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## THE LAST SUPPER OF THE WEST? AN ESSAY ON REASON, SUBREPTION AND INVALIDATING RATIONALITY



1. Ryszard Ługowski, *Project for New York* (2011), © Author & The Centre of Polish Sculpture in Orońsko, photo by Jan Gaborski

**Abstract:** What makes the power of our world in the 21st century noticeably weaken after the collapse of modernism? Why are Cassandran prophecies of geopoliticians as well as pessimistic visions in art multiplying? Is the *Last Supper of the West* imminent, as one Chinese satirist expects? What role does subreption, especially present in Western philosophy, law, economy, customs, and finally in art, play in this process? Subreption – i.e. the use of certain peculiar assumptions and reasoning without proper grounding – would first consist in *stealing* rationality from reason and making it independent by emphasizing defeasible reasoning proper for rationality, the main act of which is the act of invalidating. This would be the most serious act of subreption that Western thought has ever committed. Tamed subreption is responsible for the progressive misperception that paralyzes our Western civilization’s decision-making and is the main cause of its present weakness.

**Keywords:** avant-garde, decline of the West, geopolitics, Islamic occasionalism, invalidating rationality, subreption.

Professor Grzegorz Sztabiński was a philosopher interested in the rationality of art in the modernist era. That is why he devoted his habilitation dissertation, *The Problems of Intellectualization of Art in Avant-Garde Tendencies* (1991),<sup>1</sup> to this issue. My essay is an attempt to develop his thesis defined as a *theorism* (a convergence of practice and theory or an interaction between implicit and explicit data items in the discourse of modern – especially conceptual – art<sup>2</sup>) by showing its deep philosophical contexts. Like Professor Sztabiński, I do not want to depreciate avant-garde theoretical discourse as a kind of aberration and a sign of creative impotence, *quasi-mechanical thinking* (*cerebralism*, according to Renato Poggioli) or the *ghastly thinking of thinking* (an expression of my master from the Catholic University of Lublin, professor Jacek Woźniakowski<sup>3</sup>), but to present this problem against a broader background of so-called *defeasible reasoning*.<sup>4</sup> Such a research perspective seems appropriate because Sztabiński understood the process of intellectualization of art as “a process of mental control exercised by reason full of doubts over an uncertain situation, critical towards everything that is falsely clear and rational in a seemingly obvio-

<sup>1</sup> G. Sztabiński, *Problemy intelektualizacji sztuki w tendencjach awangardowych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, pp. 132-161.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, pp. 7, 181.

<sup>4</sup> “Reasoning is defeasible when the corresponding argument is rationally compelling but not deductively valid. The truth of the premises of a good defeasible argument provide support for the conclusion, even though it is possible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false. In other words, the relationship of support between premises and conclusion is a tentative one, potentially defeated by additional information.” – See: R. Koons, *Defeasible Reasoning* (2005-2021), in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reasoning-defeasible/> (accessed 28.06.2021).

us way”.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the following will provide a partial answer to the problem of the possibility of defining *intellectualization of art* raised by him?:

“I am inclined to believe that it does not possess any essential common features, which makes it impossible to formulate a traditional real definition properly. But, as Morris Weitz stresses, a similar situation is characteristic for most notions found in aesthetic theories. The above also holds true for the term intellectualism used in philosophy. One may only construct partial definitions which refer only to certain domains of the notion of the intellectualization of art.”<sup>6</sup>

Non-monotonic logic is now a formal explication of *defeasible reasoning* as an act of rationality which I will refer to as *invalidating rationality* and which constitutes, as I have shown elsewhere, the current context of aesthetics and art in the *machine epistemology* epoch.<sup>7</sup> At present, I will deal with the philosophical context of artistic praxis in its historical and global (geopolitical) dimensions to make this rationality visible in the situation of some dangerous and tragic challenges for the West. That is why my essay is a kind of a philosophical-etiological diagnosis and, at the same time, in its persuasive layer it constitutes a funeral speech in honour of Professor Sztabiński, who was a great lover of the tradition of modernism and the now declining Western civilization in general.

So, what has been happening after the collapse of modernism as an ideological project that the power of our world in the 21st century is clearly weakening and Cassandran prophecies of geopoliticians as well as various pessimistic visions in current art are multiplying, to recall *The Islamic Project - Central Park* (1996) by the Russian group AES+F, or the allegorical meaning of *Project for New York* (2011) by the sarcastic Polish sculptor Ryszard Ługowski concerned about the near future of the USA? What is the role of *subreption* as a motive of defeasible reasoning and invalidating rationality in this process, especially in Western mentality – in religion, philosophy, law, economy, colonial history, customs, politics of sexuality (gender) and finally in art? Isn’t the real power of the West and its moral right to lead the world based precisely on subreption? Is the West’s *Last Supper* approaching inexorably, as the Chinese satirist Banton-glaotang expects? His journalistic work – based on subreption and concerned with the misperceptions, thefts and instances of usurpation of the West – has been commented on by the media around the world.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> G. Sztabiński, *Problemy intelektualizacji...*, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 184.

<sup>7</sup> K. Piotrowski, *Some Contexts of Question about Art. From Essentialism to Machine Epistemology*, “Art Inquiry” 2019, no. 21, pp. 37-58.

<sup>8</sup> *The Last G7: Satirical cartoon mocking bloc’s attempt to suppress China goes viral*, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202106/1226050.shtml> (accessed: 13.06.2021).

## I. Reason, Subreption and Invalidating Rationality

At present, after the centuries-old critique of reason, subreption has become widespread and to some extent legalized in the cultural industry. Subreption found an alibi or dispensation in classic metaphysics, but also in modern (Kantian) and postmodern, post-structuralist, deconstructionist, anti-metaphysical postphilosophy, which invalidated the notion of *the source (the pure, the undamaged, the Holy)*, imposing anti-fundamentalist discourse of ubiquitous *interchangeability of values and copies without the original* on us.

However, before the religious and philosophical basis of originality, the civilizational peculiarity of the West, and its mission as a guarantor of the world order were questioned, the Latin term *subreptio* meant *theft* (from *subripere* - *to tear out, to take away secretly*). The concept of *subreptio* first appeared in the Roman law and then in the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church, meaning - along with the concept *obreptio* - *obtaining certain undue benefits* (for example *dispensation*) on the basis of concealing certain facts. How did it happen that subreption penetrated so deeply into the mentality of Westerners, shaping their concepts of *reason* and *rationality*?

