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Kazimierz Twardowski's Views on Ethics and Religion Versus Postsecularism

Introduction

Kazimierz Twardowski's personal attitude to religion was favorable. His convictions in this regard appear primarily in his informal statements. In one of them he declares that he tries to follow Christ, believes in providence, the immortality of the soul, but at the same time – that he is not a Catholic[1]. In another statement, however, he considers himself a determinist[2], which is undoubtedly difficult to reconcile with Christianity, which presupposes free will. When such statements are supplemented with the content of Twardowski's publications related to religion, the picture of his religious beliefs is significantly enriched, although it still remains somewhat puzzling and incomplete[3]. The situation is somewhat similar with Twardowski's ethical views – he published few works on ethics during his lifetime, but left quite a lot of unpublished material. My aim is to outline Twardowski's religious and ethical views, to present his position on the relationship between religion, ethics and science, and to reflect on the validity of his views in the context of Jürgen Habermas' conception of postsecularism.

1 K. Twardowski, *Dzienniki*, P. I. 1915–1927, ed. R. Jadczak, Toruń 1997, p. 75.

2 K. Twardowski, *Dzienniki*, P. II. 1928–1936, ed. R. Jadczak, Toruń 1997, p. 254; T. Kotarbiński, *O Kazimierzu Twardowskim*, [in:] K. Twardowski, *Wybrane pisma filozoficzne*, Warszawa 1965, p. V–VI.

3 R. Kleszcz, *Metoda i wartości. Metafilozofia Kazimierza Twardowskiego*, Warszawa 2013, p. 215.

Ethics and religion in Twardowski's publications

Several stages can be distinguished in the evolution of Kazimierz Twardowski's ethical views. Initially, the defence of the absolute character of ethical principles, which Twardowski links to religion, comes to the fore. In his 1895 article *Etyka wobec teorii ewolucji* [*Ethics versus the theory of evolution*], Twardowski argues against the evolutionary version of ethical relativism, which assumes that ethical principles result from specific social conditions related to the struggle for existence, and that different conditions entail different ethical principles. Twardowski acknowledges that the variability and diversity of ethical views is a fact, but maintains that there are nevertheless unchanging moral truths. This is indicated by the analogy between logical, aesthetic and ethical judgements, i.e. judgements in terms of truthfulness, beauty and goodness[4]. These are all varieties of judgement in terms of rightness; the one who believes that two plus two is four, who enjoys a beautiful painting, who helps a neighbour in need, is right. An opponent might argue as follows: if there were universally valid ethical norms, then everyone would know them, which is not the case, and so there are no such norms. Twardowski retorts that there is no agreement on which logical norms are universally valid, but there is agreement that such norms exist. Another counter-argument might undermine the analogy between logical and ethical judgements: everyone will agree to accept theoretical axioms (such as the claim that the whole is greater than the part), but there are no ethical axioms to which everyone agrees. Twardowski counters this objection with this: not everyone recognises certain theoretical axioms, e.g. one who cannot handle abstract concepts does not recognise them. It is the same with ethical principles – someone who does not have a developed conscience cannot properly distinguish between right and wrong. So disagreement on an issue only proves that we do not know the answers to certain questions or are unable to convince others of the answers we believe to be right. On every question there is a true and unchanging answer: it always remains true that Adam Mickiewicz was born in 1798, that Beethoven's symphonies are beautiful, that one must love one's neighbour[5].

Twardowski, in the article under discussion, considers Christ-like ethics to be the „loftiest," but does not write more extensively about its principles; he mentions only love of neighbour. He also points out that adherence to relative ethics has important practical consequences, because it entails

4 K. Twardowski, *Etyka wobec teorii ewolucji*, „Przełom" 1895, no. 18, p. 555.

5 Ibidem, p. 562.

ethical anarchy[6]. Twardowski thus equates religious, Christ-like ethics with ethics as such in this text.

