienced directly and intuitively, and therefore shocking and terrible, to which the soteriologist is sensitive? After all, to experience it, we must take the concept of the good as our starting point, then compare two specific forms of good, and finally ascertain that the will is directed towards the lesser good: we thus recognize it, in the end, on the basis of rather complex relationships among several objects. However, this difficulty does not seem insurmountable. We need only to distinguish between two things: a justified conviction and an intuitive insight. Suppose that someone with remarkable artistic talent, instead of putting that talent to use, throws himself into accumulating material goods and thus wastes his talent; this pursuit of material wealth (which we assume is otherwise legitimate) can be regarded as evil only in the sense that it is a pursuit of a good immeasurably lesser than the other, and only on this basis can it be demonstrated as evil. But he who has succumbed to this weakness, if he possesses that particular disposition from which soteriology arises, will perceive it differently. To him, that pursuit of riches will seem, beyond all reason, to be an abominable evil in itself; moreover, those very riches – innocent in their essence – will cease to be a lesser good for him, and will themselves become an evil, a disgrace, a filth, a temptation from Satan. Such shifts in human conscience are quite common. Thus, the subjective aim of the soteriologist will also be as we have described it, and the soteriologist is defended. It is true that the price of this is another flaw which we now observe in him: a tendency to succumb to certain illusions. Leaving aside, however, the fact that these illusions may be morally salutary (whoever does not wish to fall into moral tepidity should rather exaggerate and magnify the good and evil from which they must choose, rather than weigh them up too pedantically), we have not, after all, said anywhere that the soteriologist must be without flaws.

Nor was it our intention – in any case, an intention that is relevant and important to the subject – to take a defensive stance here. Let us recall what we have already said and emphasized: all this deliberation over judgement and all this controversy with the *ad hoc* invented oppo-

nent was merely a device, a temporary measure, through which a deeper definition of salvation could be obtained. If this was achieved, then the main purpose has been accomplished. In addition, and as the opportunity arose, the psychological portrait of the attitude has been further enriched with a series of traits. As for whether the soteriologist or the meliorist is more in the right, whose way of seeing things is healthier, or whose tactics more effective – we do not wish to deliberate on these matters here, not on account of the indifference of the narrator, to whom the task of judging phenomena would be alien, but because, humanly speaking, both attitudes are justified, and because without one or the other one-sidedness represented by them, it is difficult to achieve that passion which, in the moral sphere as in any other, is alone capable of securing victory through human effort.

In conclusion, it is perhaps worthwhile to ask one more question explicitly, a question that has, in a sense, continued to loom through the literal text of our arguments: is salvation an attainable goal? Well, as long as one does not adopt the indeterministic position – with which, importantly and as a side effect worth emphasizing, the proposed definition is obviously incompatible – then, contrary to what the reader might expect at this point, no *a priori* reason for denying this attainability is apparent. The love of good is a real motive, and there is nothing to suggest that it will never be the consistently and invariably decisive motive in any human being. The probability of such a fantastic win in nature's lottery is, however, so remote that in practice we can only regard it as equal to zero. Moreover – and this is without reservation – even if someone does attain salvation, neither they nor anyone else can ever be certain that they have attained it: for we cannot foresee future desires, and that which – if there is such a thing – already determines them today is unknowable to us. The words 'I am saved' are words to which no one will ever have a right; and for this reason alone, it must be said that, in practical and everyday terms, salvation is not a real goal, but an ideal.

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Suffering (ethical considerations)

Is suffering a bad thing? The answer is 'yes' according to the eudaemonists, who regard happiness as the highest good and suffering as its counterpart. But are they right? To answer this question, we must examine certain definitions and distinctions. What is suffering? Let us first agree that it is an experience – more precisely, a feeling – and that only conscious beings suffer; a stone does not suffer, nor does man suffer when he is unconscious. It is possible to make a distinction between physical suffering and moral suffering. Physical suffering is based on pain as a sensory impression, coupled with a specific unpleasant emotional quality of great intensity; the combination of these elements constitutes what is known as a sensory feeling. Moral suffering, on the other hand, arises when we are unable to achieve some good that we ardently desire, or when we lose a good that was very dear to us. The basis of moral suffering is the conviction of the absence of a desired value, and this conviction is accompanied, as with physical suffering, by an unpleasant emotional quality; the whole thus formed is a feeling of value. Physical suffering is an intense negative sensory feeling; moral suffering is also an intense negative feeling of value.

Inflicting suffering is not always wrong; we know this from everyday life. It is good when it serves a good purpose, cures illnesses, prevents transgressions, and fosters courage (think of Prus's beautiful novella *The Dream*, where the most beautiful flowers spring from tormented human souls – the very same idea expressed in the form of a poetic metaphor). It is bad when it results from evil motives, aims at an evil end, or is inflicted upon anyone as violence. Suffering imposed by fate is a test of

fortitude, which the afflicted person demonstrates by overcoming it. In all these cases, suffering has the value of a means or an instrument for the achievement of something else of positive or negative value; accordingly, we shall also ascribe a positive or negative value to suffering; this is a relative, dependent or instrumental value, as it is also called.

However, when we ask whether suffering is bad, we have something else in mind, namely the value of suffering as such, in its own right – that is, its absolute value. For it may be the case that, although suffering is an evil in itself, we nevertheless choose it in order to protect ourselves from an even greater evil; it then acquires a positive instrumental value, even though it remains evil in its nature. I mentioned that suffering is regarded as an evil by eudemonists, specifically as an absolute evil. But alongside eudaimonism, there is another school of thought in ethics known as perfectionism. Proponents of this school of thought regard, not happiness, but self-improvement and the all-round development of the personality as the highest good. Perfection may also be variously understood: the eudemonist sees the ideal of perfection in a life free from suffering; yet such an ideal of a perfect life, developed particularly in ancient ethics, may raise doubts in the mind of a perfectionist. Let us juxtapose two people: one, in accordance with the eudaimonistic ideal, led a happy life full of success, achieving his life goals without overcoming adversity or the suffering associated with it; the other, striving for perfection, suffered whilst overcoming hurdles along the way, and only after surmounting these sufferings did he achieve what he sought. Undoubtedly, the latter had a richer life; his development was more comprehensive; he was closer to the ideal of perfection, as understood by perfectionists. He achieved this through the suffering he experienced and came to know, which remained alien to that happy man. But isn't the value of suffering merely instrumental? If that were the case, suffering, having fulfilled its role in personality development, would cease to have any significance in one's future life; yet this is not so; it remains a positive component of life experience and preserves its value permanently as an element of personality; and this is already more than an instrumental value; it is the value of suffering as such, in its own right.

Perfectionists are not the only ones to defend the absolute value of suffering: they are aided by another line of reasoning that falls within the scope of general axiology. There is a well-known principle: *omne ens est bonum*, meaning that everything that is real is good by virtue of its very existence; evil is always a kind of lack, a lack of reality. Now, suffering cannot be understood as a lack; it is not merely a lack of happiness, good fortune, health, or love; these deficiencies are the causes of suffer-

ing, but suffering itself is a real experience possessing its own distinctive characteristics. And as something real, it is a good, just like everything else that constitutes reality. A further argument along the same lines points out that suffering willingly taken upon oneself redeems evil and atones for committed crimes, and is therefore undoubtedly a good in itself. Here, however, a new difficulty arises. After all, suffering often manifests itself as a destructive force, inflicting physical and spiritual harm, and sometimes leading to death. That which causes evil cannot be good. Perhaps, however, it is not suffering itself that produces these evil effects, but rather the physiological processes of which it is also a consequence: pathological changes in the body during physical suffering, and during moral suffering, stimuli that induce changes in the nervous system. After all, as they say, even joy can kill when joyful news proves too strong a stimulus for the heart's activity.

Thus, two perspectives are at odds with one another; according to one, suffering is an evil; according to the other, it is a good; yet a third position is conceivable: suffering has no intrinsic value; it is in itself value-neutral; it assumes only an instrumental value, becoming an evil or a good depending on the circumstances in which it is embedded. Let us not seek a resolution in the theoretical realm. We have here an example of a situation similar to that in many other philosophical issues: *Res ad principia venit*. What we choose is a matter of assumption; at stake are the fundamental differences in worldviews – optimism or pessimism – and we must choose between them. The theorist is content with the statement that there are different positions and that each has its merits. As Henryk Elzenberg once wrote (*The Trouble with Existence*, p. 355): "Philosophy is not about achieving a specific and definitive result, but rather the exact opposite: to keep all reasonable possibilities for understanding the world open, in defiance of the one-sided pressures inherent in every era. To avoid suffocating, a person needs these perspectives, which are open in all directions".



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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The paradox of freedom (1)

The paradox of freedom that I intend to discuss is that unlimited freedom is self-contradictory, meaning that in order to be free, one must limit one's freedom. As is well known, the principle of universal freedom cannot be realised: conflicting interests and aspirations would quickly lead to anarchy. However, it is worth considering the structure of reasoning that not only confirms this prediction, but also shows that this principle contains an internal contradiction. For if we assume that everything is permitted, then it is also permitted to deny that everything is permitted; and if it is permitted to deny that everything is permitted, then it is not true that everything is permitted. This reasoning is analogous to the well-known logical principle that if a statement implies its own negation, then the negation is true and the statement is false. This is how Plato reasons in the dialogue *Theaetetus*, when he attributes to Socrates an argument that is designed to prove the falsity of Protagoras's claim that every statement is true and that it only takes skilful argumentation to win others over. The argument goes as follows: if it is true, as Protagoras claims, that every statement is true, then the statement of his opponents that not every statement is true is also true. Secondary school students encounter yet another example of such reasoning when, in school algebra, it is proved that a first-degree equation with one unknown has only one root; to prove this, it is assumed that it has two roots, after which it becomes apparent that this assumption leads to its contradiction, since two roots are one and the same root, and therefore the equation has only one root.

Then how can freedom be restrained so that one remains free? According to the common understanding of freedom, a person is free when their actions are not subject to any restrictions other than those they impose on themselves. Whether someone imposes these restrictions on himself or not, there are two types of freedom. Physical or external freedom is freedom within the limits set by natural conditions, in accordance with the laws of nature: muscle strength, agility, lung and heart endurance, which allow one to overcome physical resistance in the environment. The natural limits of external freedom become expanded as science and its technical applications progress, enabling humans to master the hostile forces of nature, become independent of them, and harness them to work for their own purposes. Man has external freedom if he is not locked up in prison, which would lead to his destruction, and if he does not act under the threat of such confinement, as does an animal that does not live in a cage or zoo enclosure. A being acting within the limits of its external freedom may be guided in its actions by a variety of motives, including both reasonable reflection and aspirations arising from primal drives and passions. However, the human personality is characterized by the ability to distinguish between good and evil and to choose between motives for action, limiting the pursuits arising from drives and passions, the lust for fame, power and wealth, if they oppose right pursuits, i.e. those directed towards good. Life wisdom has long taught us that people who consider only their physical capabilities in their actions will soon fall prey to their own desires, which will ultimately work against them. A wise man, as the ancient sages taught, reigns over his passions, guided in his actions, not by desire, but by what is right, and thus achieves freedom from his own primal nature, known as inner or moral freedom, since the dictates of morality indicate what course of action is right.

External and internal freedoms intersect within the limits of actions permissible according to internal freedom, yet they are antagonistic beyond these limits, for people who, exercising their external freedom, succumb to their desires and transgress the boundaries of what is right, are not internally free; while those who restrain their impulsive actions in accordance with what is right limit their external freedom. The conviction that it is possible to realise one's intentions – one which accompanies both external and internal freedom – was called psychological freedom. The emergence of this conviction or a conviction contrary to it is a criterion for a person acting of having or not having freedom. Like many other criteria, it can be unreliable, as it can be misleading.

Man who has attained inner freedom also respects the freedom of others, in accordance with the principle of justice, which is *suum cuique* – to give everyone what is due to them. However, justice is manifold, depending on how one understands what is due to whom.¹ And so, in the first sense, those who give everyone the same are acting justly – like a mother who divides bread equally among her children: in this sense, popular thought considers death to be the embodiment of justice, as it strikes everyone equally, regardless of any privileges. In the second sense, justice is done by those who treat everyone as they deserve; such is the justice meted out to people beyond the grave, but here on Earth, too, a person whose social position does not correspond to their merits is rightly considered to be wronged by injustice. In the third sense, justice is exercised according to the results of work; it guides a fair examiner in assessing an exam or a fair employer in determining employees' wages. The fourth is justice that gives to each according to their needs: we find it in social welfare organizations, in all kinds of sickness, disability and old-age benefits. Finally, the fifth is justice that allocates to each person what is due to them according to their status: thus, priority is given to teachers or superiors, the elderly, and revered people.

However, few people achieve inner freedom and respect the freedom of others in accordance with the precepts of justice. Thus, there is slavery as the opposite of freedom. It deprives people of external freedom; however, it is also possible to deprive a person of inner freedom by entangling them in lies imposed by a violator who abuses the trust of unaware people. A person in external slavery can retain internal freedom: because physical enslavement, through the imposition of rules on movement, communication, and the production of various goods, may block the path to the manifestation of moral freedom in action, but it does not reach its internal foundation, i.e. the intentions behind one's actions, which are considerations of justice, not drives and inclinations.

Physical enslavement will only limit inner freedom when its pressure causes someone to abandon righteousness in their actions. On the other hand, those deprived of inner freedom by false dogmas forced upon them are often unaware of their enslavement, as they may have a false sense of psychological freedom. In social life, physical violence takes two forms: as a weapon of the enemies of justice, but also as justice's own weapon in the fight against its enemies, when it becomes the

¹ Ch. Perelman, *De la Justice*; see rev. by M. Ossowska, "Ruch Filozoficzny" 1948, 16, p. 123

executor of sanctions that uphold justice in a form omitted from the previous list: legal justice, i.e. that which is embodied in the legal code and accompanied by sanctions threatening anyone who opposes it. To distinguish it from legal justice, let the term 'virtue of justice' refer to its previously described variants. Legal justice encompasses the varieties of the virtue of justice in the sense that each of them can be applied in legal justice as its specific content, but on the other hand, legal justice, owing to its specific content, may prove to be incompatible with one or another of those varieties of justice. The aforementioned dual relationship between violence and justice – violence that either offends justice or upholds sanctions – means that the relationship between freedom and justice also requires closer examination.