### I. 1. Emphasis of Reason and Irrelevance of Rationality

Undoubtedly, subreption is responsible for the progressive paralysis in the decision-making process of our Western civilization, because it seems to invalidate the concept of Reason which has been considered from several perspectives for millennia: 1. religious (God as the Giver of truths and laws salutary for the mankind, thanks to which the human reason participates in the divine Reason); 2. philosophical (individuals contribute to a universal civilization thanks to being the species recognized as *dzoön logikón*); 3. scientific (grounding universalism thanks to the discovery and development of a priori sciences, with mathematics as the basis for a rational logical culture).

In order to grasp the classic approach to Reason or the human reason (in Greek: *nous*) characteristic for Western philosophy, we must list its seven features:

1. Substantiality, i.e. the existence in and for oneself (spontaneity, reflexivity or self-reflexivity, cumulativity);
2. Composition including passive and active nature which is the source of rational life (*bios*);
3. Rational life is diversified in an act reference to the world where purity of theoretical life (*bios theoretikos*) is made possible by an *intentional* act of

view (*theoria*) which constitutes the contemplative basis for other types of rational life (*bios praktikos* and *bios poietikos*);

4. these three forms of rational life crystallize in the chrematic (from Greek *χρήμα* - *thing*) recognition of a thing (in Latin *res*) given as a logical-epistemic truth (*veritas*) in concepts and judgments of cognition, then available truth as a good (*bonitas*) ordered on the basis of principles of practical action, or transformed (supplemented due to a natural lack) as an aesthetic-artificial beauty (*pulchritudo*) thanks to the rules of creation in the perspective of being (*ens*) understood as a metaphysical beauty, i.e. interchangeable with truth and good as the transcendentals (*pulchrum, verum, bonum*), given in such an order of spontaneous realistic cognition of being as a non-contradictory transcendental unity (*unum*) and individuality (*aliquid*);

5. Moreover, subreption also appears at the basis of classical metaphysics (the theory of transcendentals) grounded in the theory of analogy: "Analogy has the same form as a punch line defined as a *consistent inconsistency* or an *inconsistent consistency*, related to the conceptive activity of wit. [...] Metaphysics raises the question of the ontic sense of analogy, which implies the issue of subreption of *ingenium* as a basis for analogical thinking. [...] Thus, subreption is an inherent aspect of analogy. [...] - although the subreption of analogy implies diaporias, then aporia based on it turns out to be a *neutrum* invalidating monism as well as radical diffusive pluralism in metaphysical knowledge, so it is an euporia - a good solution to the metaphysical problem of participation. But thereby metaphysics has shackled itself to asteiology";<sup>9</sup>

6. The abovementioned acts or forms of rational life show cooperation, but also irrelevance towards each other (in Latin *ir* means *towards* or *versus*), because they are at an epistemic distance from each other, i.e. they can occasionally annul each other to some extent in order to achieve their goals: cognitive, practical or poietic ones; the universal claims of Reason, strongest in the domain of episteme, are thus weakened in the practical sphere of *phronesis* which, in special situations, can suspend the applicability of general principles of human conduct grounded in episteme; and, in the domain of *poiesis*, these claims of Reason - not only specific to *nous theoretikos*, but also to *nous praktikos* - can be ignored;

7. Mutual irrelevance of particular rationalities does not weaken the life of reason, but serves its emphasis (Greek *emphasis* - here in the sense of *pressure*, i.e. *strengthening* a given activity of reason); such tropism of reason to emphasis makes a *quarternarian* motif, i.e. the acrasian activity of the *Fourth* (in the sense of Carl Gustaw Jung's theory of *Quarternarium*), appear in this threefold ratio-

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<sup>9</sup> Idem, *Metaphysics in the Shackles of Asteiology*, "Art Inquiry" 2018, no. 20, pp. 29-42.

nal life.<sup>10</sup> The *Fourth* may be that which is unreasonable (corporeal, impulsive, volitional, what the Greeks called *epithumia* or *menis*) and which forces reason to increase its power. But the *Fourth* may also turn out to be one of the three rationalities that wants to dominate the others, i.e. tries *to think for all*, evoking a need to restore the harmonization of rational life disturbed by this kind of subreption.

## I. 2. The Discovery of Invalidating Rationality – Islamic Occasionalism

An evident act of subreption and an extremely fateful manifestation of the activity of the *Fourth* was the Islamic occasionalism of al-Ghazali (1059-1111) who, as one of the most important representatives of Arab scholasticism (*ka-lâm*), was active in Baghdad and various other cities in the Middle East. He tried to oppose the influences of Greek philosophy and its cult of rational nature. His aversion was directed especially towards the philosophy of nature. Islamic eclecticism combined elements of Aristotelianism (*falsafa*) and Al Farabi's Neoplatonism. These doctrines denied the creation of the world and derived its heavenly spheres from pre-eternity, or conceived of beings as derivative or created by God, but having the necessary, even eternal – as in Avicenna's metaphysics – material foundation governed by the law of causation. Beings understood in such a way would have to deny Allah's omnipotence. Thus, the will of God was limited only to certain spheres of existence (e.g. according to Avicenna, Allah could only affect general forms – species, having a limited influence on the fate of individual beings). Al-Ghazali struck at this philosophical-theological synthesis that combines the Aristotelian way of demonstrating arguments (*apodeiksis*) with the authoritative nature of prophetology and miracularity, especially attacking the belief in the necessary causal relationships between individual beings of the material world, fundamental for classical rationalism.

He believed that philosophy – especially Neoplatonism implying determinism – was contrary to revealed religion because it sought to establish the same necessary relationship between the material world and God. Al-Ghazali clearly understood the consequences of Neoplatonism for Islamic theists whose belief in God's free will was threatened, since Avicenna treated the world as a necessary consequence arising from the essence of Allah: "by nature or by compulsion, or by will and choice."<sup>11</sup> But God is not like the sun that has to shine out of necessity and has no power to stop its action. God's will and word are a creati-

<sup>10</sup> Idem, *Autonomia (w) Quarternarium. Publiczne użycie rozumu*, in: T. Pękala (ed.), *Przestrzenie autonomii - sztuka, filozofia, kultura*, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2017, pp. 69-88.