There is also a religious tinge to a series of two articles from 1895: *Filozofia współczesna o nieśmiertelności duszy* [*Contemporary Philosophy on the Immortality of the Soul*] and *Metafizyka duszy* [*Metaphysics of the Soul*]. The question of immortality, Twardowski believes, should be investigated by means of the inductive-deductive method. Its first stage is the inductive study of the properties of mental life, then the formulation of general laws on this basis, and finally the derivation of conclusions from these laws by deduction[7]. Thanks to introspection, we know that we relate all mental phenomena perceived at a given moment to our one „I" (unity of consciousness) and that we consider ourselves to be the same person that we were in every past moment of our life (identity of our „I"). Our „I" therefore exists, and its characteristics are identity and unity. Nor can it be reduced to individual mental phenomena[8]. Since the subject of mental phenomena (our self) is single and indivisible, it is the ultimate element in the world of mental phenomena, just as atoms are the ultimate elements in the world of sense phenomena. Scientific analysis cannot explain the origin and perishing of indivisible elements, so it assumes that they are eternal and does not pronounce on their cause. But without a cause, only God can exist. Since, therefore, the indivisible elements do not arise from natural forces, they are created by God[9]. The first step of this reasoning establishes the fact of the unity and identity of the subject. Step two leads to the thesis of the indivisibility of the subject, but it already goes beyond the facts of inner experience. The third step leads – by means of reasoning alone – to the conviction that the subject is the ultimate element in the world of mental phenomena, is eternal and created by God. This last step seems questionable – the thesis that if something is simple, it is eternal and created by supernatural forces is not sufficiently justified[10].

The above contents indicate that in 1895 Twardowski was convinced of the possibility of building a scientific metaphysics. This is also confirmed by his introductory lecture delivered at Lvov University on November 15, 1895. Twardowski states that induction is necessary to investigate questions such as the relation of spirit and matter or the ultimate purpose of

6 Ibidem, p. 553.

7 K. Twardowski, *Filozofia współczesna o nieśmiertelności duszy*, „Przełom" 1895, no. 14, p. 430–431.

8 Cf. ibidem, p. 469–471.

9 Ibidem, p. 493–494, 477–478.

10 A. Brożek, *Kazimierz Twardowski o problemie psychofizycznym i nieśmiertelności duszy*, „Studia z Filozofii Polskiej" 2009, t. IV, s. 24.

the universe. Other questions, on the other hand, can only be resolved by deduction, which was used effectively by, for example, Aristotle to answer the question of whether the universe had a beginning in time[11]. Metaphysics should proceed in the same way as the natural sciences, which relied on facts and, on the basis of induction, formulated general principles for deduction, but deduction verifiable by experience. Much material has already been accumulated for the construction of metaphysics, but this material is still insufficient. In philosophy, as in any science, all the justified claims of predecessors should be accepted, no matter what direction or school they represent. For it is about scientific truth and its reliable justification[12].

However, in his subsequent publications, Twardowski no longer made any claims about the existence and nature of God, the immortality of the soul and ethical principles of a religious nature, and we do not even find metaphysical claims in them. This change is evident in the treatise *Psychologia wobec fizjologii i filozofii* [*Psychology versus Physiology and Philosophy*] (1897), in which Twardowski considers philosophy to be a collection of philosophical sciences, such as psychology, logic, ethics and so on. He advocates psychologism in philosophy, which postulates the study of mental symptoms related to the traditional questions of philosophy, and rejects metaphysical speculation. With this approach, for example, moral feeling is analysed instead of inquiring into the essence of moral good; the way in which the concept of God arises and develops in the mind is studied, rather than the qualities of God. With this approach, philosophy will be able, like any science, to achieve universal and justified results. Metaphysics, on the other hand, should be left for last, contrary to the former way of proceeding, which made it the starting point[13]. Twardowski gives metaphysics a place among the philosophical sciences: it deals with questions such as the beginning of the universe, its possible purpose or the relation of the material world to the spiritual world[14]. But Twardowski's concern here is with „psychologistic" metaphysics, rather than with speculative metaphysics as traditionally understood. For he writes that concepts related to the course of the phenomena of the material world, such as causality, law, force, necessity, can only be explained through psychological analysis[15].

11 K. Twardowski, *Wykład wstępny w Uniwersytecie Lwowskim*, [in:] K. Twardowski, *Myśl, mowa i czyn*, p. 1, ed. A. Brożek, Kraków 2013, s. 460.

12 Ibidem, p. 467.

13 K. Twardowski, *Psychologia wobec fizjologii i filozofii*, „Przewodnik Naukowy i Literacki" 1897, yr. 25, i. 1, p. 34–35.