Violence occurs when opposing desires and actions collide: violence paves the way for one of these actions, preventing the other: when such a collision occurs between a just and an unjust aspiration, legal justice – at least in principle, though unfortunately not always in practice – sets in motion sanctions that use violence to curb unjust acts.

However, collisions also arise between actions, each of which invokes the principle of justice: in such cases, violence does not seem to be the right way of resolution, because even if it serves legal justice, the party against whom it is directed will accept it as unfair oppression. The source of such collisions is the excessive generality of the concepts we use to define the virtue of justice. Such is, in particular, the concept of 'what is deserved'. The concept of what is deserved is always some kind of good. The division of goods is based on a hierarchy, which in turn depends on the ethical assumptions that are accepted: it will be one thing in eudaimonic ethics and something else in a different ethical theory. Merits, achievements, and needs are also valued differently depending on the premises mentioned above. When two desires clash, both just in their intentions, but based on different ethical principles, and the collision leads to the elimination of one in favour of the other, the losing side will perceive the defeat as a restriction of freedom.

Ethical principles are components of culture, and differences between cultures prevalent in different societies are also reflected in differences between the various ethical systems. The convergence of cultures around the world, which we have witnessed especially in recent times, undoubtedly entails the convergence of ethics, merging into a single universal ethic. I believe that this phenomenon can be explained by the uniformity in the ability to have basic ethical intuitions, which are universal human abilities, just as the ability to experience colours, sounds, joy, and sadness are universal human characteristics. As this

universal ethic develops, the source of conflicts arising from the clash of ethics will disappear.

But this is not the only source of conflicts that limit individual freedom. There are times when two just aspirations clash because they refer to different aspects of the virtue of justice, e.g. when one demands justice that gives everyone the same, and the other demands justice that allocates goods according to achievements. It also happens that both just aspirations cannot be satisfied owing to a shortage of the goods they seek, as is the case when a single scholarship, enabling further academic development, must be awarded to one of two equally deserving candidates. If, in such cases, no solution can be found consistent with the principle of justice alone, then another principle must be sought which would allow the conflict to be resolved without imposing a decision that would thwart the aspirations of one of the parties and thus restrict its freedom. That principle is the principle of universal benevolence, otherwise known as the commandment to love one's neighbour. If each party, in full exercise of its internal freedom, is prepared, in accordance with this principle, to make concessions in favour of the legitimate claims of the other party, the conflict will be resolved by mutual agreement, without restricting anyone's freedom.

We have distinguished between external and internal freedom. External freedom comes up against three kinds of limitations: natural limitations in the forces of nature, social limitations in the aspirations of other people, and internal limitations in moral imperatives, which are accepted voluntarily and which, while limiting external freedom, leave the field of internal freedom open. With the development of social relations, external freedom is limited through new obstacles arising from them; the natural desire for freedom in all people finds its outlet in the transition from purely external freedom to internal freedom; this is achieved through understanding and recognizing the boundary between good and evil, between what should be pursued and what should be avoided. He who is free with inner freedom does not provoke conflicts that arise from the interplay of drives and passions, and therefore does not expose himself to acts of violence against himself. If he is unjustly assaulted, justice itself defends him. In the event of a conflict arising from just aspirations, people can also preserve their inner freedom by striving, in accordance with the principle of kindness, for a compromise in order to reconcile their own aspirations with those of the opposing party which they consider to be just. The purpose of the deliberations I present is to analyse concepts and the relationships between them. Its aim is to understand the meaning of the concept of freedom and how

this concept, in its various meanings, relates to other ethical concepts, in particular the concepts of justice and universal kindness. I am not going to formulate any recommendations, but based on the results of the analysis, one can identify another general correlation related to the paradox of freedom mentioned earlier. Everything we have dealt with thus far has concerned individual freedom. However, the concept of freedom also has another meaning, which concerns social relations; people fight for the freedom of subjugated nations or oppressed sections of the population. Defining freedom in this new sense is not easy; it involves political or economic conflicts. A social group striving for freedom regards it as the right to determine its own destiny and to decide, or at least participate on equal terms, in matters that affect its interests. But is it not true that those who cry out loudest for freedom and, on that basis, are entrusted by their fellow citizens to lead the fight for it, themselves become tyrants? It appears that the struggle for freedom for all in a society, where justice based on mutual goodwill and generally accepted ethical principles, cannot prevail, and that the supposed freedom for all will end up being freedom for some and slavery for others. Therefore, not every community is sufficiently mature for such freedom. Freedom cannot exist without justice and universal goodwill. Freedom for all is an ideal that can only be approached gradually, through the arduous effort of cultivating those social virtues that would preclude the use of violence both against justice and in its service. This thesis is not new, but perhaps these considerations will allow us to look at it more closely than is usually done.

1959–1960



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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The paradox of freedom (2)

As is well known, the principle of universal freedom cannot be realised: conflicting interests and aspirations would quickly lead to anarchy. However, it is worth considering the structure of reasoning that not only confirms this prediction, but also shows that this principle contains an internal contradiction. For if we assume that everything is permitted, then it is also permitted to deny that everything is permitted; and if it is permitted to deny that everything is permitted, then it is not true that everything is permitted. This reasoning is analogous to the well-known logical principle that if a statement implies its own negation, then the negation is true and the statement is false. Unlimited freedom contradicts itself, which is why, in order to be free, one must limit one's freedom. Then how can freedom be restrained so that one remains free?

We distinguish between external or physical freedom and internal freedom. The former is the freedom to act within the limits defined by natural conditions, conforming to the laws of nature. A being acting within the limits of its external freedom may be guided in its actions by various motives, including rational thought and impulsive urges. The human personality is characterized by its ability to distinguish between good and evil, to choose between motives for action and to reject those that are contrary to the good. Ancient moralists taught that a wise person is guided in his actions by what is right, i.e. directed toward the good, and thus achieves internal or moral freedom, because moral imperatives dictate what is right. The belief that it is possible to realise one's intentions, accompanying both external and internal freedom, is sometimes referred to as psychological freedom. The emergence of this conviction

or a conviction contrary to it is a criterion for a person acting of having or not having freedom. Like many other criteria, it can be unreliable, as it can be misleading.

A man who has attained inner freedom also respects the freedom of others, in accordance with the principle of justice, which is to give everyone his due. However, justice is manifold, depending on how one understands what is due to whom, i.e. whether it is the same for everyone, or according to merit, according to achievements, according to needs, or finally according to status. However, few people achieve inner freedom and respect the freedom of others in accordance with the precepts of justice. Thus, there is slavery as the opposite of freedom. It is imposed either by physical violence, which deprives a person of external freedom (but can also deprive them of internal freedom when its pressure causes someone to give up acting according to what is right), or by moral violence, which deprives a person of internal freedom in order to entangle them in lies, abusing their trust; someone deprived of inner freedom in this manner may retain a false sense of psychological freedom.

In social life, physical violence takes two forms: as a weapon of the enemies of justice, but also as justice's own weapon in the fight against its enemies, when it becomes the executor of sanctions that uphold justice in a form omitted from the previous list: legal justice, i.e. that which is embodied in the legal code and accompanied by sanctions threatening anyone who opposes it. Legal justice encompasses the varieties of the virtue of justice in the sense that each of them can be applied in legal justice as its specific content, but on the other hand, legal justice, owing to its specific content, may prove to be incompatible with one or another of those varieties of justice. Violence occurs when opposing desires and actions collide: violence paves the way for one of these actions, preventing the other: when such a collision occurs between a just and an unjust aspiration, legal justice – at least in principle, though unfortunately not always in practice – sets in motion sanctions that use violence to curb unjust acts. However, collisions also arise between actions, each of which invokes the principle of justice: in such cases, violence does not seem to be the right way of resolution, because even if it serves legal justice, the party against whom it is directed will accept it as unfair oppression. Then another principle must be sought which would allow the conflict to be resolved without imposing a decision that would thwart the aspirations of one of the parties and thus restrict its freedom. That principle is the principle of universal benevolence, otherwise known as the commandment to love one's neighbour. If each party, in full exercise

of its internal freedom, is prepared, in accordance with this principle, to make concessions in favour of the legitimate claims of the other party, the conflict will be resolved by mutual agreement, without restricting anyone's freedom.

The purpose of the deliberations I present is to analyse concepts and the relationships between them. Its aim is to understand the meaning of the concept of freedom and how this concept, in its various meanings, relates to other ethical concepts, in particular the concepts of justice and universal kindness.

The results of the analysis allow us to identify another general relationship between the paradox of individual freedom, which we have discussed thus far, and the freedom of societies. Defining freedom in this new sense is not easy; it involves political or economic conflicts. A social group striving for freedom regards it as the right to determine its own destiny. This ideal cannot be realised in a society where justice based on generally accepted ethical principles and mutual kindness does not prevail: the supposed freedom for all will soon turn out to be freedom for some and slavery for others. The ideal of universal freedom can only be achieved gradually, through the arduous effort of developing social virtues. This thesis is not new, but perhaps these considerations will allow us to look at it more closely than it is usually done.



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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Is it easier to lie now than in the past?

A lie is a tool of combat. It has been used since ancient times. And in periods of heightened conflict of interests and views, it manifests itself with particular intensity. As an imperative, 'believe it' is sometimes used through persuasion and force – persuasion when it is presented as the truth, which the recipient, unaware of the falsehood, accepts in good faith: the aim here is to deceive the opponent in order to deprive them of their freedom of action and subject them to the will of the liar. Examples include sending false guides to lure the enemy into an ambush or deceptive light signals on the sea coast to direct a ship onto rocks in order to wreck and plunder it. Violence is sometimes used when the opponent is already at the mercy of the oppressor, who forces the victim to say what he wants, knowing that these statements are not in line with the beliefs of the defeated: an immediate goal of such forced lying is to obtain an act of submission, and ultimately to suggest to the defeated person a belief in what is being imposed on them, initially contrary to their convictions. This is what an invader does when he demands declarations of friendship and gratitude from a conquered society, and what a bad teacher does when forcing a child to feign remorse.

Similar to coerced lying is lying for personal gain, which manifests itself in various forms of apostasy in the domain of moral values, e.g. in matters of national and religious affiliation or political and social ideology. As we know, there are cases of changing religion in order to obtain a divorce, renouncing nationality for the sake of a career, while maintaining religious and national feelings; the same applies to accepting a foreign political ideology on account of favourable economic condi-

tions, etc. Outwardly, one professes what does not correspond to one's inner convictions.

There is also lying for one's own benefit, as a means of escaping from an unpleasant reality that does not correspond to one's desires. Insignificant, but ambitious, people convince themselves of their own greatness, while those who are tormented by remorse for the harm they have done to someone else convince themselves of their own nobility. A phenomenon related to lying for personal gain is breaking promises, not keeping one's word, and not being bound by the commitments one has made.

The frequency of lying and related behaviours suggests a general disregard for what is said, a tendency not to attach importance to one's words, a lack of responsibility for one's statements, and a failure to accept the consequences of them. This assumption is supported by facts that are seemingly different from those mentioned above: even supposedly serious people fabricate stories in disputes and arguments. They condemn one another, and then, when the anger subsides, the matter is forgotten, as if neither the offender nor the offended took what they said seriously and as if they did not consider the accusations to be true. Words are thrown to the wind, without regard for their connection to reality.

It is precisely this connection that becomes disrupted in the phenomena of lying, formal apostasy, and careless hurling of insults. A thought comes to mind. It is as if, with the passage of time, words have become increasingly detached from objective reality. We know how close the connection between words and things was in primitive thinking. Words belonged to the objective realm: this is the magical power of words – spells and curses which, like the biblical 'let there be', turned into reality. This close connection, taken in reverse, is manifested in the realism of ancient philosophical thought, which saw words as a direct reflection of reality. For some ancient thinkers, a word was not merely a sign of a thing, which only acquires its meaning through knowledge of the thing it signifies, but on the contrary – in certain cases, a word was supposed to be a source of knowledge about things. It was believed that this was the case with regard to the original terms of science: a word provides an intuition of the object it signifies. The same connection lies, at least in part, at the basis of the mental phenomenon known as hypostatizing, i.e. the reification of linguistic meanings, and in the specific case of substituting real entities for general terms; there is a word, and therefore there is also a thing belonging to it. This close connection made it difficult to lie. Breaking a promise, the discord between word and deed,

denying one's faith was a violation, something contrary to nature, and the person who committed it was nothing short of a monster.

The evolution of philosophical thought loosens this connection, primarily by criticising primitive realism. Reality slowly ceases to be something absolute in relation to the human mind; in what primitive realistic thought took to be objective reality, increasingly more humanistic factors are being discovered. This criticism first destroys the magical world of primitive beliefs, then attacks the rationalist, non-empirical world in the form given to it by Platonic doctrine and its derivatives. Finally, it does not bypass the empirical world. The boundary between the subjective and the objective is shifting further and further outwards; more than that, it is becoming less sharp; subjective elements seem to be inseparable from any objective reality.

Parallel to this objectification of the object of cognition, a conviction or feeling begins to arise that the world in which we live can be transformed and shaped. The primal attitude towards this world was passive; the world was something given, and life wisdom consisted in adapting to it – this was the essence of Stoicism and Epicureanism. That passive attitude was transformed into an active one – on the one hand, thanks to the technical mastery of nature, but on the other hand, also in connection with a subjective view of the world: man begins to see it as he wants to see it and as he describes it in his projects. It is as if the original magical connection between the word and reality has been reversed; there, words of spells or incantations turned into facts because they belonged to the same objective domain – here, words create reality because reality has become dependent on its subjective perception in cognition and action.

This tendency to make reality dependent on the content of the statements made about it and on the desires nurtured in relation to it could be called pragmatic, as it finds expression in the epistemology of pragmatism, if we formulate the principal statement of this school of thought, as James did, in the aphorism: any statement that effectively guides action is true. In each of the types of dishonesty I have mentioned, there is a visible tendency to create an image of reality – a myth, as it is sometimes called – as the basis for effective action, a tendency that falls under the pragmatic concept of truth.