<sup>11</sup> J. Naify, *Al Ghazali*, in: R.H. Popkin (ed.), *Historia filozofii zachodniej*, transl. by A. Roman, Zysk i S-ka Wydawnictwo, Poznań 2003, p. 192.

ve act at the same time. This belief of al-Ghazali does not contradict orthodox Christian philosophy like St. Augustine's theology, but this is where similarities end when it comes to correcting Neoplatonism. This Islamic preacher of the *destruction of philosophy* put forward the most radical reasoning, invalidating the belief that the unification of the material world, i.e. "the combination of what we call cause and effect, is not necessary."<sup>12</sup> It is the will of Allah and not the material necessity of nature, apparently independent of God's power, which decides that a given cause produces an effect. God makes (or does not make) some fact follow another one. So, in al-Ghazali's occasionalism, cause-and-effect relationships in the world are just the habits of Allah.<sup>13</sup> The activity of being – contrary to Aristotle's theory of act and potency – does not result from its inherent nature, but from God's choice. Explaining his subreptic reasoning that robs nature of its own cause, it can be concluded that – according to al-Ghazali – the activity of nature is not necessarily related to its essence, because it can be invalidated by God. Nature may start to act differently than usual and not produce necessary and unchanging cause-and-effect relationships. Material nature has been deprived of all immanent power, since its divine source is external, transcendent. Such theological nullification of the immutable material order of nature would lead to absurdity if the world we know suddenly changed completely behind our backs on some whim of God. Al-Ghazali has an answer to this objection. If we do not experience such dangerous absurdities, it is only because Allah refrains from extraordinary miraculous activities; however, any change of nature is possible for Him. Thus, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary action (under occasional necessity established by God) is preserved and does not contradict the everyday experience of man. Even evil in the world exists according to God's will, ultimately remaining a mystery.

This voluntarism of Islam, especially its occasionalistic interpretation, as well as the method of invalidating (*naskh*) some verses of the Koran by other sentences and even, according to al-Ghazali, the practice of the Prophet (*sunah*) can abolish Koran, which is highly destructive to the classical concept of Reason and can be regarded as the initiating moment of subreption in the process of shaping invalidating rationality. Miracularity in Western thought has always been associated with a religious belief in the power of God, but it was not inferred from this that every event is miraculous and that the laws of created nature can at any time be overruled by the Creator and then re-established in accordance with some changed God's purpose. We are dealing here with a type of non-classical, non-Western rationality. Although Parmenides and

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<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 193.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, pp. 191-198.

Zeno of Elea denied obvious variability (movement) of the empirical world, while Heraclitus – on the contrary – questioned the permanence of the world, they only grasped its essence in their own way and did not try to show, like al-Ghazali did, that the laws of nature may occasionally be annulled. The consequence of occasionalism is that certain, universal, scientific, systematic (also theoretical) knowledge is impossible. However, rational reasoning is still possible in this form of scholasticism and the methodology of Islamic occasionalism using logical argumentation is not overruled because al-Ghazali accepted at least one limitation – the principle of non-contradiction, excluding what is contradictory as impossible.

### I. 3. Invalidating Rationality

Emphasis of classically understood Reason experiences distinct regression in the doctrine of Islamic occasionalism, unless we interpret this process in the light of the Jungian motif of perfection referred to as the *Quarternarium* by him. However, it should be noted that occasionalism – through the critique of Averroes and reception of *The Guide of the Perplexed* (this theological work was written by Maimonides around 1190 and the Latin translation was published in 1520) – influenced modern European thought which theoretically developed its subreption. Al-Ghazali's theses, based on reading the Jewish thinker, were discussed by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Isaac Newton and Pierre Bayle, while Nicolas Malebranche tried to reconcile them with the Christian doctrine. Especially David Hume used Malebranche's and Bayle's considerations. We know how his scepticism – critique of the concepts of causality, force and substance – destroyed the classical, realistic, or common-sense foundations not only of metaphysics but also of science.

In the Protestant world – precisely in the modern *culture of protest* – thinking about subreption made a dizzying career, radically changing its anthropological and cultural status. As we know, Martin Luther accused the Church of subreption. However, we are aware that he also demobilized Protestants to fight not only this sin, relying only on God's grace and justification by faith alone. In Protestant philosophy, the concept of subreption (*Erschleichung* – *extortion* in German) was used by Christian Wolff in his psychology, describing unlawful claims of representations to empiricity: e.g. although I can see the mobilization (formation) of my will to raise my arm and I can see the lifting of this arm, I cannot accept I have empirical knowledge that it was my will that raised my arm. Such a claim, according to Immanuel Kant referring to Wolff's rationalist psychology, is based on various types of subreptic assumptions.<sup>14</sup> The effect of

<sup>14</sup> C. W. Dyck, *Kant and Rational Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, p. 86.

a metaphysical error of subreption is the substantiation of apperception resulting in the hypostasis of consciousness. This psychological, and in fact metaphysical interpretation of subreption – since psychology is understood as *metaphysica specialis* by Wolff – gave the concept a more general meaning, leading consequently to cognitive impasse. In Kant's view, subreption is therefore an abuse of a concept (in fact a *sensual concept*) based only on sensual experience, which is nevertheless used as if it originated from pure understanding itself. It is an error in the application of categories in their empirical sense to an object of intellectual cognition, following – in subreption – an object that appears to be given in some way. Generally speaking, subreption fallacy – in Wolff's and Kant's terms – consists in considering something that in fact is not experience as experience. Hence, the status of subreption was raised – from immoral and illegal extortion (*Erschleichung*) to epistemological or transcendental, which invalidated its limited hamartiological status essential for the Latin tradition, since for Protestant thinkers subreption is not only a sin or a disorder in human knowledge, but it is a law of perception of a transcendental subject (perhaps including God?). Then, the only remedy for it are criticism of pure reason or agnosticism – the immanent crypto-subreptions of the Kantian system as a basis for modernity and an announcement of the history of 'the constructing mind' defined by Henri van Lier, as noted by Sztabiński.<sup>15</sup>

Just as occasionalism is an initiating impulse in the formation of invalidating rationality, Kantism introduced the act of invalidating within Reason itself, as the leading thaumaturgic tendency of a transcendental subject. In Kantism, reason is not a container for accumulating information, but – as we can already see in Leibniz – a structure of formal rules shaping experience. Without these principles of reason – implemented by God, as in Leibniz's monadism, or in secularized Kantian reason in which these formal rules always operate – rational objective cognition, but also thinking as such is not possible. In his theory of reason, Kant distinguished *die Vernunft* or, due to the feminine gender of the German concept, it is better to say *rationality*, and *der Verstand* (intellect). Reason itself is not sure of its substantiality, as the *substance* concept – devoid of grounding in sensual experience and therefore of problematic validity – has been reduced to one of intellect categories as an intelligible principle. Rationality (*die Vernunft*) doubts her substantiality, because she does not find sufficient grounds in herself to recognize that she is identical with herself. Thus, the necessary condition of classically understood rationalism in Kantism does not secure rationality (*die Vernunft*), but above all the activity of the intellect (*der Verstand*) in which the German analyst discovered not only logical rules independent of any sense data, but also synthetic principles of intellectual