14 Ibidem, p. 38.

15 Ibidem, p. 40.

In his article *O tak zwanych prawdach względnych* [*On So-Called Relative Truths*] (1900), Twardowski continues to defend the absolute character of ethical principles, but no longer links them to religion. His argument is as follows. (1) Some claim that ethical principles are relative because they allow for exceptions. But when these principles are formulated in the right way – as specific rather than general judgements – such a claim collapses. E.g. the formulation „one must not speak against one's conviction" is not appropriate; the correct way to state this norm is „as a rule, one must not speak against one's conviction". It is uncertain whether universal moral principles exist; if scientific ethics were to determine in the future that they do not, one would have to fall back on specific principles for specific categories of individuals or societies[16]. (2) Another argument holds that since certain principles apply only in certain circumstances, they are relative. Opposing this argument, Twardowski considers the following example. The Spartans considered the principle „Frail children should be put to death" to be valid, and it may be argued that this was right in the circumstances in which they lived. But it is a principle that applies in some circumstances and not in others. So in the quoted wording, the principle is framed inaccurately; its full wording is: „It is necessary to put to death children who are frail under the conditions in which the Spartans lived." The principle does not apply in conditions other than those in which the Spartans lived, but not because it has become wrong, just because there is no society that should apply it. When it is argued that certain ethical norms are right in a certain place and time and wrong in other circumstances, these norms are – as in the previous case – wrongly formulated as general principles. (3) The variability of ethical concepts, i.e., their different content in different places and times, does not justify relativism. Let's say that one judgment proclaims about a certain conduct that it is good, and another judgment proclaims that this conduct is not. If there is a different concept of good in each of these judgments, they are not contradictory[17]. The above way of understanding „absoluteness" is quite peculiar, because usually this word is understood as independence from place, time, persons, etc. Here, however, ruthlessness co-occurs with these factors: an absolute moral norm is one that is always valid in certain circumstances, but no longer in others. This understanding of absoluteness does not seem to be wrong, although it is certainly incompatible with linguistic and ethical intuitions.

16 K. Twardowski, *O tak zwanych prawdach względnych*, [in]: *Księga pamiątkowa Uniwersytetu Lwowskiego ku uczczeniu pięćsetnej rocznicy Fundacji Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Lwów 1900, p. 14.

17 Ibidem, p. 14–15.

Unpublished texts

After 1895, religious themes ceased to appear in Twardowski's publications, but they still appear in his unpublished statements. In a manuscript titled *Etyka* [*Ethics*] which was probably written between 1898 and 1901[18], Twardowski extensively develops an ethical theory based on the assumption that conduct, which is in accordance with the qualities that distinquish man, is good. The first of these qualities is reasonableness as the ability to think abstractly, thanks to which man can act on the basis of detached concepts. The second is related to the fact that he lives in a community and consciously regulates this life. In view of this, the ethical criterion is as follows: such action is good, which proceeds with all consciousness and not under the influence of the moment, and enables or facilitates communal life. Virtue is an emotional disposition coupled with the direction of the will, which makes it possible to perform acts compatible with an ethical criterion. Virtue is formed by arousing feelings of value toward certain modes of conduct, and this in turn requires arousing feelings of value toward persons acting in the desired manner. These persons can be parents, educators, historical, legendary or religious figures[19].

According to Twardowski, the formation of virtue without the participation of religion is difficult, because the moralizing must begin at a young age, and then it is difficult to implant feelings of value on the basis of abstract concepts – you need an ethical ideal, which is a figure that arouses such feelings. The rational in this situation is to choose the highest of ideals – God. Religion is idealism dressed in concrete clothes; the personification of the moral order of the world. Whoever is not an idealist in this sense has no motivation to make sacrifices, because he sees no reason to do so[20]. Scientific ethics is independent of religion, but morality as the application of ethics to life requires the help of religion. Also helpful in moral improvement are the means used by religion, such as confession, concentration, and meditation. In the text under discussion, Twardowski distinguishes between theoretical ethics, the subject of which is the psychological basis of ethics and the issue of the ethical criterion, and practical ethics, which is the study of virtues and duties: to oneself, to others and to God. Here, however, only the issue of duties to oneself is developed.

18 R. Jadczak, *Przedmowa*, [in]: K. Twardowski, *Etyka*, prep. R. Jadczak, Toruń 1994, p. 9–10.

19 K. Twardowski, *Etyka*, prep. R. Jadczak, Toruń 1994, p. 67.

20 Ibidem, p. 72–73.

The next stage in the development of Twardowski's ethical views is connected with his university lectures on ethics, especially his lecture *O zadaniach etyki naukowej* [*On the Tasks of Scientific Ethics*] (this lecture was given in the academic year 1905/1906). The task of scientific ethics is not to create an ethical foundation, that is, a disposition for ethical behavior. This is because it is the task of moralizing, which belongs to education, legislation and religion. Twardowski narrows the previous ethical criterion, distinguishing between individual ethics (a.k.a. biotechnics, the art of living, etc.) and social ethics, which is ethics in the proper sense. The subject of the former is the life and happiness of the individual, and the latter is the life and development of the collective. Ethics (i.e. social ethics) is the study of the conditions and ways of reconciling the interests of individuals or associations of individuals as far as possible. This definition includes at the same time an ethical criterion – such conduct is good that contributes to the reconciliation of the interests of individuals, and bad is that which hinders such reconciliation[21]. There are two ways of reconciling interests. First, individuals limit their interests only to the extent that it is necessary for the interests of others. The duties of justice apply to such limitation, and the guiding maxim in this case is: what you do not want done to you, do not do to another. The second way of reconciling interests is to identify self-interest with the interests of others, and the means of such identification is love. Here the maxim is: „do to another what you yourself would like to receive from him" or „love your neighbor as yourself".