The word began to serve action rather than cognition. At the same time, of the two semantic functions of language, the objective and subjective designation of things and the expression of experiences, the latter came to the fore. The importance of words shifted from what they mean

to what they express. The brakes of nature, not moral but semantic, which hindered lying, became worn out. Today, lying is easier because it encounters less resistance from the objective side, which seems to have distanced itself from words.

But at the same time, the question arises as to whether the basis for the moral judgement of lying has changed. The negative moral qualification of lying is based on multiple motives. One of them seems to be the original understanding of the inseparable connection between words and things. Lying violates this connection, and is therefore contrary to nature and evil as such. Secondly, lying disrupts social relations and is thus also socially harmful, as Kant in particular emphasised. Thirdly, lying is a weapon of the weak and cowardly, in the sense that lies fear the truth, i.e. liars fear exposure, which is why lying is viewed negatively from the perspective of heroic ideals. Of the three reasons mentioned (and there are more that could be cited) behind the negative moral judgement of lying, the first has lost its force as a result of the previously discussed shift in emphasis away from the function of signifying and towards the function of expressing.

The third motive also does not work as strongly as it used to, owing to changes in the ideal of heroism. The motive of social harm undoubtedly remains in force. However, we do not always remember this, especially since lying always brings some immediate benefit to the liar. Today, moral judgement is most often applied not to lying as an act in itself, but to the whole situation in which lying is a means to achieve other goals. Depending on the assessment of these goals, whether positive or negative, lying is either justified or condemned. Thus, while it would be incorrect to say that lying in itself is no longer considered morally wrong, it seems that the moral judgement of lying has lost much of its former severity in today's society. Although for many of us lying is still considered ugly, moral sanctions against lying as such are applied with great leniency. This is also one of the reasons why it is easier to lie today than in the past.



Tadeusz Czeżowski

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On integrity, objectivity, and impartiality in scientific research

The purpose of all scientific research is truth. Anyone proclaiming something as scientific is simultaneously stating whether they are presenting it as an axiom, a proved truth, or merely a conjecture of varying degrees of probability; and if, as may happen, no arguments can be found to sufficiently justify any of the conflicting assumptions, the choice between them is made in such a way that one of them is considered a provisional hypothesis, constituting a starting point for further research. Undoubtedly, therefore, consciously presenting statements that are not true as true in science deserves the accusation of lying. Thus, the principle of presenting as true only those statements whose truth can be guaranteed according to the current state of affairs is a principle, not only of methodology, but also of scientific ethics. I call it the principle of integrity.

However, no guarantees can rule out the possibility of error. The principle of integrity requires that this possibility be taken into account and that one be prepared to revise one's position if it proves to be erroneous or if the reasons on which it is based are insufficient. In keeping with the principle of integrity, only a well-founded scientific conviction, and no other considerations, should determine which scientific claims a person defends.

Scientific integrity in science requires freedom in a twofold sense: internal freedom, i.e. the strength to resist any temptation to compromise integrity for the sake of success, fame, or other benefits; external freedom, i.e. freedom of research and scientific criticism, regardless of

political, economic, religious, or any other interests. The scholar should find internal freedom within himself, while external freedom should be guaranteed by the society and state in which he lives. Internal freedom manifests itself in the scholar's objectivity in his research, while external freedom allows him to be impartial.

By objectivity, we understand not yielding to preconceived prejudices and sympathies, choosing premises in accordance with the requirements of science, taking into account all arguments pro and contra when justifying claims, provided they have scientific value – in short, applying only the principles of scientific criticism in scientific research. Conversely, anyone who places other considerations above these and departs from the principles of scientific criticism will not be objective.

One who does not take sides in a dispute remains impartial. Such impartiality on the part of an observer is not the same as objectivity; one can remain objective and still side with the disputing party that one considers to be right according to one's objective position. For example, Galileo was not an impartial observer in the dispute over Copernicus's science when, in accordance with scientific objectivity, he stood on its side. But impartiality is also understood in a narrower sense as the impartiality of an arbitrator who, *sine ira et studio*, decides the case in favour of one of the disputing parties. Galileo, while not impartial in the first sense, was undoubtedly impartial in the narrower sense on account of his competence when he sided with Copernicus's theory, relying solely on scientific arguments. When referring to scientific impartiality, we mean impartiality in the narrower sense, which scholars are not allowed to exceed. However, scholars not only have the right, but in many cases also the duty, to act as arbitrators in disputes they witness and to side with the party that represents a scientifically valid position within their competence. At the same time, we cannot ignore the danger that it is extremely easy to overstep the bounds of one's competence and imperceptibly stray from scientific objectivity, especially when the dispute has a broader social context. Thus, the question of when a scholar has a duty to intervene in a dispute he witnesses and take the position of an arbitrator must be decided again from the point of view of scientific integrity: intervention is necessary where a lack of it could be understood as an endorsement of an erroneous position, i.e. as a lack of objectivity.

Scientific integrity, scientific objectivity, and scientific impartiality are so closely related that anyone who is scientifically honest must be scientifically objective and impartial in the narrower sense, and impartial in the broader sense only where this does not conflict with objectivity.

It is said, however, that the freedom of scientific research, which we mentioned above in connection with scientific objectivity and impartiality, is an illusion. A scientist inevitably has to be subjective and biased. Therefore, it is not personal integrity in the above sense that should be required in scientific research, but rather submission to the most progressive direction, with progressiveness being determined by practical criteria, i.e. political and economic ones. Scientific objectivity is an illusion, they say, as all researchers are a product of the social conditions in which their personality was formed, and the point of view determined by those conditions determines their views. The supposed elevation or overcoming of this point of view only leads to its replacement by another, which is again biased and limited, just like the previous one. These inherently limited points of view, and not objective arguments, determine scientific views, like all others. There is also no such thing as impartiality, because every person is entangled in the sphere of interests of a social group and acts in the interests of that group in their scientific work, as in any other work. If someone opposes the social group in which they grew up, he becomes a defender of the interests of another group, since it is impossible to escape the circle of conflicting interests and the struggle between them.

The above reasoning is evidently related to the argument aimed at demonstrating the relativity of all knowledge, since each piece of knowledge is conditioned by the circumstances in which it arises. However, its further assumptions lead to the overcoming of this relativism in favour of a worldview considered to be the expression of the highest form of evolution, free from the one-sidedness of previous studies.

Let us take a closer look at the summarized argument, distinguishing between the terms objectivity and impartiality, as we previously did. Undoubtedly, the premise that individuals embracing certain scientific views are intellectually dependent on the historical and cultural conditions of the environment in which they live is correct; it is also correct to assume that every scientific position can be genetically explained by tracing its origins to the environmental conditions in which it emerged. But this inevitable genetic dependence does not yet constitute a lack of objectivity. A researcher would only cease to be objective if he were to rest on these acquired beliefs without questioning their veracity. For it is not a matter of where beliefs come from, but whether they are true. A researcher is objective if, in the course of his research, he takes into account, not only his own beliefs, but also all existing beliefs on a given subject (this is referred to as taking into account the state of research), and if

he is able to evaluate them all, including his own (without assuming in advance their superiority over others), properly evaluate them from the point of view of scientific correctness in order to choose the one that is most justified, even if it means rejecting one's own original position. This is what is required of a conscientious researcher; those who are unable to do so are not practising science, but only propagating their own position. Shortly put, every claim or position is subjective in the sense that it belongs to someone and was formed under their life circumstances, but such subjectivity is not the opposite of scientific objectivity, which consists in justifying one's claims in accordance with the requirements of the scientific method.

As with objectivity, the same applies to impartiality. When any scientific claim is considered from the point of view of a particular social position that is in conflict with another social position, it may be used to support that position, but it may also be used to oppose it; however, anyone who, on this basis, claims that the person making the claim is biased – in the first case in favour of a given position, in the second case against it – would understand partiality and impartiality differently from what we have previously established. Namely, we have distinguished between impartiality in a narrower and broader sense, the impartiality of an arbitrator and the impartiality of an observer. A researcher who publishes the results of his scientific work remains an impartial observer, even if these results can be used to support a certain controversial position, as long as the researcher adheres strictly to a scientific stance and does not use his findings to draw practical conclusions that are the subject of the dispute. Responsibility for these consequences rests solely with the person who draws them. The researcher remains an impartial arbiter even when, based on his findings, he enters into a dispute, but in doing so he does not go beyond the limits of his scientific competence.

This understanding of impartiality is linked to the postulate of scientific autonomy and defends against the subordination of science to political considerations and all other considerations, its right to be guided solely by the directives of logic and scientific methodology. This right stems from the assumption that what is true is also right. Righteous political and other pursuits in life do not need to restrict science in its pursuit of truth by appropriate means, because they do not need to fear the truth; on the contrary, the imposition of restrictions on science by those in power suggests that these forces do not have the truth on their side and do not pursue righteous goals.

The claim that science is not objective and impartial cannot therefore be upheld with the understanding of objectivity and impartiality as adopted above. However, there are other aspects to it. One of these insinuates that researchers who proclaim certain views have intentions that are directly contrary to scientific objectivity. For such an accusation to be justified, it would have to be based on a thorough analysis of the criticized author's arguments and on demonstrating that these arguments do not meet the conditions of scientific integrity. If no such analysis exists, it must be considered unacceptable.

Finally, we must consider the formulation expressed in the form of a slogan or methodological postulate about the partisanship of science. The postulate of partisanship is certainly different from the postulate of truth, which we assumed at the beginning of these considerations, and may or may not be consistent with it. It is consistent when the postulate of partisanship requires us to side with a view that meets the requirements of scientific criticism and as long as it meets them: in this case, partisanship is synonymous with the impartiality of an arbitrator. If, on the other hand, the principle of partisanship is applied unconditionally and on credit, as it were, to views that are insufficiently justified (whereby it is necessary to demand not a general justification for the worldview as a whole, but a detailed justification for each component of the whole separately), then it is nothing more than a weapon of militant dogmatism.

SECONDARY SOURCES



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The meaning of life as interpreted by Henryk Elzenberg and Tadeusz Czeżowski

In the catalogue of universal and most important philosophical issues, the problem of meaning occupies one of the most prominent places. There is no shortage of statements that describe the issue of meaning as the most fundamental topic of philosophical reflection. This is the view of those who say that *"the meaning of philosophy is the search for meaning"*. When we ask the question: why is something happening in the world this way and not differently? Why should we act this way and not another? Is there any justification for something being the way it is? – these questions seek the meaning of something, why it is this way or why it should be this way and not otherwise. Various answers to the question of why this is so are possible: from, we do not know, till, it is an answer confirming the existence of meaning or the possibility of its realisation.

Accepting the latter answer allows to distinguish specific types of meaning:

A distinction can thus be made between rational meaning – the search for the meaning of the world is the search for its rationality,

Teleological meaning – meaning is what is purposeful, a system purposefully constructed.

Axiological meaning – this type of meaning “is closely related to value”.¹

Logical sense – “synonym of the word – meaning”, also called “semantic”.²

The knowledge and experience of the last few decades of the unprecedented destruction of the natural world will force a reflection on the notion of a global sense or perhaps a sense of civilisation.

This is not the only possible classification of meaning.

And in terms of subject matter, we most often formulate questions about the meaning of being, the meaning of existence, the meaning of life, also the meaning of dying and death, about which the most eminent philosophers of various epochs have expressed so many wise thoughts. Among those mentioned here, the issue of the meaning of life is the most frequently analysed and considered, a very interesting subject of reflection for great thinkers, but also for each of us, when in a moment of reflection on our life, especially in borderline situations, we ask about its meaning. The abundance of statements on this subject is astonishing, ranging from the statement that “the meaning of human life is the search for the meaning of life” to the pessimistic conclusion that “there is no such thing as the meaning of life or the meaning of death”. Different concepts of meaning have emerged over the centuries. They were expressed by Pythagorean, Platonic and Aristotelian thought (in the following order: number, idea, concept of purpose), the Cartesian cogito, Leibniz’s principle of sufficient reason, Kant’s conviction that a rational being is capable of fulfilling moral duties, Hegel’s question about the meaning of history, and further thought by Kierkegaard, Rickert, Husserl, Heidegger, Adler, Frankel, Levinas. This is almost the entire history of philosophy and it is impossible to refer to it here in even the most concise outline. What remains, therefore, is a choice – and we are making such a choice – of two Polish philosophers who have devoted their attention to this issue: Tadeusz Czeżowski and Henryk Elzenberg. Why these thinkers? For several reasons at least. First of all, both scholars had a lot of wise and important things to say on this matter. Secondly, both are among the most outstanding representatives of Polish intellectual culture of the 20th century. Thirdly, their work enjoys unflagging interest and their philosophising successfully resists the passage of time

¹ Henryk Elzenberg, “Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu”, in: *Pisma aksjologiczne*, compiled by Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal, (Lublin: UMCS Publishing House, 2002), 177

² Ibidem.

and, with the successive experiences of collective thinking and culture, retains its cognitive attractiveness also for the contemporary public, acquiring, in different situations and times, new and valuable interpretations and meanings. And it was probably for these reasons that the conference organisers decided to devote a separate session to a reflection on the intellectual output of the two thinkers, which includes the subject of this speech. I also think that, for us gathered in this very place (Nicolaus Copernicus University), it is certainly not without significance that these thinkers associated a significant part of their creative life with the university in Toruń. They created a philosophical environment, significantly shaping its spiritual image and intellectual culture, first in Vilnius and then in Toruń, and it was here that the culmination of their intellectual development and creative activity took place.