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<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, pp. 29-33, 182.

activities. Thanks to a priori logical categories that direct experience, including the category of substance, and thanks to the principles of synthesis, such as the principle of conservation of matter and the principle of causality (sequences in time), which enable orientation in the material (sensual) world, intellect forms a domain of all objectivity with the help of a priori forms of pure intuition – time and space. The first moment of invalidation appears here, since the principles of synthesis, which, after all, apply only to the material world, are not as indispensable for thinking as logical principles. Likewise, even more outside this logical source of rational thought, there are a priori sight forms of intuition in sensual imagination which are sometimes understood by Kant as appropriate to an empirical, biological subject (the human species). Nevertheless, intellect, comprehended holistically in terms of cooperation of logical principles and the principles of synthesis, forming impressions in representations and representations of representations as concepts that are components of judgments (understood allogeneically), enables objectified cognition which, however, does not exhaust the sense of rational thinking as such. Although Intellect (*der Verstand*) contains logical principles constituting the core enabling all thinking, its position in Kant's critical system is still not as strong as that of rationality (*die Vernunft*) which surrounds it like a wider circle outstretched outside of it. Rationality conceals intellect as the logical nucleus of rationalism necessary for thinking. Just as *der Verstand* forms the sphere of objectivity, which is one of the conditions of classically understood (chrematic, causal and necessary) rationality, *die Vernunft* – which defines interests inherent in all the powers of a subject – tries to replace intellect. The rationalism of a Kantian subject does not boil down to logical rules, because rationality (*die Vernunft*) seeks something unconditioned in the subject, the world and the source of all properties – some perfect being. When intellect imposes its laws on nature according to the basic group of judgments (quantity, quality, ratio and modality) according to their pure concepts (the general, reality, substance and necessity), *die Vernunft* tries to invalidate necessity ruling in nature by imposing its regulative ideas of freedom, purpose and God, which are to become a kind of natural laws, a sense and a divine source in this Kantian thaumaturgy, (isn't it the act of subreption that appeared in occasionalism?). These regulative ideas of rationality are intended to subjugate the experience of nature formed by intellect with the help of transcendental imagination (*die Einbildungskraft*), although they have only *logical* and not *real* applications. Claims concerning the objects of ideas of rationality cannot be considered valid, since they go beyond the field of experience objectified by intellect, which does not change the fact that dialectically acting rationality claims to invalidate the heterogeneity of the cognition field, as if rationality – and not intellect – was the proper source of this field. In this way, the mysterious domain of duty (*sollen*), located in rationality and

recognized by the dialectics of rationality in its negative function, is to invalidate independence of the empirical domain, positive objectified knowledge given in the form of the so-called synthetic a priori propositions formed by intellect, i.e. the domain of *is (sein)* captured by analytics and aesthetics closely related to it. Rationality (*die Vernunft*) can logically invalidate the domain of *is (sein)*, since, while a priori categories and synthetic principles of intellect (*der Verstand*), and forms of imagination necessarily shape the objects of experience, they do not refer directly to them as *things in themselves*, for they are understood to be *transcendentally ideal*. Of course, it is not intellect that achieves self-understanding here, but pure invalidating rationality discovers the unconditioned in itself, asking about the possibility of future metaphysics. Clement Greenberg as well as Sztabiński<sup>16</sup> rightly emphasized the initiating role of Kantian criticism in the genesis of modernism.

#### I. 4. The Power of Negativity and Criticism

Kant's contribution to the emergence of invalidating rationality (*die Vernunft*) became an impulse for German idealism which understood this rationality as a *thing in itself*, especially in Georg W. F. Hegel's system. The idea of an invalidating chrematic dimension of reason, which appeared in Kant's transcendental thaumaturgy, was reinforced in Hegel's dialectics as an act of *Aufhebung* which ultimately eliminates tools necessary for self-creation of the Absolute and thus some forms of rationality (e.g. religion and art) that this emphasis of Spirit (Reason) made possible in history.<sup>17</sup> For this, Hegel had to construct a new logic that rejected the classical laws of being and thinking. After Kantian critical-transcendental (regulative) thaumaturgy with its act of invalidating, Hegel gave this subreption a metaphysical status, showing the perspective of a *new organon* which was his study of the enormous power of negativity (*das Negative*), i.e. what is apparent in the phenomenon but at the same time forced by the inner necessity of Reason. Despite Hegel's thesis about the so-called *logical death of art*, his dialectical rationality became – according to Peter Bürger – the basis for the rationality of the Great Avant-Garde in the 20th century, especially in Dadaism and surrealism that intensify the act of invalidating.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> G. Sztabiński, *Problemy intelektualizacji...*, op. cit., pp. 61, 87-90.

<sup>17</sup> K. Piotrowski, *Narzędzie pozbawione swego bycia narzędziem. Sztuka w 'porządku dyskursu'*, in: T. Pękała (ed.), *Dyskursy sztuki. Dyskursy o sztuce*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2018, pp. 71-74.

<sup>18</sup> "Die Avantgardisten intendieren also eine *Aufhebung* der Kunst – *Aufhebung* im Hegelschen Sinn des Wortes: Die Kunst soll nicht einfach zerstört, sondern in Lebenspraxis überführt werden, wo sie wengleich in verwandelter Gestalt, aufbewahrt wäre." – P. Bürger, *Die Theorie der Avantgarde*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1974, p. 67.

Hegel's followers either retained the possibility of synthesis in the dialectical act of invalidating (Karl Marx), or gave it up altogether (Theodor W. Adorno). The latter – in *Negative Dialektik* (1966) – introduced the concept of pure change made by radicalized negativity itself and the libertarian potential of Hegel's aesthetics emphasizing the need for artists' self-awareness. According to him, the intellectualization of art took place *objectively and out of necessity* in the 20th century.<sup>19</sup> Thus, he rejected the cumulative nature of reason. Starting from Hegel's diagnosis that the subject of history is *List der Vernunft*, he decided to free history from the spiritualist or materialistic nightmare of *Ver-söhnung*. Others followed this path of not only despiritualization, but also dematerialisation, in which the critical theory – eliminating all forms of cunning in self-critical or destructive practices in culture – tried to liberate society from any forms of identity and cumulative thinking, understood as centuries-old tools of evil implosion. Rationality has been engaged in the process of permanent criticism of instrumental reason, reification and commodity exchange by means of the logic of decay that invalidates all positivity, serving to emancipate from substantial personalistic subjectivity and tyranny of the absolute truth. Adorno specially created a program of emancipation from subreption recognized on the example of Enlightenment dialectics and the history of Western metaphysics, objectively understood as a repetitive process in which the subject mistakenly recognizes himself in the world, although it is considered completely his (human) world.