Also in this concept there is a religious theme. Twardowski assumes that ethics, religion and law do not differ in field, only in social function. Ethics is to establish general laws of reconciliation, while law and religion are to execute these laws, to apply them in practice[22]. For ethics itself has no executive power. Ethics, for instance, concludes that private property is better for reconciling interests than common property. From this, the norm „do not steal" can be derived. However, its observance requires motivation, that is, an ethical foundation, which is created by law and religion. They give ethical regulations a sanction in the form of temporal and eternal punishments. In addition, religion attempts to create a disposition to adhere to ethical norms by shaping such inclinations as reverence for a deity, altruism, love of neighbor. These inclinations lead to compliance with ethical norms more effectively than punishments. The theoretical, ideal relationship between ethics and law and religion would be that scientific ethics is

21 K. Twardowski, *O zadaniach etyki naukowej*, prep. I. Dąmbska, „Etyka" 1973, no. 12, p. 142.

22 Ibidem, p. 144–145.

the legislative factor, and law and religion are the executive factors. For such a relationship to exist, however, scientific ethics would have to be finished and have due seriousness in relation to law and religion[23].

In connection with Twardowski's previously mentioned declaration that he is not a Catholic, it is worth mentioning that he was already critical of at least some practices and dogmas of the Christian religion at a young age. At the age of 16, he wrote in his diary that eating a wafer during Mass as a sign that we are united with Christ is worse than the actions of cannibals. He also stated that there is only one God, not three Gods, because if there is a difference between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, then one of them is the true God, and if there is no difference, then there is only one God, and the names „Father", „Son" and „Spirit" were invented by humans[24]. Later, Twardowski advocated the disconnection of theological departments from universities, as these departments lacked, he stressed, scientific character – their professors lacked freedom of research and freedom of belief[25]. He also opposed hanging crosses and conducting religious agitation on university premises[26]. This attitude was in line with his stance on religion and religiosity, which he placed in the private sphere. On the other hand, it seems that the founder of the Lvov-Warsaw School recognized all his life the principle of love of God and neighbor, which he considered the basic content of Christianity.[27]

23 Ibidem, p. 147. In 1907, in Lvov, Twardowski gave a lecture entitled *O zadaniach etyki naukowej* [*On the Tasks of Scientific Ethics*] and its summary was published in the „Przegląd Filozoficzny" ["Philosophical Review"]. Based on this summary, it can be implied that the content of the lecture coincided with the content of the lecture discussed. In the Lvov lecture, Twardowski emphasized, among other things, that scientific ethics does not formulate any norms of conduct, since „Science only tells what and how things are, but does not tell what should be" (K. Twardowski, *Odczyt o zadaniach etyki naukowej*, „Przegląd Filozoficzny" 1907, yr. 10, i. 1, p. 143).

24 K. Twardowski, *Dzienniki młodzieńcze (1881–1887): uzupełnione „Dziennikiem" Marii Gąsowskiej (1881), wierszami wiedeńskimi (1882) oraz korespondencją z rodzicami (1882–1893), Józefem Krypiakiewiczem (1885–1886) i Wojciechem Dzieduszyckim (1885–1891)*, ed. A. Brożek, Warszawa 2013, p. 34.

25 K. Twardowski, *Dzienniki*, P. I 1915–1927..., p. 75.

26 K. Twardowski, *Dzienniki*, P. II 1928–1936..., p. 159.

27 In a letter to his cousin and bishop, Boleslaw Twardowski, he wrote in 1923: „let us not cease in our work, in which, despite all differences, we can and should always be united by what is the essential content of Christ's teaching: Love of God and neighbor!" (quoted in: A. Brożek, *Kazimierz Twardowski w Wiedniu*, Warszawa 2010, p. 165).

The unscientificness of metaphysics

Twardowski exhibited clear metaphysical and religious inclinations, which remained consistent throughout his life. For instance, in 1932, the founder of the Lvov-Warsaw School admitted that a combination of monadology and Fechner's concept devoid of an asubstantial approach to the soul was close to him[28]. But it should be emphasized that he did not declare this as a scholar practicing philosophical sciences. In 1904, in a speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the Polish Philosophical Society, he stressed that the Society – while rejecting all dogmatism – should not serve any philosophical direction. The goal of a philosopher's work is to illuminate the truth, and its principle is scientific criticism. This does not mean, however, that the scientific, logical operations of the human mind exhaust all its needs[29].