It is significant that both thinkers shared a long path of life together, lasting over thirty years, at the universities of Vilnius and Toruń, bound by constant close cooperation, friendship and mutual respect for each other's achievements. We emphasise this fact, aware that this community of similar biographies and friendly references had no counterpart in the symbiosis of philosophical thinking. At the same time, these people, who were very close, as scholars, differed considerably in the way they conceived and practised philosophy and understood its vocation, thus giving a very eloquent testimony to the actual possibility of realising Norwid's postulate of differing beautifully, but also to the conviction that the world in its existential, human and axiological dimension can be described in various ways from the perspective of philosophy, and that these various ways of describing it contribute something important and significant to its overall picture. After all, Czeżowski is a representative of the famous Lviv-Warsaw philosophical school, of which Elzenberg was a critic. This school, whose founder was Kazimierz Twardowski, finds its identity in a particular methodological stance and the associated convictions that philosophy should be scientific, analytical, operating with the tools of contemporary logic, separated from worldviews, renouncing speculative inquiries but also, by the same token, many traditional philosophical problems. Czeżowski considered the method of analytical description, based on the use of formal logic, to be the basic tool of cognition. He placed particular emphasis on the development of the methodology of science, devoting a lot of attention to the analytical method and various forms of reasoning. He believed that every science is an interpretation of logical theories, from which the principles of constructing its sentences and the principles of reasoning taking place in it are taken. The various sciences, which he divided into axiomatic and empirical, are interpre-

tations of some logical, apodictic or probabilistic system. The scientific nature of philosophy is based on a logical structure and the scientific methods used within it, such as analytical description, the intersubjective verifiability of assertions and the relationship with empiricism. He built the foundations of empirical ethics and did not reject metaphysics because he believed that it could be practised in a scientific way.

Elzenberg, on the other hand, was mainly concerned with axiology, ethics and aesthetics, and developed an axiologically oriented vision of the world and man, directing attention towards a general theory of values, seeing it as the basis for ethics and aesthetics. This very issue, together with the philosophy of culture and reflection on literature, marked a completely different circle of interest for him.³

He opposed the apotheosis of rationalism and logical formalism, the monopoly of discursive thinking, with the view that there is a need to reach the irrational basis of reality, and that knowing the essence of things requires that the investigations of reason gain an ally in intuition, figurative and metaphorical thinking. He believed that in this way the complexity of human subjectivity with its moral and aesthetic reality could be more accurately captured.

While maintaining a distance from the great social problems, historicism and sociology, he directed his attention towards the human individual, created an individualistic and personalistic conception of man, and turned towards the world of moral and aesthetic values.

His philosophical stance and way of philosophising was characterised by anti-dogmatism and the accompanying conviction that, in philosophical reflection, it is important to leave all meaningful possibilities for understanding the world and man open and not to strive at all costs for unequivocal solutions and final results.

In Polish philosophy of the last century, he occupied a position of distinction, following his own thought path. He was believed to be the embodiment of the coexistence of opposites, because his thought was not free from antinomies. He was an outstanding intellectual who pointed out the limitations of the intellect and emphasised trust in intuition. He criticised rationalism and adhered to the principles of rational thinking while leaning towards irrationalism. He combined historiosophical pessimism with a belief in the possibility of perfecting the human individual. He persevered in his search for the meaning of life, while seeing the smallness and meanness of the world. He recognised the evils of human

³ Włodzimierz Tyburski, *Elzenberg*, series: *Myśli i Ludzie* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna 2006), 30–53.

nature and advocated respect for human subjectivity. His vision of the world and of man was pervaded by dualism. He saw an insurmountable gap between the subjectivity and individuality of the human individual and the world of things and collective life.

Elzenberg opposed cultural axiological relativism and utilitarianism with a philosophy seeking absolute values, called them perfect, and distinguished them from utilitarian ones. He believed that only they could give meaning to human life. He pointed to the specificity of axiological cognition and argued that competence in this area does not derive directly from intellectual skills, as *the organ of cognition of the valuable world* – is above all – *the personal value of the person getting to know it*.

While emphasising the clearly visible differences in the ways of understanding philosophy and its style of practice, it is also worth pointing out what both thinkers had in common. Definitely the jointly emphasised importance of axiological reflection and the associated reflection on the philosophy of meaning, but above all, faithfulness to the world of values that they justified in their theoretical reflection and determinedly implemented in various circumstances appearing on their difficult path of life. This is best evidenced by their biographies. Let us cite just two examples. Elzenberg's ardent patriotism and love of freedom led him to join the Riflemen's Association and the First Brigade of the Legions, and then to take part in the battles of 1920. During the grim period of the occupation, both scholars were devotedly involved in the work of the underground university in Vilnius. And when Czeżowski wrote his excellent essay on *Courage* in those times of horror, anxiety and overwhelming fear, the issue of courage was for the professor not only a subject of theoretical reflection, it was not just a matter of emphasising educational activities aimed at making this virtue a reality, but was above all a difficult existential experience. He experienced it very closely when he survived selection for execution in occupied Vilnius, and also when he unhesitatingly saved people of Jewish nationality. For his acts of great courage, the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem honoured the Professor by including him among the *Righteous Among the Nations*.

A certain set of beliefs about the ethos of the scholar was also common to both thinkers. The issue of the ethics of scientific work and the scientist's deontology was particularly developed in numerous statements by Tadeusz Czeżowski. He believed that the main task and ethical duty of an academic was to strenuously strive for the truth and to be faithful to the truth. By proclaiming the truth, the scholar thus serves society, fulfilling his or her moral obligations to it. The directive of fidelity to the truth, contained in the code of professional ethics, provides the scholar

with the self-knowledge of his or her vocation, setting a direction that reveals the meaning of his or her work and research effort.

Tadeusz Czeżowski emphasised that fulfilling the postulate of discovering and proclaiming the truth is not only a matter of the scholar's qualifications, but also a matter of his ethics, strongly emphasising the organic connection between methodological and ethical rule. To create it, a scientist should respect certain rules of conduct. Among these, he singled out the principle of scientific criticism, the principle of scientific integrity, objectivity and impartiality and the freedom of science.

The issue of the meaning and value of life is a subject that Czeżowski takes up, motivated not only by the need to define himself theoretically in relation to this issue, so multifaceted in the history of philosophy, but also to attempt to answer the questions posed by practical philosophy, which is proudly called the teacher of life. This topic is a kind of culmination of his reflections on the related issues of happiness, suffering, freedom, fear and anxiety, courage, lies, the value of dialogue, and attitudes towards the world. In undertaking it, he uses the method of analytical description, developed mainly for other fields of reflection, with excellent results. As a consequence, a position is developed in which the analytical context is enriched by a value-oriented and even metaphysical perspective. First, therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between three meanings of understanding sense when we relate it to life. The first is internal meaning: a person's life is a meaningful whole when the objectives of his actions, whether partial, intermediate or final, are united by a unifying thought, forming a harmonious, coherent, non-contradictory system. We then say that meaningfulness is a certain component, graspable, harmonised whole. Such criteria of meaningfulness belong as much to human life as to works of art, but they are also an essential component of logical and scientific thinking, in any form. However, these are not sufficient rationales that ultimately determine the meaningfulness of life. After all, a well-structured, logically coherent set of activities can also serve unworthy purposes. It is therefore necessary that the goal organising the action is worthy of life, is a worthy goal. Therefore, it is indispensable that meaning is associated with value. And in order to make sense of life in the above meaning, one must possess the ability to distinguish between the right and the wrong, between what is better and what is worse, and to set reasonable goals. If we add perseverance in the pursuit of a goal, i.e. a strong will, such an alliance of the intellectual, ethical and volitional factors form the ethical character of man, which is a prerequisite for giving meaning to his life. "In order to determine the meaning of life", writes Czeżowski, "any system of ultimate goals, even

harmonious ones, is not enough; these goals must be assessed in terms of values, and this happens in a specific way. In order to explain this let us introduce the term *a goal worthy of life*".

Summing up this fragment of his reflections, Czeżowski states: "life has meaning if it has been arranged in such a way that it forms a whole aiming rationally towards the realisation of the best goals, which we are capable of realising under the given conditions. In order to make sense of life in the above meaning, one needs, firstly, the ability to distinguish between what is really good and what is good only on the surface, and between what is better and worse, and secondly, one needs to make an effort to persistently pursue one's goals. This ability is life wisdom, while the ability to make an effort in pursuit of a goal is called strong willpower. The two factors together form a person's ethical character. [...] The prerequisite for making sense of one's life is therefore to develop an ethical character".

The second distinction emphasises the social dimension of the meaning of life, which, according to this interpretation, is realised by going beyond individual goals, participating in collective life, in the creation of socially and culturally valuable tasks. The social meaning of human life is determined by the value of the creations that a life leaves behind. At the same time, it is important to realise that the intrinsic value of an action remains, even when the traces of a good deed are fading.

Careful reflection reveals yet another way of understanding the meaning of life – philosophical, as it relates people's lives to the world conceived as a whole, of which the existence of each individual being is a part. The starting point of the reasoning is the following supposition: *If the world as a whole has meaning, its components also have meaning*. Assuming, and this is the premise of scientific inquiry, that the world has a logical and harmonious architecture we recognise that each part fulfils its proper role. At the same time, it is the philosopher's clear polemic against those concepts that assume disharmony in the world and deny faith in the meaning of life.

In summing up these analyses, Czeżowski draws an analogy between the search for the meaning of life and actions aimed at solving a mathematical problem. *After all, life is like a task that man has to solve, and the meaning of life is the solution that has to be found. [...] He who finds the right solution will make his life meaningful*".⁴ In times marked by a crisis of meaning, Czeżowski wants to rebuild and strengthen faith in the mean-

⁴ Tadeusz Czeżowski, "Sens i wartość życia", *Ruch Filozoficzny* 21 (1962): 65.

ing of life. He does so in an open but unimposing way, rather he outlines the framework of a rational discourse on meaning and areas of sensible action, shows the reasons for possible choices, leaving each of us the right to make specific decisions.

On the other hand, Elzenberg took the question of the meaning of life and one's own existence as the starting point of axiological reflection. He is convinced that the interest in meaning stems from the strong human need to make sense of life and to exist in a meaningful world. But meaning cannot be given to human life by an act of will. The meaningfulness of our lives is inextricably linked to the realm of value, as value creates meaning and gives meaning to life, which necessarily flows from values. It therefore rejects subjectivity and the consequent belief that something is valuable to me, that I determine the framework of meaning. On the contrary, "it is the objective value and it is this alone that gives us that priceless good – the meaning of life". Therefore, "meaning is what we are looking for, the fruit that falls from the tree, but not accidentally, but only when we become convinced of the existence of objective values".⁵ It is the value of an object that gives meaning to its existence. Meaning is therefore a derived phenomenon. It depends on value, duty and rightness. Therefore "the very existence of an object of value makes sense. He goes on to say "meaning is the very existence in a world of values or containing values: an act acquires meaning by being positively directed towards a value", "Meaning is the sum of acts composed of objects of value (or merely containing objects of value)".⁶

Elzenberg moves from these theoretical conclusions to an attempt to determine the meaning of the human situation in social life and history from a category perspective. He is most active on this subject in his excellent work *Kłopot z istnieniem* [*The Trouble with Existence*], as well as in his philosophical, moral and literary essays, which are *freer in their thought*, but which attract attention with their elegance of style, wealth of associations and metaphors, suggestiveness of language, and insightful analyses. His thoughts put into an aphoristic form and collected there constitute a summary record of the philosopher's state of mind, spirit and intellectual experiences. He referred to them as mere excursions into the realm of ethics, philosophy, religion and literature, but in fact, they are a mine of reflections, analyses, intriguing insights, surprising

⁵ Elzenberg, "Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu", 184–185.

⁶ Ibidem, 186.

conclusions and bold, often discussion-provoking observations. In *The Trouble with Existence*, reflection on man and his vocation comes to the fore. It is set against the backdrop of a pessimistic vision of collective life and history. He contrasts the evil world of interpersonal relations with the world of spiritual creativity, elevating man above the surrounding natural and social world and his own nature, convincing that man can build his own meaningfulness against the meaninglessness of his environment. The barbarism of our times stems from the undermining and shattering of authentic values. In this situation, the duty of an honest man is to act in such a way as to go through life with honour. This is what ethics is supposed to teach, which for the philosopher is the science of manly behaviour towards being.

However, Elzenberg's pessimistic vision of history, social life and man does not lead him to ultimately doubt the meaning of human life and to resign himself to all-pervading evil, but forces him to look for opportunities to overcome or at least weaken such an image of human nature, social life and history. This is evidenced by the philosopher's belief, not devoid of hope, in the existence of a feeble stream of good history, as well as the idea of *a man rising above himself*, who in this act builds islands of sense in a world of senselessness. These feeble *streams of history* can balance and even overcome the streams of *evil history*, because goodness, Elzenberg says, has a greater weight than evil, and a pinch of it thrown on the scale can overcome the enormity of wickedness. The dark vision of history is not their only image, just as the belief in the flawed, evil nature of man does not provide grounds for total anthropological pessimism. For it is possible to contrast man's evil nature with the noble, value-creating aspirations inherent in it, and to fight against that which hinders the efforts of the human individual to uplift himself, to rise above his own nature and to set himself on the path of a life of value.

The idea of the existence of streams of *small* and *good* history, the *idea of man rising above himself* and the deep belief that there are things *higher and more perfect than others* – this is the philosopher's conviction that the world is becoming *something acceptable to which a sense of purpose can agree*.

Elzenberg's idea of *man rising above himself* and in this act searching for meaning, and Czeżowski's conviction that human life is like a task that man is given to solve – the dream of life, in turn, is a solution that must be found – these are the convictions of philosophers who, by pointing out the directions of the search for what is really important in life, help us to think about it better, more accurately, more deeply.

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Streszczenie

Problematyka sensu, w jego ramach sensu życia, jest jednym z najbardziej poczesnych tematów filozoficznej refleksji. Teoretyczna zaduma nad sensem pozwala na wyodrębnienie określonych jego typów. Jest więc sens logiczny, sens racjonalny, sens teleologiczny, sens aksjologiczny, sens globalistyczny albo cywilizacyjny. Zaś w ujęciu przedmiotowym najczęściej formułujemy pytanie o sens bytu, sens istnienia, sens dziejów, sens życia, także sens umierania i śmierci. Problematyka ta to nieomal całe dzieje i nie sposób tu do nich odnieść się w najbardziej nawet zwięzłym zarysie. Pozostaje zatem wybór i dokonujemy takiego wyboru – dwóch filozofów należących do ścisłego grona najwybitniejszych przedstawicieli polskiej kultury intelektualnej – Henryka Elzenberga i Tadeusza Czeżowskiego.