### I. 5. Cratophany and Dia-Criticism

It has been noted that the main motive behind philosophers' inclination to idealism or anti-realism is lust for power.<sup>20</sup> Questioning the external world, independent in existence from the subject, is to satisfy the need for domination. However, this motivation – according to John Searle – should be distinguished from rational argumentation put forward by idealists. The possibility of distinguishing between motivation and rational argumentation is, as we know, questioned in Nietzscheanism, because Nietzsche examines the problem of reason from a naturalistic point of view, using the concept of *Great Reason*, which is *whole body*. So, *will to power* did not make Nietzsche an idealist. On the contrary, he turned out to be a critic of idealism, including Kantism. This does not mean that Searle's observation does not apply here, since Nietzsche ended his philosophical development – after a phase of infatuation with the philosophy

<sup>19</sup> G. Sztabiński, *Problemy intelektualizacji...*, op. cit., pp. 7-10.

<sup>20</sup> J. R. Searle, *Mind, Language and Society. Philosophy in the Real World*, Basic Books, New York 1998, pp. 38, 61.

of life and evolution – with a quasi-anti-realist position which is referred to as *perspectivism* and viewed as a key impulse for postmodernism. Nietzsche's project to increase the power of an organism (according to Gilles Deleuze, taken over from Baruch Spinoza) by undergoing as many influences as possible could only be successfully implemented thanks to an act of forgetfulness which enables the plasticization of consciousness. Thanks to the act of forgetfulness, the *body-reason* is able to absorb new stimuli and produce new insights, and thus maintain its activity blocked by reactive historicism, leading to relativism and ultimately to nihilism which is hostile to life.

In this context, we can indicate a new stage in the formation of invalidating rationality, the manifestation of which would be pragmatic – or cratophanic – forgetfulness dictated by the bodily limitations of our mind. Moreover, each organism has its own perspective that invalidates the perspective of another organism because life lives at the expense of another life. Life is fundamentally unfair. Conflict in life is repeatable and irremovable. However, it is possible to minimize (to enlighten *spiritually*) its effects in the so-called *community of free spirits*, where perspectivism (anomy of the *will to power*) takes the mild form of interpretationism and thus no longer a fight of bodies. Once again, subreption is associated with an exceptional privileging of will, but after denying God's existence.

The progress of invalidating rationality – after Martin Heidegger introduced the theme of temporalization of epistemic sources (as a effect of discovery of the *onto-ontological difference*) – can be traced in the so-called *philosophy of difference* and in the mutations of this idea in such trends as post-structuralism, deconstructionism, neo-pragmatism, transversalism and proceduralism, which make up postmodernity. Heidegger's theory of aletheio-logical truth gave an impulse to revise the key notions of classical discourse logically oriented towards the truth understood as *veritas*.<sup>21</sup> The essence no longer exists (as a present whole – an object), but essentializes according to power which enables it to manifest itself as *unconcealedness* (*aletheia*). Aletheio-logical discourse thus presupposes cratophanic-logical discourse promoted by Nietzsche, as in the famous *Brief über den "Humanismus"* (1947) of Heidegger. The quotation marks used with the word "humanism" are a dramatic nullification of the classical tradition.

As cratophanic effects, structures of human culture become products of certain *will to know*, as Michel Foucault would say. Knowledge begins as a result of a *cut* act (*coupure*) having a *threshold* (*seuil*) – a specific system of concepts on the basis of which discourse develops as a tool of prohibition, divi-

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<sup>21</sup> K. Piotrowski, *Narzędzie...*, op. cit., pp. 75-77.

sion or separation and, above all, as the *will to truth*. What knowledge imposes on a subject “in a more general way than any specific tool”<sup>22</sup> is a technical level which differentiates into various *epistemes* or *discursive formations* with their *systems of exclusion*.

In Foucault, the diffusion of difference not only manifests itself in the mutual nullification of respective epistemes, but also in its peculiar struggle. At the beginning of the lecture *The Order of Discourse*, he expressed this aim in the following way:

“I wish I could have slipped surreptitiously into this discourse which I must present today, and into the ones I shall have to give here, perhaps for many years to come, I should have preferred to be enveloped by speech, and carried away well beyond all possible beginnings, rather than have to begin it myself. I should have preferred to become aware that a nameless voice was already speaking long before me, so that I should only have needed to join in, to continue the sentence it had started and lodge myself, without really being noticed, in its interstices, as if had signalled to be by pausing, for an instant, in suspense. Thus there would be no beginning, and instead of being the one from whom discourse proceeded, I should be at the mercy of its chance unfolding, a slender gap, the point of its possible disappearance”.<sup>23</sup>

It is the reminiscence of subreption, i.e. a theft of place appropriate for voices articulating the violence of individual *discursive formations* – in suspense which has to become a dispensation. Why does Foucault want to experience that nameless voice of discourse in its totality and – as it must be said – as unconditioned rationality? It is because he does not want the question of discourse to be just a cratophanic problem of particular speech reduction to a tool, i.e. a question of cutting and juridical-technical order of things with specific rules that govern random discourse as a manifestation of institutional violence.

Thus, Foucault, like Heidegger, acts as a whistleblower of instrumentalism, while respecting its overwhelming influence. Discourse in the so-called *microphysics of power* is understood as a tool and at the same time a product of some bodily order, being governed by rules of accumulation, exclusion, reactivation and derivation. If Foucault wants a different discourse – a discourse not as a compulsion of verification and utility, but as a *drift* between the concentration centres of power and violence – of prohibition, division and rejection – then he must invalidate the constant tendency to mechanization which causes

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, pp. 81-84.

<sup>23</sup> M. Foucault, *The Order of Discourse*, in: R. Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-structuralist Reader*, transl. by Ian McLeod, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Boston 1981, p. 51.

discourse to have any sort of technicisation at all: with the order of controlling, selecting, excluding, organizing and redistributing, and which determines the procedural identity of discourse and type of discursive control of a subject. The diffusion of difference in post-structuralism resembles the effects of aphasia, isosteny and isocephaly, known from the history of scepticism. Deconstructivism makes these moments of invalidating speech even more radical, reducing the problem of the *overdetermination* of voice to *aporia*.