A quarter of a century later, in a speech at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Polish Philosophical Society, Twardowski stressed that the Society must not spread any metaphysical view of the world. Views of this kind play an important role for people: they help them to relate to the world, others and themselves. However, they are unscientific, since it is impossible to demonstrate by means of scientific arguments the validity of a particular worldview or the erroneousness of another (unless the erroneousness is due to the internal contradictions contained in it or its incompatibility with the results of scientific research). Everyone has the right to adopt such a view of the world and life that suits him, as long as it does not contain internal contradictions, is consistent with science and is understandable[30]. Such a view, however, is a personal matter. Even if one considers one's metaphysical view to be objective, one should at the same time consider that it cannot be scientifically justified and convince others of it. Confessing to a particular metaphysical view of the world and life does not interfere with methodical work in the realm of philosophical sciences[31].

It happens, says Twardowski, that non-scientific views contain certain truths that can later be confirmed by science. Examples of such views include the belief in the efficacy of certain herbs or the initially metaphysical

28 A. Brożek, *Kazimierz Twardowski o problemie psychofizycznym...*, p. 24.

29 K. Twardowski, *Przemówienie z okazji otwarcia Polskiego Towarzystwa filozoficznego we Lwowie, 12.02.1904*, „Przegląd Filozoficzny" 1904, yr. 7, i. 2, p. 242.

30 K. Twardowski, *Przemówienie wygłoszone na obchodzie dwudziestopięciolecia Polskiego Towarzystwa filozoficznego we Lwowie dnia 12 lutego 1929*, in: *Księga Pamiątkowa Polskiego Towarzystwa Filozoficznego we Lwowie, 12.II.1904–12.II.1929*, Lwów 1931, s. 10.

31 *Ibidem*, p. 10–11, cf. D. Łukasiewicz, *Analiza relacji między filozofią, nauką a światopoglądem w ujęciu Twardowskiego*, [in:] *Rozum i wola. Kazimierz Twardowski i jego wpływ na kształt kultury polskiej XX wieku*, J. Jadacki, Lublin 2021, p. 354–355.

concept of atoms. So science confirms some metaphysical views, and the creators of metaphysical systems can benefit from scientific knowledge. In this way, the two fields come closer together, but the scientific view of the world and life will never coincide with the metaphysical view. This is because the sciences are constantly making new discoveries and sometimes rebuilding their foundations. Therefore, since no science can be completed, neither can the scientific view of the world and life obtain such a form[32].

In 1932, Twardowski gave a speech entitled *O dostojeństwie Uniwersytetu* [*On the Dignity of the University*], in which he states that science could eliminate or alleviate many of humanity's moral tribulations. If the issues that divide people and arouse mutual hatred were approached from the standpoint of objective truth, they would either be resolved, or it would be necessary to recognize that the opposing views in equal measure have no proper justification, and therefore cannot demand subordination[33]. Science has no masters except experience and reason, and the same should be true of the university, which is the place where it is practiced. The university must not be restrained by any external factors unrelated to scientific inquiry: political, social or economic. The profession of a scholar requires not only intellectual qualifications, but also fortitude and character. His personal likes or dislikes must not influence the results of his research. The independence of a scientist is questionable when he belongs to organizations that require their members to hold specific beliefs; when he operates in areas to which access requires submission to doctrines, slogans or programs that raise doubts in critical minds. On the other hand, the disinterested search for scientific truth is the source of the purest and most lasting satisfaction. This satisfaction is even greater for someone who, while searching for scientific truth, reflects on it itself, which is the task of philosophy. This discipline creates a theory of scientific knowledge, requires clarity and precision of argumentation and it examines the concepts used by the specific sciences. It also arouses criticism that protects against submission to authorities, intellectual habits and excessive trust in limited human reason[34].

In the above speech, Twardowski considers the development of a theory of scientific knowledge to be the primary task of philosophy. Such a position is more radical than the cited views from 1897, 1904 and even 1927. Twardowski also raises the demands for the rejection of personal inclinations in scientific cognition and the prohibition of the scientist's membership in organizations that preach certain doctrines. It seems that Twardowski meant

32 K. Twardowski, *Przemówienie wygłoszone*..., p. 13–14.

33 K. Twardowski, *O dostojeństwie Uniwersytetu*, Poznań 1933.

34 *Ibidem*.

here primarily political organizations, but perhaps he also meant adherence to a particular positive religion[35]. It is significant that in the same year (1932) he wrote, as mentioned earlier, about his metaphysical sympathies. Apparently, he believed that relegating religious and metaphysical beliefs to the private sphere was sufficient for the reliable and unbiased practice of philosophical sciences. It is worth mentioning that Twardowski wished his funeral to be secular, and a copy of *O dostojeństwie Uniwersytetu* [*On the Dignity of the University*] was placed in his coffin[36].