Problematykę sensu i wartości życia podejmuje Czeżowski motywowany nie tylko potrzebą teoretycznego określenia się wobec tak wielorako rozumianego zagadnienia, ale także podjęcia próby, które stawiane są przed filozofią praktyczną. Rozróżnić należy trzy znaczenia rozumienia sensu, gdy odnosimy go do życia. Pierwszy to sens wewnętrzny: życie człowieka jest całością sensowną, gdy cele jego działań, te częściowe, pośrednie i ostateczne związane są jednoczącą je myślą, tworząc układ harmonijny, spójny, niesprzeczny. Ten rodzaj sensu konstytuuje sojusz czynnika intelektualnego, etycznego i woliwotnego. Drugie rozróżnienie akcentuje społeczny wymiar sensu życia, który realizuje się poprzez wykraczanie poza indywidualne cele, udział w życiu zbiorowym, w kreowaniu społecznie i kulturowo wartościowych zadań. Trzeci rodzaj sensu życia – filozoficzny odnosi się do życia ludzkiego i świata pojmowanego jako całość, którego częścią jest egzystencja każdego jednostkowego bytu.

Elzenberg pytanie o sens życia i własnego istnienia uznał za punkt wyjścia aksjologicznej refleksji. Sens nie może być życiu ludzkiemu nadany aktem woli. Sensowność naszego życia nieodłącznie powiązana jest ze sferą wartości, bowiem wartość stwarza sens i nadaje sens życiu ludzkiemu, z konieczności płynie on od wartości. To nie ja wyznaczam ramy sensowności – przeciwnie – wartość obiektywna i właśnie tylko ona daje nam to dobro bezcenne – sens życia. Sens uzyskujemy wtedy, gdy „dobijamy się przeświadczenia o istnieniu wartości obiektywnych”. Sens jest więc zjawiskiem pochodnym, gdyż wartość przedmiotu nadaje sens jego istnieniu. Zależy od wartości, powinności, słuszności.

Słowa kluczowe: sens, klasyfikacja sensu, sens życia, sens życia – właściwe rozwiązanie, sens i wartość.

Summary

The problem of meaning, including the meaning of life, is one of the most prominent themes of philosophical reflection. The theoretical reflection on meaning (sense) allows to distinguish specific types of meaning. There is logical sense, rational sense, teleological sense, axiological sense, globalist or civilisational sense. In terms of subject matter, we most often formulate the question on the meaning of being, the meaning of existence, the meaning of history, the meaning of life, and also the meaning of dying and death. These issues cover almost the entire history and it is impossible to address them here in even the most concise outline. What remains, therefore, is a choice – and we are making such a choice – of two philosophers belonging to the inner circle of the most eminent representatives of Polish intellectual culture, Henryk Elzenberg and Tadeusz Czeżowski.

The issue of the meaning and value of life is taken up by Czeżowski, motivated not only by the need to define himself theoretically in the face of such a multifaceted issue, but also by the attempts that are put before practical philosophy. It is important to distinguish between three meanings of understanding sense when we relate it to life. The first is internal meaning: a person's life is a meaningful whole when the objectives of his actions, whether partial, interme-

diate or final, are united by a unifying thought, forming a harmonious, coherent, non-contradictory system. This kind of meaning is constituted by an alliance of intellectual, ethical and volitional factors. The second distinction emphasises the social dimension of the meaning of life, which is realised by going beyond individual goals, participating in collective life, in the creation of socially and culturally valuable tasks. The third type of meaning of life – the philosophical one – refers to human life and the world conceived as a whole, of which the existence of each individual being is a part.

Elzenberg took the question of the meaning of life and one's own existence as the starting point of axiological reflection. Meaning cannot be given to human life by an act of will. The meaningfulness of our lives is inextricably linked to the realm of value, as value creates meaning and gives meaning to human life, which necessarily flows from values. It is not I who sets the framework of meaningfulness – on the contrary, it is the objective value and it is this alone that gives us that priceless good – the meaning of life. We gain meaning when “we become convinced of the existence of objective values”. Meaning is therefore a derived phenomenon, as the value of an object gives meaning to its existence. It depends on values, duty and rightness.

Keywords: meaning, classification of meaning, meaning of life – the right solution, meaning and value.



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The axiological concept of the meaning of life in Henryk Elzenberg's philosophy

1. Introductory remarks

The concept of the meaning of life is historically ambiguous. Looking back at the history of philosophy, one can become convinced that our contemporary questions about the meaning of human life are a continuation of the questions and reflections that have been pondered since ancient times. This is not without reason. Plato's reflections on Eros and the sealing of the soul with Form of Goodness, Aristotle's reflections on a happy life befitting a rational being, Epicurus' remarks on the wise use of pleasure – these are just a few examples of ancient philosophical concepts that have been and will continue to be treated as answers to questions about the meaning of life.

At the same time, questions about the meaning of life are *par excellence* contemporary in nature, closer to our times than to those of Plato, Aristotle, or Epicurus. Even if we notice a certain continuity in terms of the issues involved, we cannot ignore the fact that the concept of the meaning of life introduces a semantic novelty. We cannot simply assume that when we think about the "meaning of life" we are thinking about exactly the same thing as the ancient Greeks thought about "eudaimonia". What is this novelty? The historical context provides some clues.

The first use of the expression “meaning of life” can be found at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries in Germany. The fact that the concept of the meaning of life emerged during the Romantic era, a period that emphasized feelings, experiences, and a sense of unity with a greater and higher whole, is no coincidence. After all, the expression “meaning of life” draws heavily on the senses (Latin: *sensus*). It is not simply about participating in the greatest good attainable by man – one still wants to feel and consciously experience.

From the perspective of the history of ideas, the concept of the meaning of life **shimmers**, alternating between continuity and rupture, attachment to the classics and tradition, and at the same time a romantic-modernist emphasis on the experiential side. This duality is clearly present in the philosophical reflections of Henryk Elzenberg – a Polish thinker in whom one can see inspirations from both antiquity and modernity.¹ Elzenberg’s concept of the meaning of life may be attractive to contemporary readers because it refers to the concept of “value”, which has had a meteoric rise in philosophy since the late 19th century.

The subject of this work is the axiological concept of the meaning of life according to the author of *The Trouble with Existence*, and the aim of this work is to reconstruct this concept on the basis of his writings published during his lifetime and his manuscripts. A prominent theme of this work is the dependence of the meaning of life on values. These considerations do not intend to treat the concept of the meaning of life in purely axiological terms. After all, Elzenberg was not concerned with meaning in general, but with the meaning of **human** life. The analysis of the concept of the meaning of life by the author of *The Trouble with Existence* needs to tie axiology with philosophical anthropology: axiology explains what meaning is in general, while philosophical anthropology explains whether, how, and thanks to what a specific way of human existence can be meaningful.

The main methods used in this work were reconstruction method and analysis of source texts, whose task is to reconstruct the content of Elzenberg’s concept of the meaning of life on the basis of his writings. Particular attention was paid to sketches not published during the philosopher’s lifetime (especially *The Axiological Concept of Meaning* from 1942 and the sketch *Can the So-Called Meaning Be Given to Life?* from 1957), as well as texts that have not been published to this day, because it was mainly in them that the issue of meaning was addressed. For this reason,

¹ Włodzimierz Tyburski, *Elzenberg* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 2006), 147–148.

this reconstruction should be treated with caution. When applying the reconstruction method, particular attention was paid to the chronology of the Polish philosopher's individual texts in which he addressed the issue of the meaning of life.² Elzenberg's concept of the meaning of life was reconstructed in the context of his entire philosophy, because the author of *The Trouble with Existence* treated the concept of the meaning of life as part of a broader system of the philosophy of values. In addition, this text uses methods of linguistic and conceptual analysis, whose task was to clarify the content under study and the argument.

The work is divided into several parts. The following section presents an outline of Elzenberg's general formal axiology. The central place here is occupied by the reconstruction of the concept of perfect value, without which it is impossible to understand further arguments about the axiological concept of meaning. The third part of the work addresses the question of whether the meaning of life is axiological or teleological in nature. The fourth part of the work analyses the question of what can be meaningful in the axiological sense. An original reconstructive hypothesis is put forward here, namely that all the proposals considered by Elzenberg can be reduced to one – concerning existence. The fifth part of the work is the most important because it directly concerns human nature, which determines how human life can be meaningful, as well as the role that meaning plays in human existence. This part of the text is the culmination of the research.

2. The system of axiology and the concept of perfect value

For Elzenberg, the most important thing was to develop an axiological "system", which he understood as a **reasonable** and coherent attitude toward the world which is ordered by internal "logic", rather than as a **rational** system of propositions.³ This does not mean that a reliable and rigorous approach to philosophy was of no importance to the Pol-

² The footnotes to *The Trouble with Existence* additionally provide the dates of the aphorisms. The abbreviation "MHE" refers to materials of Henryk Elzenberg's which are stored in the Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, general reference number: III-181. After "MHE", the file number in the collection and the card number were indicated, with a note as to whether it is the *recto* or *verso* side of the card. All quotations from Elzenberg's texts have been translated by the author.

³ Henryk Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem. Aforyzmy w porządku czasu* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1994), 150 (22 I 1923).

ish thinker. On the contrary, the attitude towards the world should be based on certain axiological reasons and theses that would **defend** this attitude towards reality.

Every human being should be someone of value, but it is impossible to completely and *a priori* determine what the duties of each individual are and what exactly is required of them in terms of making the world a better place.⁴ Ethics can only prohibit certain actions or encourage others. "Yes, do good outside of yourself as well. But do not look for rational guidelines as to **what** good you should choose to do. Choose the one that suits you best".⁵ Elzenberg argued that in the light of two equally convincing axiological choices, a person has the right to follow the good that is closest to them. "The world has many aspects of this kind, so that under each of them it can be understood without distortion. I have the right to choose my aspect according to the needs of my personality".⁶ Elzenberg was concerned with developing a meaningful, value-based attitude towards the world (rather than the right one attitude, i.e. one that is best and maximizes good), and in particular, not a purely rational attitude, which is entirely determined by *a priori* reasons that apply to everyone and no one.

In order for one's attitude towards the world to be meaningful and coherent, it is necessary to reflect thoroughly on values. Within the discipline of knowledge that studies values – axiology – two orders of practice can be distinguished.⁷ Formal axiology formulates statements that apply to all values, their structure, and the relationships between them, regardless of the objects to which they might apply.⁸ Substantive axiology deals with formulating statements about the value of specific objects and considers them as aesthetically valuable (beautiful) or ethically valuable (good). Elzenberg is familiar with the classical concept of *kalokagathia*, claiming that beauty and goodness are one and the same value *in re*, albeit viewed from different perspectives.⁹

⁴ Henryk Elzenberg, "Rzeczywista podstawa etyki", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma etyczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2001), 185.

⁵ Ibidem, 186.

⁶ Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem*, 165 (17 VIII 1927).

⁷ Antoni Płoszczyńiec, *Asceza i człowiek. Studium antropologii filozoficznej Henryka Elzenberga* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2021), 36.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Henryk Elzenberg, "O różnicy między 'pięknem' a 'dobrem'", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma estetyczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 1999), 15-17.

Many people, when using the word “value” or a related term, mean something that Elzenberg characterized as the concept of value in the utilitarian sense. This concept refers to anything that satisfies a need, desire, or craving, gives pleasure, or “increases existence” (e.g. gives greater freedom of action). Whatever is valuable in the utilitarian sense is valuable relatively, to someone.¹⁰ Every object that is valuable in the utilitarian sense is, by its very nature, an object whose properties satisfy the needs, desires, etc. of some subject or subjects, or possibly an object whose “nature” corresponds to the “nature” of subject (such as recognizability for a person hungry for fame). Every judgment that assigns value in a utilitarian sense to an object is equivalent to a judgment that establishes a correspondence between the characteristics of that object and the characteristics that would satisfy a subject or subjects (or are desired by them).

However, we also deal with other types of judgments. When we say, for example, that “spirit is worth more than matter”, this judgment, although comparative in nature, presupposes that the spirit has **some** value **at all**.¹¹ This value does not depend on anyone, because when we say “spirit is worth more than matter”, we are not saying that spirit is more desirable than matter, nor that it gives someone more pleasure. Since spirit as such is worth more than matter, spirit has some absolute value, a value that consists in occupying “a certain level in the hierarchy; a hierarchy that is not established; according to some specific point of view and because of some specific feature, but in a hierarchy as if *par excellence*, independent of considerations and points of view, not established”.¹²

A judgment that a given object is valuable is an approval.¹³ To approve something means the same as to recognize that a given object meets certain requirements. Since we are talking about value of which consists in occupying a specific level in an unestablished, absolute hierarchy, it must be said that the approval of an object is the same as stating that a given object is as it should be¹⁴ (*Soseinsollen*). In other words, an object of value is an object that has certain characteristics that it should have.¹⁵

¹⁰ Henryk Elzenberg, “Pojęcie wartości i powinności. Tekst żemłosławski”, in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2002), 126.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem, 128.

¹³ Ibidem, 134.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 135.

¹⁵ Ibidem, 139–140.

Elzenberg called the value he sought “perfect value” because the essence of value understood in this way lies in a certain perfection, excellence, and nobility. Perfect value is a value in the strict sense due to its absolute nature. Therefore, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as “utilitarian values”, but there is the concept of value in the utilitarian sense, which deserves to be called “value” insofar as it is similar to perfect values. It should be remembered that everything that is valuable in the utilitarian sense is immanently relative to the subject, while perfect value is an objective value – if an object has some perfect value, it would have it even if it were the only object in the universe. The above definition of perfect value is simplified, because objects can be valuable partially (e.g. when a person is intelligent and courageous but not generous) or only to a certain extent.

Elzenberg calls the features that make certain objects valuable “value-creating features”. Value itself is a kind of “predicate” because it is attributed to specific objects, but it is not a “feature” of an object, such as justice, harmony, lyricism, subtlety, wisdom, or intelligence. Value is a state of affairs that consists in the sameness of what an object is and what it should be: when an object has such and such features and should have such and such features, then that object is valuable.¹⁶

It is still necessary to explain how the word “duty” contained in the definition of perfect value should be understood. Having rejected a number of inappropriate ways of understanding this term (e.g. “should” in a conditional-instrumental, imperative, probabilistic sense), Elzenberg concluded that “duty” in the deontological-axiological sense is indefinable. However, duty can be imagined as something that provides motives for the will,¹⁷ i.e. the metempirical will. Such a will is autonomous, pure, unchanging, independent of the subject’s inclinations, universal, and reasonable. Elzenberg did not assume the existence of a metempirical will, but claimed that we **imagine** duty in the axiological sense as something that would be desired by such a will.