While logicians resolved the issue of indeterminate statements (e.g. propositions about the future) by introducing fractional logical value, or by limiting the applicability of the law of noncontradiction, Jacques Derrida used undecidability in order to multiply or rather disseminate meaning, completely ignoring the fundamental distinction between *sense* (*Sinn*) and *reference* (*Bedeutung*) that Gottlob Frege had once introduced, as well as between *perception* and *concept*, as Sztabiński emphasized in his description of the development of *theorism*.<sup>24</sup> Thus, overdetermination (or dissemination) of meaning became a pretext to invalidate the possibility of determining the meanings of words for Derrida. It should be added that the act of invalidating the so-called *metaphysics of presence* (and its violence) took on the character of irreligious and at the same time para-messianic deconstruction in late Derrida's works. Derrida's main subreption is expressed by his agenda of *messianism without messianism* and its origin is linguistic. Language constantly produces subreptions understood here as performative acts prior to constative acts: "The error is not within the reader; language itself dissociates the cognition from the act. Die Sprache verspricht (sich); to the extent that is necessarily misleading, language just as necessarily conveys the promise of its own truth. This is also why textual allegories on this level of rhetorical complexity generate history."<sup>25</sup> So, according to Derrida and Paul de Man, language deludes us with promises, although it promises meanings, references and sense, pretending to be a structure based on experience. This view of language meets the subreption definition of Wolff and Kant.

### I. 6. Invalidating Rationality in Neo-Pragmatism, Transversalism and Proceduralism

Similarly in neopragmatism, the invalidation of the so-called *final conclusive vocabulary* allegedly brings only positives, because irony allows us – as

<sup>24</sup> G. Sztabiński, *Problemy intelektualizacji...*, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>25</sup> P. de Man, *Allegories of Reading. Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1979, p. 277. See: K. Piotrowski, *The Promises of Unism, Zonism, Contextualism, and (Dia) Critical Art. Some Aspects of Performativity in Polish Art (1923-2008)*, "Art Inquiry" 2012, no. 14, pp. 119-120.

Richard Rorty argued – to deal with the randomness of our context, which can weaken or cancel. Since our identity is contingent, it is beneficial to try something different, which is made possible by the ironical weakening and loosening of our identity in an abnormal re-description. The point is just not to be cruel in re-description. That is why we have to be in solidarity, and therefore the act of irony must be guided by liberalism, according to which the greatest evil is to inflict suffering on someone.

Postmodernists like Rorty noticed that *homo viator* is a model of contemporary subjectivity. In Wolfgang Iser's view of the anesthetic perspective of the so-called *transversal reason*, anesthesia makes it possible for a certain type of sensitivity to move from one rationality to another.<sup>26</sup> Transversal reason (*die transversale Vernunft*) and plural rationality (*die Rationalität*) do not create two separate potencies, but the same reflective potency in different directions and functions. Heteronomic rationalities refer to objectivity and are therefore chrematic, while transversal reason – to rationality, going beyond objectivity. This achronism is possible thanks to the *emptiness* of transversal reason. Thus, Iser drew consequences from the postmodern critique of reason, especially negating the Hegelian striving for *reconciliation* (*Versöhnung*), also invalidating some of the classical attributes of reason, such as cumulativeness and intentionality (limiting them to rationality), while maintaining spontaneity, reflexivity or self-reflexivity in his characteristics of reason. Transversal reason updates itself only in transition in search of maximum satisfaction and happiness. It consists in the ability to manoeuvre between antagonistic poles in search of tangent points and transitions between them, in order to affirm the pluralism of rationality. It is possible only thanks to the cunning invalidation of the claims of a given rationality against another one that is antagonistic to it.

Such postmodern modification of reason also rejects Jürgen Habermas's belief in the possibility of harmonious reconciliation of various rationalities in the so-called *communicative action*. However, despite this pressure of postmodernism, the German philosopher did not abandon the universalist claims of reason. For Habermas, practical reason consistently has procedural content, thus devoid of any substantial connotations. In this way, he interprets Kant's categorical imperative in the light of discursive ethics, which requires actors of the moral game to unconditionally recognize the intersubjectively conducted argumentation procedure, prompting participants to the idealizing crossing of the boundaries of their interpretive perspectives and lifting the *veil of ignorance*.<sup>27</sup> Habermas protects the public use of reason from religious, metaphysical

<sup>26</sup> K. Piotrowski, *Wprowadzenie; Anestetyczna perspektywa rozumu (w ujęciu Wolfganga Isera)*, in: idem, L. Golec (eds.), *Promieniowanie myślokształtów – od estetyki do anestetyki*, "Seminaria Orońskie", vol. III, Centrum Rzeźby Polskiej w Orońsku, Orońsko 1998, pp. 11-20, 24-42.

<sup>27</sup> J. Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, MIT Press, Cambridge 1998.

or other assertoric grounding in favor of legalism (autonomy of legal norms, supremacy of a constitution), but – in order to be consistent with procedural impartiality – it cannot eliminate the perspective of deriving theory of justice from some real or true doctrine. Therefore, he must allow adherents of various religious or metaphysical doctrines to have a public debate, accepting *rational disagreement*, but disagreement controlled by legal procedures of the use of reason which plays a critical and regulative function here. Thus, public use of reason consists in the deontological, immediate binding of participants joining the debate in which invalidating rationality is motivated by a search for the best possible solution to a dispute.

### I. 7. The Default Position

Due to these modern and postmodern modifications of reason and rationality, attempts are being made to derive the necessary condition of rationalism from the classical concept of mind as direct cognizability, logically oriented towards the truth understood as *veritas*, with reference of reason to the real world, i.e. independent in existence from the cognizing subject, structured by the law of cause and effect. The abovementioned problem of subreption is related to rationalism, the condition of which can be found, for example, in the *initial assumptions (the default position)* of John R. Searle<sup>28</sup> – a defender of the pre-theoretical basis for thinking, which cannot be justified and proven, and a propagator of the *Enlightenment concept or external (material) realism* against irrationalism and anti-realism, mainly modern (post-Cartesian) idealism, also Kantian agnosticism, modernized types of skepticism, relativism, perspectivism, ethnomethodology, social constructivism, neo-pragmatism, deconstructionism or postmodernism (along with the strong pressure of a matrix civilization and the temptation to imagine an artificially nourished and electrically stimulated *brain in a glass container*).