Twardowski and postsecularism

It seems that Twardowski's position on the way metaphysical and religious beliefs function is similar to contemporary postsecularism, or more precisely, the version of this trend represented by Jürgen Habermas[37]. Postsecularism assumes that in a liberal, democratic society, religion – under certain conditions – can play an important role in the public sphere. Habermas wants to provide a recipe for the consensual coexistence of citizens with different worldview orientations, especially two groups: the secular and the religiously committed. Secularization, which has taken place in Western societies, is sometimes evaluated in opposing ways: some believe that religious forms of life are rightfully being replaced by rational forms, while others believe that it is more of a unfair seizure of religious forms by secular ones. Habermas believes that both positions are wrong, because they assume that one side can only prevail at the expense of the other, and are incompatible with the current Western postsecular society, i.e. one in which religious communities still exist, contrary to earlier predictions[38]. A secular understanding of the world has not become dominant, and religious organizations influence public opinion and speak out on key, and at the same time contentious, social issues (e.g., abortion, euthanasia, animal protection). Hence the question arises: how citizens of different

35 Cf. D. Łukasiewicz, *Analiza relacji między filozofią...*, p. 354–355, 357.

36 T. Rzepa, *O psychologicznej i wojennej misji twórcy Szkoły Lwowsko-Warszawskiej*, „Studia Psychologica" 2016, 16 (1), p. 52.

37 The following authors are associated with various forms of postsecularism: Giorgio Agamben, Jeffrey Alexander, Zygmunt Bauman, Ulrich Beck, Peter Berger, Michel Foucault, Marcel Gauchet, René Girard, Hans Joas, Leszek Kołakowski, Bruno Latour, John Milbank, Jadwiga Staniszkis, Alain Touraine (M. Łuczewski, S. Burdziej, *Przełom postsekularny*, „Stan Rzeczy" 2013, no. 2 (5), p. 9).

38 J. Habermas, *Wierzyć i wiedzieć*, [in:] J. Habermas, *Przyszłość natury ludzkiej. Czy zmierzamy do eugeniki liberalnej?*, transl. M. Łukasiewicz, Warszawa 2003, p. 105.

orientations are to view each other and what to expect from each other so that relations between them remain civilized[39].

The answer to religious conflicts in the past was a gradual separation of church and state. Initially, religious minorities were only tolerated, and this tolerance was not at all associated with respect (in the Netherlands, for example, Catholics and Protestants hated each other). Religious groups lived in mutual isolation and remained strangers to each other. But, Habermas believes, this way of functioning proved insufficient by the end of the 18th century, when the rule of law was born. Members of different subcultures, including religious communities, should recognize each other because they belong to one political community and are responsible for the contributions they make to it. Because of this mutual recognition, contentious issues should always be resolved through deliberative, inclusive and democratic procedures in which the parties treat each other as equals. One of the most pressing issues that should be resolved in this way is the demarcation between positive and negative religious freedom, that is, between the right of some to practice their faith and the right of others to be spared religious practices they do not recognize[40].

Habermas believes that it is necessary to work out such arguments and resolutions that can be accepted by all members of the community. Religious statements and arguments should be allowed in public debate, as they contain many pertinent moral intuitions. However, at the institutional and legal level, there should only be a universal secular language, accessible to all, into which religious rationales should be translated[41]. A liberal state can recognize as rational only those religious communities that renounce the imposition of their faith by violence and the use of coercion of conscience against their followers. Religious consciousness, in undertaking reflection on its own situation in a pluralistic society, should deal with the dissonance resulting from contact with other religions; it should align itself with the authority of the sciences, „which have a social monopoly on

39 J. Habermas, *Notes on post-secular society*, http://www.signandsight.com/features/1714.html, 18.06.2008 (access: 7.09.2024).

40 *Ibidem*, cf. J. Habermas, *Między naturalizmem a religią*, transl. M. Pańków, Warszawa 2012, p. 107.

41 J. Habermas, *Notes on…*, J. Habermas, *Między naturalizmem…*, p. 117. Habermas believes that religion and philosophy have long inspired each other, and a good example of the translation of Christian content into secular language is the idea of the dignity of all human beings, which has its origin in the idea of the creation of man in the image and likeness of God (cf. R. Wonicki, *Między naturalizmem a religią. O idei społeczeństwa postsekularnego w myśli Jürgena Habermasa*, „Stan Rzeczy" 2013, no. 2 (5), p. 129).

knowledge of the world"[42], and recognize the foundations of the constitutional state, which are based on secular morality. „Without these acts of reflection, monotheisms in a ruthlessly modernized society produce destructive potential"[43].