3. The meaning of life as a subject of axiological inquiry

For Elzenberg, the question of which of the meanings of the word “meaning” can be used to talk about the meaningfulness of life (or the

¹⁶ Ibidem, 140–141.

¹⁷ Ibidem, 168. Vide: Elzenberg, “O różnicy między ‘pięknem’ a ‘dobrem’”, 19–20.

meaningfulness of the world) played a fundamental role. The author of *The Trouble with Existence* distinguished between three concepts of meaning: logical, teleological, and axiological. *A limine*, he rejected meaning in the logical sense in the context of his considerations, because meaning understood in this way is simply synonymous with the word "significance". Individual words (e.g., "bell", as opposed to "hrttfgzxyt") or compound words (e.g., "big bell", as opposed to "bigged bell") can be meaningful in this way, but not human life.

Two concepts of meaning claim to characterize the meaning of human life: teleological and axiological. According to the teleological concept, everything that is "purposeful, internally or externally: an action, an act aimed at something, a deliberately constructed arrangement" is meaningful.¹⁸ In turn, meaning in the axiological sense is "closely related to value"¹⁹ as something derivative of value.²⁰ The former is justified by its relationship to the goal, the latter by its relationship to value.

Meaning of life doesn't mean "the purpose of life" or "a goal in life". First of all, the scope of the word "meaning" in both senses is different. Objects and sets of objects can be meaningful, but only in a teleological sense and only when we treat them as certain arrangements. An individual book as such is not meaningful, nor is a collection of books. However, the arrangement of chapters in a book or the arrangement of books in a library can be meaningful because they serve certain purposes (e.g. organizing the argument in a monograph; making it easy to find works you are looking for). Meaningful in the axiological sense is existence, and above all, the existence of a valuable object.²¹

Elzenberg denied that the purpose of life and the meaning of life are one and the same. On a linguistic level, it is impossible to speak of the equivalence of the terms "meaning of life" and "purpose of life". At most, one can say that some goal or goals ("of life", but also "in life") can give life meaning. Either way, not every goal gives meaning.²² The meaning of life also can be derived from something other than a goal. In this context, Elzenberg speaks, for example, of characteristics that

¹⁸ Henryk Elzenberg, "Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Pisma aksjologiczne*, ed. Lesław Hostyński, Andrzej Lorczyk, Agnieszka Nogal (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2002), 177.

¹⁹ Ibidem, 178.

²⁰ Ibidem, 184.

²¹ Ibidem, 179–180.

²² Henryk Elzenberg, "Czy tak zwany sens może być życiu nadany?", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Z filozofii kultury*, ed. M. Woroniecki (Kraków: Znak, 1991), 377.

he believes are meaningful. "A life striving for holiness is presumably meaningful, but a holy life is probably at least as meaningful".²³

Elzenberg doubted whether meaning is given to life by goals that are imposed on a person – in the sense that a person is destined to achieve a given goal, just as a fire extinguisher is designed to extinguish a fire. First, let us consider the goals to which we would be destined as natural beings ("specimens" of *homo sapiens*). Leaving aside the question of whether humans are destined for any goal at all (e.g. happiness), it is doubtful whether such goals actually give meaning to human life (e.g. prolonging the species). It is even more doubtful whether, in such cases, one can speak of **giving** meaning to one's own life. If the purpose is given in life entirely from "outside", by the forces of nature, without reference to human subjectivity, then such meaning may simply "not be felt".

Elzenberg's writings suggest that we should be even more doubtful about whether society or humanity as a whole can give meaning to an individual's life. The philosopher took a decidedly pessimistic view of human communities. He wrote uncompromisingly: "Society may contain wise and good people in its mass, but it is always stupid and evil in itself. It is amoral, selfish, predatory, tyrannical towards its members; it has low aspirations and shallow beliefs; **it is infinitely worse than the average decent individual** [...]. *La société, c'est le mal*".²⁴ On a macrosocial level, evil spreads more strongly.²⁵ Society as such is not guided by ethical thoughts.²⁶ For these reasons – and others²⁷ – Elzenberg did not treat social norms as a source of meaning in life. "Society: 'an organization for maintaining the flatness and **meaninglessness** of human life and for suppressing any attempts within it to rise above'".²⁸

In cases where goals are indeed self-imposed, the philosopher pointed out that not every such goal would make sense. Many such goals are purely conventional because they are set completely arbitrarily.²⁹ In such

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Henryk Elzenberg, "Sprawy zbiorowości ludzkiej a mój system myślowy", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *Z filozofii kultury*, ed. M. Woroniecki (Kraków: Znak, 1991), 357.

²⁵ Henryk Elzenberg, "Pesymistyczny pogląd na naturę ludzką", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *MHE* 41, k. 13 v.

²⁶ Henryk Elzenberg, "Wolność i autorytet w etyce", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *MHE* 14, k. 8 r.

²⁷ See Płoszczyńiec, *Asceza i człowiek*, 62–66.

²⁸ Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem*, 386 (10 II 1953). Emphasis from author of this article.

²⁹ Elzenberg, "Czy tak zwany sens...", 378.

a situation, they lack **justification**. For Elzenberg, this was an important issue because the philosopher assumed that value provides a **reason** why one should act in a certain way and not another. Thus, purely conventional goals cannot give meaning to life. If, on the other hand, goals are not purely conventional, then one must ask whether they achieve something of absolute value or whether they are partly imposed by nature or society.

According to Elzenberg, the meaning of life is characterized by the axiological concept of meaning. The meaning of life is closely related to value because it is derived from value. "**Value creates meaning**, gives meaning; it **flows** from value".³⁰ When we talk about "giving" meaning to our lives, it means that we **voluntarily** "reach values or valuable goals",³¹ which in turn make our lives meaningful. So, it is not the case that our lives are meaningful by virtue of the very act of supposedly "creating values" by projecting them, as according to Nietzsche or Sartre, for example. Values are not "created" by the consciousness of the subject. The meaning of life is a derivative of the **factual** relationship between a person and a value. Man "gives" meaning to his own life in the same way that he warms himself when he approaches a fire. Without the decision to come closer, man would not warm himself, but the actual source of heat is the fire, not will.

The concepts of justification are common to meaning in the teleological and axiological sense, hence the following definition can be given: something is meaningful in the axiological sense if it is axiologically justified, i.e., justified by a specific relationship to values.

4. What is axiologically meaningful

Elzenberg's notes on the axiological concept of meaning were not published during his lifetime, and in many places, one can see a live movement of thought. The philosopher returned to certain themes, while abandoning others. This forces us to ask which aspects of his concept of the meaning of life can be considered permanently accepted by him.

Elzenberg emphasized the derivative nature of meaning. The meaningfulness of anything depends on values and axiological duties. In Elzenberg's two most important texts on this subject, we read that existence can be meaningful. This view has not been revoked anywhere.

³⁰ Elzenberg, "Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu", 184.

³¹ Elzenberg, "Czy tak zwany sens...", 378.

Objects can be valuable, features can be value-creating, values themselves are certain states of affairs, and the existence of a valuable object is meaningful. Meaning in the axiological sense “is the axiological justification for the existence of something”,³² because it is value that makes the existence of a given object meaningful, constituting the **reason** for its meaningfulness. The applicability of the concept of meaning to facts and events is less clear, but the philosopher was inclined to accept this solution.³³ Since every event consists in the appearance of something (i.e. something begins to exist), the appearance of certain things may also be meaningful. Facts, it seems, can also be meaningful, but only existential facts, not facts concerning the relations between existing objects (e.g. that a bell is bigger than a dog).

It is much more problematic to determine what other categories of objects can be axiologically meaningful. Despite the sketchy nature of Elzenberg’s notes on this subject, it can be hypothesized that the philosopher came to certain conclusions regarding the range of objects capable of being meaningful – although it is difficult to speak of their “final” nature.

At the beginning of *The Axiological Concept of Meaning*, one can read that the concept of meaning applies to sets of acts. In order for this set of acts to be axiologically meaningful, it must be treated as a sum of acts, because when treated as a system, it is more appropriate to speak of teleological meaning. “This sum would be meaningful to the extent that the **individual acts in it were right or valuable**”.³⁴ It should be noted, however, that when later giving working definitions of meaning, Elzenberg no longer spoke of a set of acts, similarly in his later text *Can the So-Called Meaning Be Given to Life?* In the 1942 text, he clearly limits the scope of the definition of meaning to “existences and progresses”, while in the 1957 sketch, there is no mention of sets of acts (neither progresses). Does this mean that Elzenberg completely “eliminated” the theme of the sum of acts in his reflections on the meaning of life? Perhaps. However, the hypothesis that he retained this idea in some way seems more credible.

Firstly, let us note that there is no evidence in Elzenberg’s writings that he explicitly rejected this idea. Secondly, it seems more consistent with the philosophy of the author of *The Trouble with Existence* to recognize that the idea of a set of acts as something that can be meaningful has been “absorbed” by the idea of existence as something which can be

³² Ibidem.

³³ Elzenberg, “Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu”, 181.

³⁴ Ibidem, 179.

described as meaningful. Elzenberg asked about the meaning of life, and life is a form of existence. The philosopher did not ask about the meaning of all life, but about specifically human life. From Elzenberg's manuscripts, we can deduce how he understood it: "[...] 'Life' here means 'conscious existence', such as ours, human existence".³⁵ Conscious existence, as conscious, lasts and proceeds in the intentional acts of man. Therefore, we can consider that human life constitutes a specific sum of acts.³⁶ On this basis, we can conclude that when we talk about the meaning of an individual's life, we refer to their existence and – which amounts to the same thing – to the sum of acts they have performed (*resp.* sum of acts fulfilled by group of people). Thus, it seems that Elzenberg did not exclude the sum of acts as something that can be axiologically meaningful, but it should be treated as a specifically human case of existence. The correct and precise answer to the question of what the concept of axiological meaning applies to is **existence** – whatever exists and is valuable at the same time has meaning, but not every valuable object is alive.

Three themes recur in Elzenberg's notes from 1942: 1) individual acts can be meaningful, i.e., acts positively directed toward perfect value;³⁷ 2) the existence of a world that is valuable or contains certain values in itself is meaningful;³⁸ 3) certain "progresses" can be meaningful, in which the value of one object is given to another, passes from one to another, or somehow causes the sum of values within a whole to increase.³⁹ Are these categories of objects capable of being meaningful that are fully apart from existence? The author of these words puts forward a reconstructive hypothesis that they are not.

To substantiate this hypothesis, it is necessary to quote the concluding passage of the essay *Can So-Called Meaning Be Given to Life?*:

Distinctions.

Subjective meaning: when certain values are subjectively considered objective.

Objective meaning: when these values are indeed objective.

Transcendent meaning: due to something beyond a given life, and what that life serves.

³⁵ Ibidem, 187.

³⁶ Antoni Płoszczyńiec, "Czy sens życia jest tym samym co cel życia? Rozważania aksjologiczne", *Analiza i egzystencja. Czasopismo filozoficzne* 37 (2017): 45–47.

³⁷ Elzenberg, "Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu", 186, 179 (footnote 5).

³⁸ Ibidem, 185–186

³⁹ Ibidem, 187–191

Immanent meaning: what this life has (considered) in itself, as a closed system.⁴⁰

The fact that the philosopher used the above distinctions in his last work on the concept of meaning seems crucial, as it allows us to determine which themes in Elzenberg's philosophy "remained". It is very important that the content of the aforementioned draft was discussed at a university seminar in the winter semester of 1956/1957. This fact proves that the author himself considered the concepts, arguments, and distinctions contained therein to be important and well-thought-out enough to present them to the public. Therefore, he was ready to defend them. Significantly, in the same text, the definition of meaning is explicitly limited to the axiological justification of **existence**.⁴¹

It seems that when talking about subjective meaning, Elzenberg did not mean some subjective variation of meaning, but only the subjective recognition of something as meaningful. "Subjective" here functions as a modifying attributive that changes the meaning of the noun "meaning" rather than specifying it – just as the expression "subjective truth" does not refer to a certain class of truths, but to beliefs that are considered true.

Transcendent meaning and immanent meaning seem to constitute a kind of *modi* of meaningfulness, ways of realizing meaning: whatever is meaningful is transcendentally or immanently meaningful. In the case of transcendent meaning, meaning is attributed to the existence of some X, but due to a certain relationship between X and something that is valuable, exists outside of X and forms a certain whole with it. Immanent meaning, on the other hand, is the meaning that characterizes the existence of the valuable object itself.

If individual acts are meaningful, it seems that they can only be meaningful in a transcendent sense, because each act transcends what its intention is directed towards. Emotional acts can direct us towards value in a positive way, and if our life consists of a certain sequence of acts, it seems that not only such a sum can be meaningful. If we consider individual acts to be a "moment" of life or the "occurrence" of something in life, then the category of individual acts can be reduced to the category of existence. Elzenberg wrote that the meaning of life is gradable,⁴² and it is easier to understand the idea that human life can

⁴⁰ Elzenberg, "Czy tak zwany sens...", 379.

⁴¹ Ibidem, 378.

⁴² Elzenberg, "Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu", 183.

be partially meaningful if we recognize that individual acts can also be meaningful.

There are two ways of talking about the meaning of the world. If we consider the world to be a whole that is more than the sum of its parts, and if we also consider that the world understood in this way has its own specific values, then the existence of such a world would make sense. It seems, after all, that the world has such properties,⁴³ which does not contradict the fact that there is a lot of evil in the world and that the world itself is (fundamentally) evil. The world makes sense, but not completely. Existence in a world that contains some values can also make sense, but only in a transcendent sense. All meaning is derived from value, and yet the meaning of the existence of X may derive from the value of an object outside X. Human existence may be meaningful, but as an existence incorporated into a certain whole. The world as a “place” where all valuable objects can appear is also meaningful. However, the meaning of the world’s existence as a “place” for everything that is good and beautiful is much more derivative in nature than the meaning of human existence in direct relation to values realized outside of itself.