However, despite the defence of realism and a biological conception of mind, the substantiality of reason remains irrelevant to him like other metaphysical issues (e.g. the problem of psychophysical duality or the existence of God). Searle points out that some matters are no longer important to us and, therefore, we do not make any judgments about their truthfulness. So, he does something completely different than, for example, Gilbert Ryle in his famous book *The Concept of Mind* (1949).

For Ryle, the basic tool of analysis was the grammar of everyday language, which arose from Aristotelian logic. Its rules – governing the use of individual categories in expressions – were a decisive criterion for him, determining whe-

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<sup>28</sup> J. R. Searle, *Mind, Language and Society*, op. cit., pp. 9-20.

ther we are dealing with a *category mistake*. According to the British analyst, comparing and opposing the body and mind is more or less the same as saying that Mrs. Kowalski has a bad mood and something else to do. The elimination of category mistakes is the same as removing all subreptions from cognition. Therefore, the question of reification of mind was not indifferent for Ryle when he demonstrated in his critique of Cartesian dualism, inspired by behaviourism, that its ontologization of mind as a spiritual substance separate from the body is inconsistent with English grammar. Why, although Searle rejects all forms of idealism and also tends to the biological concept of mind, he has no intention of this dispute over its substantiality?

In his conception, the influence of invalidating rationality is clearly visible. Searle cites interesting episodes from his life. When he lectured in Italy, he visited local churches. One of them – the Venetian church of Madonna dell’Orto – changed its patron saint after the statue of Madonna was found in a nearby garden in 1377. It was then considered that this sculpture had miraculously been thrown from Heaven. “That is not a possible thought for us – Searle writes – because, in a sense, we know too much.”<sup>29</sup> This marginal remark is extremely interesting. Searle does not take away the rationality of the decision to change the patron of this church, which had previously been dedicated to St. Christopher, but he only shows that, at the end of the 20th century, the conditions under which the abovementioned reasoning was possible, can no longer be considered as binding. The conclusion is that human reason – knowing its history and learning about all controversies or aporias that the mind theory has generated – uses the fact that it knows too much, but not as a premise for its paralysis, as in postmodernist abuse of the phenomenon of *overdetermination* (the tropes of *undecidability* or *unreadability*, especially in deconstructionism of Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man), but as an instrument of its emphasis. Searle quotes another, even more extraordinary tale and we do not feel that he thinks the reasoning in this tradition should be considered irrational. It is a story related to the patron of the church of San Miniato in Florence, who was to be the first martyr in this city. In 250 he was executed under the reign of Emperor Decius. The Saint survived an attack of lions and was therefore beheaded: “After his decapitation, he got up, tucked his head under his arm and marched out of the arena, across the river, and out of town the town. He climbed up the hill on the south side of the Arno, still carrying his head, until he reached the top, where he sat down. On that site the church now stands.”<sup>30</sup> Those who believed this story began to build the basilica in his honour in 1070.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, p. 35.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, p. 36.

The story is wonderful, but Searle's comment is just as surprising – albeit not from a logical, purely formal point of view: “The point is not that we believe it is false, but that we don't even take it seriously as a possibility.”<sup>31</sup> The question of truthfulness of these miraculous events – as Searle suggests – is beyond our rationality, but – from a purely logical point of view – we cannot take it away from rationality just because our epistemic standards have changed. The fact *we know too much* makes the emphasis of reason take place at a higher level of epistemic complexity. Then, certain beliefs we had at earlier levels of the development of rationalism may not be made binding on us. However, this does not mean that we can consider them to be irrational or seriously non-compliant with rationalism, as new premises may emerge that will change their logical status. Therefore, we can purely logically accept the supposed rationality of certain theses, but at the given stage of rational argumentation they are irrelevant for the emphasis of our reason. This is reminiscent of the paradox of material implication that is true even when a premise is false. Searle seems to be saying that we may be indifferent to the truth of premises, but we should take care that conclusions are never false, as only this will disturb the progress of rationalism. Undoubtedly, according to Searle, the starting conditions – that is, the basis for rationalism – must be the assumption of realism, because only thanks to it the emphasis of reason is possible. Thus, even in Searle's mentality, who is, after all, a declared defender of the realist and the Enlightenment tradition of rationalism, defeasible reasoning and invalidating rationality have made its mark.

### I. 8. The non-monotonic logic of defeasible reasoning

Searle's analysis becomes clearer when we include the issue of non-monotonic logic in it, being the formalization of defeasible reasoning based on subreption. For the purposes of these considerations, let us assume that subreption, i.e. the *use of certain peculiar assumptions and reasoning without proper grounding*, would first consist in stealing rationality from Reason and making it independent by an emphasis of defeasible reasoning proper to rationality, the main act of which is the act of invalidating. This would be the most serious act of subreption that Western thought has ever performed. Above, I have tried to reconstruct the already historical acts of subreption which, as such – i.e. perhaps as philosophical misperceptions – became premises in the development of invalidating rationality. Non-monotonic logic extends the concept of correct thinking – so far modelled on the basis of classical logic (preferring deductive reasoning as normative for knowledge based on experience) – to subreptic reasoning, i.e. based on reductive reasoning (unreliable), taking into

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<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

account various hidden unspecified premises, preferences, expectations, etc. as premises in this type of defeasible reasoning. The novelty of non-monotonic logic is based on the fact that it recognizes the following reasoning as correct: if premises are correct, they can sometimes lead to false conclusions, and yet this reasoning is considered correct (acceptable), although we should regard them as subreption (misperception, apparent experience).

A caricatured example of the subreptic motive in reasoning is given by Jan Świdziński - a Polish contextualist and precursor of non-monotonic aesthetics<sup>32</sup>: "A medieval Chinese encyclopaedist divided animals as follows: a/ belonging to the emperor, b/ beautifully fragrant, c/ tame, d/ milk pigs, e/ mermaids, f/ fabulous animals, g/ wild dogs, h/ belonging to the above classification, i/ behaving like crazy, j/ countless, k/ painted with a thin camel-hair brush, l/ and the like, m/ these that break jugs, n/ those that look like flies from a distance."<sup>33</sup> This amusing enumeration is a model example of subreption. People, including Westerners, systematically ignore the principles of classical rationalism and logical division. The very development of formal logic in the 20th century provokes them to do this type of activity, since the metalogical principle of monotonicity - introduced by Alfred Tarski in 1930 - states that if a conclusion is the logical consequence of a set of premises, it is also the consequence of any wider set of premises, and thus an extension of a set of premises allows us to approve at least the conclusions that were derived from the original set.<sup>34</sup> Thus, whatever we add to our culture according to the open formula of liberalism, even the most absurd theses or prejudices, we have the right to expect that conclusions obtained at an earlier stage in the development of our rationality will remain binding for us. Meanwhile, the break with the principle of monotonicity (cumulativity) is especially visible today, when the power of the West is rocking and trembling at its very foundations due to the radicalization of liberal ideology, while its fundament - the Greco-Roman-Christian order - is cancelled in front of our eyes by current anti-essentialist constructivism in various spheres of our life, especially in moral matters. The coherence of Western civilization, the symbolic capital of which is still New York, is becoming very questionable, since the consequences of the original - especially religious - premises of our civilization may be invalidated after adopting other ones, including subreptic beliefs, which, however, was not provided for by Tarski's principle of monotonicity. Since the 1980s, logicians have been proposing to broaden the concept of rationalism by limiting or questioning this