On the other hand, the search for universally accepted rationales requires the secular side to understand the „articulatory power of religious languages", because otherwise there may be an unjust exclusion of religion from public life and depriving society of important sources of meaning[44]. The effort to translate religious content into secular language should also be undertaken by secular citizens, not just the religious side. For if secular citizens did not take religious communities seriously because of their religious mindset, there would be a return to the isolation, alienation and hostility of worldview subcultures, familiar from the first stage of the process of separation of church and state mentioned above. The attitude of secular devaluation of religion should be rejected just as one rejects the inequality of rights between men and women, dictated by religious considerations, unacceptable from the point of view of a secular constitutional state[45].

How does Habermas' conception relate to Twardowski's position? Completely in line with Twardowski's ideas is the recognition of science as having a „social monopoly on knowledge of the world" and the demand for the search for universal arguments, convincing to citizens with different worldview orientations. Such universal arguments should – at least to a large extent – be based on experience and reasoning, and thus be essentially scientific in nature. An adherent of a particular worldview is not able, Twardowski stated, to get someone to accept that worldview with purely rational arguments. The founder of the Lvov-Warsaw School therefore assumed that a worldview – including a religious one – is a purely private matter. Habermas is not so radical, as he allows worldview rationales, especially religious ones, into public discourse. However, he also sees science and its associated rationality as a field that provides universal criteria, determining whether or not to allow particular worldview elements into the institutional sphere. This postulate is in line with Twardowski's statements regarding science's resolution of disputed issues. Both philosophers believe that worldview and religion have important life and moral significance (e.g., Twardowski explicitly says that the logical operations of reason do not exhaust all its needs, that religion helps in moral development, etc.; Habermas believes that

42 J. Habermas, *Wierzyć i wiedzieć*..., p. 106.

43 *Ibidem*.

44 *Ibidem*, p. 110.

45 J. Habermas, *Notes on*...

religion can counteract the disappearance of meaning resources, which are constantly shrinking, cf. J. Habermas, *Wierzyć i wiedzieć*..., p. 114). In view of this, Habermas' postsecularism can be considered to be largely in line with Twardowski's ideas on the workings of worldview and religion, although of course the German philosopher's theory is much more elaborate, detailed and takes into account contemporary realities.

Final conclusions

In his early publications, Twardowski was inclined to treat ethics as simply religious precepts in the moral sphere; he identified ethics as such with religious ethics, largely Christian, although not associated with any particular denomination. This was accompanied by an attempt to demonstrate the existence of God through rational means. This „religious" stage, however, was relatively short-lived, as it basically covered only 1895. In Twardowski's subsequent publications, there are no more inquiries of the metaphysical or religious type (e.g., attempts to defend religious ethics or the existence of God). Particularly notable is the article *O tak zwanych prawdach względnych* [*On So-Called Relative Truths*], in which Twardowski no longer upholds the thesis that there are universal ethical norms that are always and everywhere valid, and does not mention that the norms have any religious character. However, in his unpublished statements, religion still occupies a rather important place. His manuscript *Etyka* [*Ethics*] highlights the importance of religion for individual moralization and self-improvement, and his later lecture *O zadaniach etyki naukowej* [*On the Tasks of Scientific Ethics*] captures religion as playing an important social role. Later, Twardowski does not reject his metaphysical beliefs, but if he mentions them, it is as a private person. This seems to be a conscious and deliberate attitude, in line with the content of the cited speech on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Polish Philosophical Society. Twardowski places the metaphysical and religious view of the world in the private sphere, and at the same time stresses that scientific cognition, based on experience and reason, should be used to settle disputed issues in the public sphere.

Habermas' postsecularism could be seen as a particular contemporary concretization and modification of Twardowski's position. The most important common feature of both views is the recognition of science and its associated rationality as a platform of understanding for citizens of society, representing different worldviews and religions. Many arguments have been made against Habermas' position, and two of them are as follows. Some argue that postsecularism in this version assumes that the religious side must make far greater concessions than the secular side, and therefore

introduces disproportionality. Specifically, this involves allowing religious language and arguments only into the informal public sphere, but no longer into the institutional sphere, which is supposed to make religion a „servant of modernity"[46]. Another possible objection is that secularization leads to a world without virtue and God, in which people are ruled by their desires and instrumental reason subordinated to these desires. Instrumental reason, however, is only partial and insufficient, standing below holistic reason, which takes into account the idea of the good and a metaphysical vision of reality[47].