As for progresses, i.e., certain progresses involving an increase in the amount of value, this option also seems to boil down to the answer that existence can be meaningful. First of all, let us note that when writing about the meaningfulness of progresses for the first time, Elzenberg touched upon this topic in a passage concerning the construction of the “strongest” concept of meaning or a situation that is maximally meaningful.⁴⁴ This suggests that what is at stake here is the question of the maximum realization of meaning, i.e. the extreme case of what can be meaningful **at all**. So even if some progresses were maximally meaningful, this does not rule out the possibility of reducing the category of progresses to some kind of existence. And such a possibility likely is. In 1957 text, the philosopher did not write about progresses, but progresses correspond to the category of transcendent meaning. However, what is at stake here is the certain existence and meaningfulness of the existence of a certain object in relation to something valuable. It can be argued that certain progresses are meaningful and that the creation of what is valuable has a meaning-creating character.⁴⁵ If events can be meaningful, progresses – as a kind of processes – should also be meaningful, because

⁴³ Henryk Elzenberg, “Stałe wartości świata”, in: Henryk Elzenberg, *MHE* 31, k. 2 r.

⁴⁴ Elzenberg, “Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu”, 187.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, 190.

they are both are a form of existence (the beginning of something's existence and the development of something's existence).

5. Summary: man as the beneficiary and bearer of meaning

The meaning of life is something valuable to everyone for many reasons. Perfect values make us "feel carried away in a meaningful world".⁴⁶ This means breaking through a certain isolation between the subject and the world. In "this world", beautiful and good things are susceptible to destruction, which can make the world appear evil due to its indifference to what is valuable. "More than by the law of death and transience, the cosmos is 'evil' because of its indifference to ethical categories".⁴⁷ For an axiologically sensitive individual who feels the need for meaning in life, such a world appears cold and **alien**. A world containing something valuable would appear familiar and would make participation in it give life some meaning. Elzenberg's concept clearly contained motifs of a tragic struggle for meaning in spite of the meaninglessness of the world, but it seems that the content of the unpublished works entitled *The Constant Values of the World* (1948) suggests that the world is valuable in some aspects and therefore world itself is somehow meaningful, even though it is not entirely good (like the cosmos of the Stoics) nor meaningful.

Besides, meaning is "our good" and, ultimately, we only desire meaning for our own existence⁴⁸. Why? Because, according to Elzenberg, no motivation can exist without a sense of meaning. If one feels the meaning of something, then that something becomes worthy of action for the subject.

[...] a sense of meaning [...] would be an **essential motivating factor** in all actions. Regardless of any other motives, an action would only be 'worth' undertaking in a meaningful world, and only if it is meaningful itself. The feeling of meaninglessness of the world is such a terrible misfortune because it removes this motivating factor – and man no longer wants to do anything.⁴⁹

It should be noted that meaning is objective in nature and cannot be reduced to the co-constitution of motivation. Meaning is not some-

⁴⁶ Ibidem, 184.

⁴⁷ Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem*, 313 (18 X 1942).

⁴⁸ Elzenberg, "Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu", 185

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 189.

thing psychological, "but constitutes the basis of motivational force, its source".⁵⁰

An unusual theme emerging from Elzenberg's writings concerns the important relationship between the meaning of life and... asceticism. The philosopher wrote that a philosophical concept which makes the meaning of life dependent on perfect values arouses resistance on the part of human nature, and that this resistance must be overcome through ascetic practice⁵¹. When writing about asceticism, Elzenberg had in mind the practice of systematically overcoming universal human tendencies, i.e. human nature. Man, however, originally, "by nature", has a tendency toward self-centeredness, that is, relativizing all values to his subjective perspective: what is good "in general" is what is good "for me". According to Elzenberg's notes, this perspective stems from the biological dimension of his existence. Because a self-centered view of the world is characterized by the relativization of values to the subject (one's own or someone else's, or possibly collective), values in the utilitarian sense dominate in it, and man cannot, does not want to, or has considerable difficulty in perceiving perfect values. Awareness of the existence of values that are absolute in nature is the first condition for communing with them, loving them, and realizing them, and the meaning of life depends on all of this (and on the values themselves, of course). Asceticism, therefore, opens us up to the world of perfect values, as long as we overcome the one-sidedness of our tendencies that bind us to the purely biological sphere⁵² (common to other animals) and realize that what is truly valuable in life is not what is desirable and pleasant.

Life in the service of values obviously has meaning. The meaning of life, according to Elzenberg, **appears** primarily as a life that realizes values and a life that is positively oriented (through the acts of the subject) towards values. That is, as transcendently meaningful. We live a human life when we lead our lives in some way, and we lead them by pursuing certain goals. Importantly, by leading a meaningful life, we retain a certain **freedom**: according to the comments in the second part of this article, we have a duty to pursue certain values, but we can follow those that are closest to our hearts. So, by pursuing the meaning of life, I pursue **my** meaning.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, 190.

⁵¹ Henryk Elzenberg, "'Sens życia' (głos dyskusyjny o artykule T. Czeżowskiego)", in: Henryk Elzenberg, *MHE* 33, k. 7 r.-v.

⁵² Płoszczyniec, *Asceza i człowiek*, 225–227, 238–240.

On the other hand, meaningful in its original and paradigmatic sense is "the existence of the valuable object **itself**".⁵³ We are talking here about meaning in its immanent sense. Of course, transcendent and immanent meaning are not mutually exclusive: a person who pursues values and is positively oriented towards them acquires certain value-creating features (virtues, etc.), and thus become valuable themselves. However, meaning in the immanent sense should be recognized as the basic way of realizing meaning, and this particular variety of meaning should be placed at the very top, as this would be in line with the spirit of Elzenberg's axiology, according to which perfect value is objective, not relational. Since meaning saturates the existence of an object to which value is "given", *a fortiori*, it is even more meaningful is an existence of valuable object, which gives this value. One could venture to say that Elzenberg defined existence as something meaningful, as long as it was axiologically justified, whereby the existence of an object can be justified directly by the intrinsic value of the object or justified derivatively by the value of something outside the object.

In any case, by moving towards the universe of values, man becomes part of it. "The goal of life is to reflect as much of the cosmos as possible in one's small individual soul".⁵⁴

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⁵³ Elzenberg, "Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu", 186.

⁵⁴ Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem*, 94 (16 XI 1915).

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Aksjologiczne pojęcie sensu życia w filozofii Henryka Elzenberga

Abstrakt

Celem tekstu jest rekonstrukcja koncepcji sensu życia polskiego filozofa Henryka Elzenberga. Do tego zadania wykorzystano metodę rekonstrukcyjną, analizę tekstów źródłowych, analizę pojęciową oraz analizę językową. Duży nacisk położono na metodę rekonstrukcyjną i analizę tekstów źródłowych, ponieważ najważniejsze zapiski Elzenberga na temat sensu życia znajdowały się w pismach niewydanych za życia filozofa. Polski filozof rozwijał aksjologię opartą na pojęciu wartości perfekcyjnych, bezwzględnych z istoty, które przysługują przedmiotom, które są takie, jakie powinno być. Sens życia według Elzenberga płynie z wartości, ponieważ sensowność polega na byciu uzasadnionym przez wartości. Do rezultatów badawczych niniejszego tekstu należy między innymi szerokie opracowanie kwestii, dlaczego sens życia należy według autora *Kłopotu z istnieniem* określać poprzez stosunek do wartości, a nie jako coś teleologicznie uzasadnionego. Ugruntowano hipotezę badawczą, że wszystko, o czym można orzekać sensowność, podpada pod kategorię istnienia czegoś wartościowego. Ponadto, w zakończeniu zwrócono uwagę, że na gruncie filozofii Elzenberga realizacja sensu życia wymaga ascetycznego przezwyćężania własnej natury.

Słowa kluczowe: Wartość, sens życia, cel życia, natura ludzka, Henryk Elzenberg, aksjologia, polska filozofia, etyka, perfekcjonizm, sens świata

The axiological concept of the meaning of life in Henryk Elzenberg's philosophy

Summary

The aim of this text is to reconstruct the concept of the meaning of life as presented by Polish philosopher Henryk Elzenberg. To this task, the reconstruction method, source text analysis, conceptual analysis, and linguistic analysis were used. Great emphasis was placed on the reconstruction method and analysis of source texts, as Elzenberg's most important writings on the meaning of life were found in writings not published during the philosopher's lifetime. The Polish philosopher developed an axiology based on the notion of perfect values, absolute in essence, which are inherent in objects that are as they should be. According to Elzenberg, the meaning of life flows from values, because meaningfulness consists in being justified by values. The research results of this text include, among other things, a comprehensive study of why, according to the author of *The Trouble with Existence*, the meaning of life should be defined through its relationship to values, and not as something teleologically justified. The research hypothesis that everything that can be judged to be meaningful falls under the category of the existence of something valuable has been established. Furthermore, in the conclusion, it was pointed out that, according to Elzenberg's philosophy, the realization of the meaning of life requires the ascetic overcoming of one's own nature.

Keywords: Value, meaning of life, purpose of life, human nature, Henryk Elzenberg, axiology, polish philosophy, ethics, perfectionism, asceticism, meaning of world



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Henryk Elzenberg's Analytical Existentialism

Elzenberg – alongside Kotarbiński – is one of the two greatest Polish philosophers of the first half of the 20th century. In contrast to the spirit of their time, both left behind systematic works – unique and of world-class calibre – while simultaneously embodying the age-old philosophical antagonism between Plato and Democritus. Both also set unparalleled standards of rationalism in their respective forms. However, the overwhelming dominance of the latter in contemporary humanities blurs their opposition – and, paradoxically, due to the absence of a rational buffer against naturalism, pushes philosophy toward irrationalism. This process, for instance, undermines Christian thought. This destructive hegemony is expressed today in statements such as: “*Naturalism has rendered people powerless against evil*”.¹ All the clichéd “lacks of good”, “banalities of evil”, or “the so-called evil”, along with the abolition of the death penalty, serve as evidence of this trend. Elzenberg did not take the easy road of optimism. Like no other philosopher in the 20th century, he sought to deeply investigate: What are values? And he boldly proclaimed what they truly are. He constructed an unparalleled ontology of goods (and evils – thus, a *formal axiology*) and also provided an unconventional *substantive axiology*. His philosophy remains, in the most straightforward sense of the words, the pinnacle of realism.

¹ Words of Prof. Damian Leszczyński. It is not so much naturalism itself, because it can be cosmocentric, but its anthropocentric, contemporary and simplistic variety.

On the 50th anniversary of Henryk Elzenberg's death (1887–1967), *Przegląd Filozoficzny* organised a major conference at the University of Warsaw, resulting in a volume of over 500 pages.² Few of our philosophers today can boast such interest from students writing theses, doctoral dissertations, and habilitations. However, the main organiser of the conference made a telling statement – declaring that Elzenberg was “more of a poet than a philosopher” (rather than someone “consistently constructing a position based on argumentation and aimed at describing the truth”).³ Why such disparagement of content – when the form of Elzenberg's writings, their artistry, is undeniably beyond question? This stems from an idiosyncrasy – a clear rejection of Elzenberg's understanding of philosophy, that is, an aversion to Platonism. Indeed, Epicurus might have described Plato in a similar fashion, referring to him as a “poet” (in fact, he persistently remained silent about him).

Elzenberg can be considered a textbook example of the innateness of genius. He blossomed into a great mind not “from his mother and father” but from his “own seed”, overcoming significant challenges throughout his life, including being orphaned by his mother at the age of one and by his father at twelve. He studied at the Sorbonne under the guidance of Bergson and Rauh;⁴ however, he was soon caught up in the turmoil of war and his homeland, becoming a soldier in Piłsudski's Legions and fighting against the Bolsheviks in 1920. During brief periods of respite between these struggles, he translated Leibniz's *Monadology* and analysed Leibniz's philosophy. In 1921, he earned his habilitation, and in 1936, he became a professor of philosophy in Vilnius, thanks to the recommendation of Twardowski and Kotarbiński, who were his professional adversaries (a reflection of the academic customs of the time!). From 1946 to 1950 and again from 1956 to 1960, he served as a professor in Toruń, with a period of exile during the Stalinist era in between. Elzenberg published only six books: prior to World War II, he wrote about Leconte de Lisle,⁵ Leibniz and Marcus Aurelius; and after the war, he

² *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 4 (2017).

³ Jacek Hołówka, “Poezja i filozofia”, *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 4 (2017): 489; 491.

⁴ Frédéric Rauh (1861–1909) – French philosopher, author of *The Essay on the Metaphysical Foundations of Morality* (1890), *Moral Experience* (1903) and *Moral Studies* (1911). “My professor in Paris”, says Elzenberg in *Trouble with Existence* (25.10.1923). In Poland, he is entirely unknown and not translated. However, the University of Warsaw Library holds his three books.

⁵ Charles Marie Rene Leconte de Lisle (1818–1894) – an outstanding French poet, the founder of Parnassism, the guiding influence on Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Verlaine, and also Rilke.

published *Trouble with Existence, Value and Man*, and *Attempts at Contact* (*Trouble with Existence* is one of the most important Polish books of the 20th century (!), translated into German in the 21st century). He wrote approximately 130 articles, with about 60% of his legacy remaining in manuscript form. Both his published and unpublished works continue to inspire a small but dedicated group of followers across four successive generations. His unpublished writings are gradually being edited and published.

In his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Feeling of Religion in Leconte de Lisle* (1909), Elzenberg wrote:

"[...] If a person reads thirty, fifty, or a hundred books, there will be one among them from which they draw a crucial element of their philosophy – likely because their mind holds an inclination, a need that this book fulfils, while others do not".⁶

Elzenberg's mind possessed a strong Platonic inclination, which he revealed by quoting the French poet:

"Faith in another world is a very powerful support, and I pity those who lack it".⁷

For those who do not find *Trouble with Existence* to be a "resonant book", Elzenberg's thought – or, more broadly, the tychistic rationalism he represents – will always remain beyond their reach. They will be left with either positivism or the outright rejection of rationalism. After all, it is far more difficult to grasp fate than to simply believe that "things should be good". This is the first lesson of the "Elzenberg's phenomenon" – a lesson in philosophical aristocratism. There are those in philosophy who are entirely incapable of grasping human genius. And today, in an egalitarian society, it is they who dominate.

Elzenberg constructed a philosophical system that, while not as broadly conceived as Kotarbiński's (he only hinted at a general metaphysics), was essentially limited to axiology and anthropology. Its foundations rest on two axioms: **axiological absolutism** and **anthropological pessimism**. A century ago, both were widely dismissed as "obstacles to progress". (Yet even within the Lwów-Warsaw School, thinkers like Tatarkiewicz and Czeżowski showed inclinations toward absolutism

⁶ Henryk Elzenberg, *Odczuwanie religii u Leconte de Lisle'a*, trans. P. Bobowska-Nastarzewska (Toruń 2013), 23.

⁷ Ibidem, 49.

and cognitivism – the idea that ethical and aesthetic judgments can be true or false. This was the legacy of Polish Romanticism, which only needed to be refined using the tools of modern logic).

Elzenbergism, following Wolniewicz, could be described as *analytical existentialism*. This may sound like an oxymoron, but the paradox disappears when we clarify that while its subject matter is existentialist, its method is analytical. The level of rationality in Elzenberg's thought is undoubtedly higher than in Heidegger or Jaspers. Elzenberg avoids empty verbalism and instead embraces rigour in language. His style is both beautiful and precise yet underpinned by solid logic – honed through intellectual duels, for instance, with the Lwów-Warsaw School. His rationalism is subtle and integral, though limited in scope. It stands in sharp contrast to the dominant irrationalist and scientific currents in contemporary philosophy, which the author collectively referred to as *rabulist philosophy*,⁸ attributing to it a "blindness to value".⁹

According to Elzenberg, values are concrete entities that exist objectively (contrary to subjectivism – "value resides in things, not in the mind"). However, they appear in two forms, which he described as *perfect* and *utilitarian*. The former is absolute (binding for everyone), while the latter is relative (dependent on the subject). Perfect values manifest in nature, but their value originates beyond it – given in the very possibility of their realisation, as an *ontological duty*. (One might argue that God determines this, although Elzenberg was neither a Christian nor a theist. His "religion" was, in fact, a *religion of values*). In cases where two people have a mutually exclusive disagreement about assessing a perfect value, one of them must be mistaken. In contrast, there is no disagreement when it comes to utilitarian matters; there are only individual biological preferences ("one person may prefer brunettes while another prefers blondes").

The distinction between two types of values was already known to Seneca, who divided goods into those with a price and those with dignity (*pretium* vs. *dignitas*). Anselm also acknowledged this distinction, differentiating between beneficial goods (*commoda*) and just goods (*iusta*). Later, Kant reaffirmed this division, aligning with Seneca's ideas. This distinction is also well known in everyday language – we speak of "spiritual, intrinsic, autonomous, transcendent" values in contrast

⁸ Cf. Henryk Elzenberg; *Kłopot z istnieniem. Aforyzmy w porządku czasu* (1963), Note (2) of 9 VII 1961.

⁹ Cf. his article "Nauka i barbarzyństwo" – published in AMP (<https://deliberatio.eu/pl/archiwum-mysli-polskiej/nauka-i-barbarzynstwo>).

to “utilitarian, vital, practical, natural” ones. However, no one before Elzenberg had justified this distinction – not Scheler or Moore. This, among other things, constitutes Elzenberg’s contribution to world philosophy.

It is easy to provide examples of goods of both types: a perfect value (W^P) could be a Shakespearean sonnet, while a utilitarian value (W^U) could be raspberry liqueur or a piece of clothing. However, defending this distinction is challenging. After all, clothing or a drink can be perfect, just as a sonnet can be treated in a utilitarian way. This was precisely the outcome of Elzenberg’s initial characterisation of values – a paradoxical loop. Consider the following:

$W^U \approx$ that which satisfies a need or desire;

$W^P \approx$ that which evokes respect and reverence.

But “need” can be either utilitarian or perfect, just as respect and reverence can be directed toward both perfect and utilitarian matters. However, everything falls into place if we refine the first quasi-definition by specifying a *natural need* – one that constitutes a necessary condition for biological life for any human being (Elzenberg understood “desire” as something secondary to need, as “its satisfaction at a specified level”). In a specific situation, without drink or clothing, anyone would eventually perish. The same does not apply to a sonnet – not everyone would die without it (in fact, very few would). The second characterisation (W^P) is flawed because it is psychological – it relies on feelings, which, while their causes may be objective, are subjective in their manifestations. Therefore, it is necessary to refer to some objective attributes, and the only such attribute is the *ontological duty*, which indicates *what must be done* (as opposed to the subjective *duty of action*, which dictates what *I am to do*).

Thus, after revision, we arrive at the following characterisation of the two types of values:

W^U = that which satisfies a natural need.

W^P = that which is as it ought to be – by the judgment of *ontological duty* and in the eyes of an *autonomous subject*.

Natural needs are strictly defined by human biology (they are of various orders and branches, ranging from broad categories, such as nourishment, reproduction, sleep, and body regeneration, to more specific ones like eating, drinking, breathing, and entertainment, etc.). Satisfying these needs is a guarantee of life and also provides pleasure (though ordinary hedonism derives pleasure from “higher levels” of satisfaction,

while negative hedonism, or asceticism, stems from avoiding the lack of satisfaction). However, the pleasure derived from the realisation of perfect values is of a different nature – non-natural. This pertains to an individual's character.

An *autonomous subject* is reason freed from natural needs through asceticism – it is an axiological consciousness and intention. Elzenberg argues that we perceive perfect values through *axiological intuition*. However, this intuition is the result of a complex life process. When an individual's theoretical reason encounters a critical juncture, their practical reason assesses – based on socially instilled patterns and logic – whether a particular state of affairs should exist. At this point, someone's character determines whether they will pursue values or block anti-values (Elzenberg, like Kant, did not consider evil characters – those who act against their own practical reason; instead, he believed – like the Gnostics – that the conflict existed solely between character and nature, or between “spirit and matter”).

What might a naturalist say to this? They could deny the existence of an *ontological duty*, which is assumed by the anti-naturalist. If this were the case, the debate could end there: these are two *ultima ratios*, revealing the limits of finite reason (human). Although there are naturalists (such as Stanisław Lem or, in the past, the Epicureans) who acknowledge the “*autonomy of values*”. They then become entangled in a contradiction, trying to justify this autonomy from nature in a naturalistic way (for example, by adaptation).

How can one escape the “perfection of liqueur” and the “utilitarianism of the sonnet”? In simpler terms, only the “liqueur itself” or the “sonnet itself” can be considered perfect, while their applications are utilitarian, that is, other (broader) entities. For instance, someone might read Shakespeare for entertainment, for the simple joy of rhyme, regardless of the perfection of the work, and a liqueur can be perfect independently of its use (nothing in its recipe can change without ruining it). However, specific perfection (duty) cannot be justified – it is only felt and fulfilled, resonating with similar subjects. The pantheons of human masterpieces are slowly built over time, and into them, one by one, through an unbroken succession of generations of admirers, enter pyramids, sonnets, and deeds born of courage like those at Thermopylae.

Just as in his axiological absolutism, Elzenberg drew upon Plato and Augustine, in his anthropological pessimism, he followed primarily Augustine – though not without reservation. He espoused a form of historical pessimism (concerning the collective: “Things are bad, and they will

not improve"¹⁰) as well as substantial and personal pessimism. In his view, "the Third Reich was not an aberration in the history of humanity, but its vanguard";¹¹ and the human being, at best, is "not a devil, but a swine".¹² He rejected Socratic ethical intellectualism (characteristic of the Greeks in general), as well as Rousseauism, maintaining that one may consciously commit evil but does so merely by virtue of their animalistic nature – by disregarding moral duty (a view of evil akin to that found in Gnosticism). He did, however, reject the notion that people possess a love of evil (he dismissed the idea of predestination, the Manichaeic worldview). He also rejected the two main beliefs of the Western man: faith in God and faith in Progress (both in its liberal and socialist forms). In his view, true humanity (as opposed to mere anthropoid existence) can only be realised through the pursuit of perfect values. It is only through achieving these values that a person's life can attain meaning.

Elzenberg's philosophy of the human being bears a distinctly aristocratic character. However, true aristocratism – one might say – is poly-disciplinary: champions can be found in virtually every profession. (The exceptions are three anti-domains: prostitution, begging, and informing.) Thus, most people possess some form of talent and can realise perfect values at a level suitable for them. In this lies the only innate fulfilment of the "idea of equality" (apart from the established equality before the law). Even otherwise average individuals occasionally exhibit a willingness to sacrifice their lives for their homeland – one of the greatest perfect values.¹³ There also exist, on the margins of the population, purely "animalistic" types – nihilists. "They would have wives, children, eat, drink, and then drop dead – what good is any of it to anyone?"¹⁴ – says Elzenberg. "Having wives and children", after all, is a vast realm for the doing of good. Only when limited to mere reproduction and consumption would it be a testament to the lack of humanity, and in fact, it is such a testament solely through irreparable harm. Such is often the case, but the aesthetic undertone of Elzenberg's philosophy stems from his auto-centric perspective.

Elzenberg exhibited a "split personality" (in the words of Wolniewicz): his intense desire for rationality, reminiscent of Leibniz, and his

¹⁰ Elzenberg, *Kłopot...*

¹¹ Cf. Bogusław Wolniewicz, *Filozofia i wartości* (Warszawa 1993), 74.

¹² Cf. Ulrich Schrade, *Nurty filozofii współczesnej* (Warszawa 1997), 36.

¹³ Cf. Henryk Elzenberg, "Naród i wojna" – text in AMP. <https://deliberatio.eu/pl/archiwum-mysli-polskiej/narod-i-wojna>.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

conscience clashed with a pronounced sense of moral solipsism or auto-centrism (“self-sufficiency” of Stoic provenance). This is why the author has two distinct camps of admirers, symbolised by the names of two of his notable students: Wolniewicz and Herbert. Autocentrism is an innate way of living that places one’s own affairs in the foreground (a milder form of egocentrism, which recognises only one’s own concerns). Its opposite is heterocentrism. It is likely that, as an autocentric individual, Elzenberg never truly loved anyone. Consequently, his religiosity remained “personal”, arising solely from individual dread, without any root in the despair of losing loved ones. Hence, there is an estrangement from Christianity in him and a syncretic (Stoic-Hindu) garb for the cult of values. Elzenberg did not fully realise that without the influence of Christian ideals (still present, albeit weakening, in Western civilisation), axiological intuition falters.

Elzenberg did not explicitly write or say everything mentioned above. It was his students – Bogusław Wolniewicz, Zbigniew Musiał, and Ulrich Schrade – who articulated these ideas. Nevertheless, they would not have done so without him, and Polish culture would have been immeasurably poorer.

Translated by Marek Kądzielski

Summary

Elzenberg constructed a philosophical system that, was essentially limited to axiology and anthropology. Its foundations rest on two axioms: axiological absolutism and anthropological pessimism. Elzenbergism could be described as *analytical existentialism*. This may sound like an oxymoron, but the paradox disappears when we clarify that while its subject matter is existentialist, its method is analytical.

According to Elzenberg, values are concrete entities that exist objectively (contrary to subjectivism – “value resides in things, not in the mind”). However, they appear in two forms, which he described as *perfect* and *utilitarian*. The former is absolute (binding for everyone), while the latter is relative (dependent on the subject). Perfect values manifest in nature, but their value originates beyond it – given in the very possibility of their realisation, as an *ontological duty*. We arrive at the following characterisation of the two types of values:

W^U = that which satisfies a natural need.

W^P = that which is as it ought to be – by the judgment of *ontological duty* and in the eyes of an *autonomous subject*.

Natural needs are strictly defined by human biology (they are of various orders and branches, ranging from broad categories, such as nourishment, reproduction, sleep, and body regeneration, to more specific ones like eating, drinking, breathing, and entertainment, etc.). Satisfying these needs is a guarantee of life and also provides pleasure (though ordinary hedonism derives pleasure from "higher levels" of satisfaction, while negative hedonism, or asceticism, stems from avoiding the lack of satisfaction). However, the pleasure derived from the realisation of perfect values is of a different nature – non-natural. This pertains to an individual's character.

Just as in his axiological absolutism, Elzenberg drew upon Plato and Augustine, in his anthropological pessimism, he followed primarily Augustine – though not without reservation. He espoused a form of historical pessimism (concerning the collective: "Things are bad, and they will not improve") as well as substantial and personal pessimism. In his view, "the Third Reich was not an aberration in the history of humanity, but its vanguard"; and the human being, at best, is "not a devil, but a swine". He rejected Socratic ethical intellectualism (characteristic of the Greeks in general), as well as Rousseauism, maintaining that one may consciously commit evil but does so merely by virtue of their animalistic nature – by disregarding moral duty (a view of evil akin to that found in Gnosticism).

Keywords: Elzenberg, anti-naturalism, tychistic rationalism, perfect and utilitarian values, anthropological pessimism

Egzystencjalizm analityczny Henryka Elzenberga

Streszczenie

Artykuł interpretuje system filozoficzny Henryka Elzenberga jako odmianę egzystencjalizmu analitycznego: egzystencjalistycznego ze względu na przedmiot, analitycznego zaś ze względu na metodę. Jego podstawę stanowią dwa aksjomaty – absolutyzm aksjologiczny i pesymizm antropologiczny. Autor rekonstruuje Elzenbergowskie rozróżnienie wartości perfekcyjnych i użytecznych. Pierwsze mają charakter absolutny i obiektywny, a ich podstawą jest powinność ontologiczna ujmowana przez podmiot autonomiczny; drugie są relatywne wobec naturalnych potrzeb i służą podtrzymaniu życia biologicznego. Analiza prowadzi do charakterystyki antynaturalizmu Elzenberga, jego arystokratyzmu duchowego oraz przekonania, że sens życia może urzeczywistnić się wyłącznie w realizacji wartości perfekcyjnych. Drugim biegunem systemu jest pesymizm antropologiczny i historiozoficzny, wyrażający się w odrzuceniu zarówno sokratejskiego intelektualizmu etycznego i rousseauizmu, jak i wiary w postęp. W zakończeniu wskazano napięcie między racjonalizmem filozofa a jego auto-centryzmem oraz znaczenie jego uczniów dla rozwinięcia tej interpretacji.

Słowa kluczowe: Henryk Elzenberg; antynaturalizm; racjonalizm tychiczny; wartości perfekcyjne i użyteczne; pesymizm antropologiczny