The two objections above are perhaps related, since they seem to presuppose what Habermas forbids: the introduction of religious language and rationale into the institutional-legal sphere. However, first, it is science, not religion, that has a universal language through which adherents of different worldviews and religions can communicate. The lack of such universality of religious language is due to the very fact of the multiplicity of religions. But even if it were possible to formulate a universal religious doctrine that adherents of different religions could agree upon, it would still lack a universal language comparable to the language of reason and experience. Second, even if secularization entails the negative consequences that its critics point out, a universal return to religious consciousness seems unrealistic. For man will not renounce the freedom he has gained, even if this freedom causes negative consequences. What religion, moreover, would such a universal return to religious consciousness be based on, given that the adherents of each religion ascribe to themselves the exclusive right to truth?

Habermas' proposal seems to have an advantage over the postulate of religious revivalism: it appreciates the role of religion, emphasizes the need for mutual recognition and respect of the secular and religious sides, postulates the participation of all citizens in public life, and points to the way in which religions could perform self-reflection in order to adapt to functioning in liberal societies[48]. Habermas does not link the secular perspective and the demand for the universality of the language of science with atheism and hostility to religion, and he does not confine the latter to the private sphere. On the contrary: followers of particular religions are allowed to profess them in public, and the boundaries of what is tolerated (in public

46 Cf. M. Puczydłowski, *Filozofia Jürgena Habermasa wobec zwrotu postsekularnego*, „Kwartalnik Filozoficzny" 2016, vol. 44, i. 1, p. 159–161; E. Wyrębska, *Nowoczesne społeczeństwo wobec światopoglądowego pluralizmu. Rola religii w społeczeństwie według Jürgena Habermasa*, „Etyka" 2013, no. 46, p. 47.

47 J. Korab-Karpowicz, *Habermas i (nie)świadomość tego, co zostało utracone*, „Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria" 2012, no. 2 (82), p. 397–398.

48 E. Wyrębska, *Nowoczesne społeczeństwo*..., p. 48.

sphere) should be mutually agreed upon by all parties involved. Habermas' concept, including its key assumption about human rationality, may seem overly idealistic, utopian. But even if the state of affairs it postulates is unattainable, some approximation to it seems possible and desirable. For, as Twardowski wrote, „ideals point us in the direction of action and the goal to which we are to aspire, although we know that we will never fully achieve it"[49].

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49 K. Twardowski, *Niezależność myśli*, [in:] K. Twardowski, *Myśl, mowa i czyn...*, p. 73.

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Poglądy Kazimierza Twardowskiego na etykę i religię a postsekularyzm

Streszczenie

Kazimierz Twardowski w swoich wczesnych tekstach opowiadał się za etyką religijną i próbował racjonalnie uzasadniać istnienie Boga i duszy. Jednak z jego publikacji

dość szybko znikają treści religijne, etyczne i metafizyczne. Natomiast w pracach niepublikowanych Twardowski wciąż wiele uwagi poświęca etyce naukowej, którą z jednej strony uznaje za niezależną od religii, ale z drugiej – z religią w istotny sposób powiązaną. Według twórcy Szkoły Lwowsko-Warszawskiej światopogląd może odgrywać kluczową rolę w życiu jednostki, powinien jednak pozostawać jej sprawą prywatną, natomiast kwestie dzielące ludzi i wywołujące wzajemną nienawiść powinny być rozstrzygane metodami naukowymi. Takie stanowisko w dużej mierze pokrywa się z postsekularyzmem Jürgena Habermasa, który można interpretować jako swoistą konkretyzację i rozwinięcie poglądów Twardowskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: Jürgen Habermas; Kazimierz Twardowski; metafizyka; postsekularyzm; religia; światopogląd

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Kazimierz Twardowski's Views on Ethics and Religion Versus Postsecularism

Abstract

In his early texts, Kazimierz Twardowski advocated religious ethics and sought to rationally justify the existence of God and the soul. However, religious, ethical, and metaphysical content quickly disappears from his publications. On the other hand, in his unpublished works, Twardowski continues to devote significant attention to scientific ethics, which he considers independent of religion, yet significantly connected to it. According to the founder of the Lviv-Warsaw School, a worldview can play a key role in an individual's life but should remain a private affair. Issues that divide people and cause mutual hatred should be resolved using scientific methods. This position largely coincides with Jürgen Habermas's post-secularism, which can be interpreted as a concretization and development of Twardowski's views.

Keywords: Jürgen Habermas; Kazimierz Twardowski; metaphysics; postsecularism; religion, worldview

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