<sup>32</sup> K. Piotrowski, *Świdziński i współczesni*, op. cit., pp. 343, 691-705.

<sup>33</sup> J. Świdziński, *Rola wyobraźni w świecie współczesnym* (1970), typescript, Świdziński Family Archives, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> K. Piotrowski, *Some Contexts...*, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

metalogical principle of monotonicity (cumulativity), because living contextual thinking requires it. We often take for experience what is only subreption, being then forced to make appropriate corrections. An explanation and at the same time a justification of any of our misunderstandings would be the statement that we simply all think non-monotonically.<sup>35</sup> How deeply does this new non-monotonic logic – inherent in programmable AI rather than in the human being longing for the authority of Reason and a coherent worldview – affect the mentality of Westerners?

## II. The Last Supper of the West?

Are we the cause of this weakness ourselves, because Western interventio- nism protects the global order (the so-called *free market*) and at the same time enslaves individual nations with liberal ideology and soulless proceduralism, suppressing their religion and timocracy<sup>36</sup>, which is sharply suggested by an American ally from Saudi Arabia – Abdunasser Gharem – in the work *Capital Dome* (2012)? This work shows a mock-up of the Capitol Dome in Washington D.C. as a crude trap which is held up by Thomas Crawford's 19th-century statue, because Westerners today worship this idol of the armed goddess of Freedom instead of true God. Therefore, the inner side of Gharem's dome-trap has Islamic motifs and its interior looks like a mosque. This *cut* – an amalgamation of Islamic geometry and neo-classical architectural styles – points to a threat to Arabic religiosity, seeking its security guarantee in the USA. Or perhaps we are dealing with another type of a threat? Abdunasser Gharem rightly points to the heterogeneous Islamic core in the Capital Dome, which today, as it were, fills this empty outer shell of the symbol of Western power from the inside. The amplification of *tmesis* in Western culture is at the same time the radicalization of the invalidating rationality analyzed here<sup>37</sup>, although completely devoid of religious justification present at the moment of its discovery by al-Ghazali. As I have tried to show, the invalidating rationality of Western civilization was shaped by the reception of occasionalism of this Sufi thinker and by the creative transformation of his subreption. Allah was replaced by capricious reckless people who amaze with their new subreptions which are to be enough for us instead of true miracles of God.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, pp. 48-50.

<sup>36</sup> K. Piotrowski, *The Veer Towers of the New Modernism: Proceduralism or Timocracy?*, "Art Inquiry" 2016, no. 18, pp. 67-86.

<sup>37</sup> K. Piotrowski, *Tmesis - Cutting Age. System mody: od bazy do para-bazy*, in: Pękala, Teresa (ed.) (2016), *Teatr, teatralizacja, performatywność*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2016, pp. 345-364.

What did the Abu Dhabi declaration of *moral powers*, represented by Pope Francis and Ahmed al-Tajeb, the Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar University in Cairo, actually refer to, since in 2019 they did not work out a religious, philosophical or ideological foundation for this decree of human – in fact purely formal, procedural – brotherhood? Is this declaration not suspended in a vacuum, having nothing to do with God's will, as its critics say? Is the arbitrary will of the Catholic modernist and the follower of Sufism, or some other subreption enough for such a manifestation of supra-religious brotherhood? After all, the so-called human rights on the UN agenda have long lost their support in natural law rooted in classical philosophy and Christian theology. Instead of connecting, human rights are more and more often seen as a liberal supremacy tool and thus repel people oriented towards different, mostly traditional or conservative value systems. Because, for example, what other principle could this submissive policy of the Vatican towards Chinese communists be based on, leaving them decisive influence on the formation of Catholicism in the Middle Kingdom? What rationality would be the basis for relations between the defensive Christian world or the liberal West, and the aggressive expansionism of political Islam or atheistic Chinese communists – extremely patient and effective, also in strengthening the position of Chinese art in the last four decades? How is this to be accomplished if these counterintuitive axiological systems can only mutually invalidate each other? A pragmatic consensus, discursive ethics and global proceduralism require the world to eliminate the radical aspects of these axiologies – rather to subtract (invalidate) them, and not to add new distinctive features which must provoke opposition within these camps – e.g. in terms of breaking globalization, which – by the way – seems unstoppable. For a long time, its epistemological context – despite the universalist aspirations of these positively minded fathers of the humankind – has been the conviction that there are incommensurable types of rationality with the now dominant invalidating rationality. It seems that it is better to modernize while caring for your own culture and religious faith, as Japan does. China is also following this path to some extent. This means that invalidating rationality will be subject to strict control and non-monotonic logic will only be respected where it is actually productive – for example in developing technology (artificial intelligence) and machine epistemology. The question is therefore dramatic and foreshadows a heated conflict between these countries. So, the future of the West looks terrifying. Its announcement may be the series of *Eternity vs. Evolution* (2013-2014) exhibitions where Xu Zhen presented the *European Thousand - Armed Classical Sculpture* (2014). He created an image of a multi-handed Buddha statue using many ancient – Greek or Roman – sculptures. This is the great wisdom of China, which has consciously used subreption tactics for several decades to strengthen itself and ultimately destroy the hegemony of white man's

civilization that humiliated them in the 19th and 20th centuries. Will the wish of a Chinese internet user come true that *this is perhaps their 'last supper'*?

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## OSTATNIA WIECZERZA ZACHODU? ESEJ O ROZUMIE, SUBREPCJI I RACJONALNOŚCI UNIEWAŻNIAJĄCEJ (streszczenie)

Co sprawia, że po załamaniu się modernizmu potęga naszego świata w XXI wieku wyraźnie słabnie? Dlaczego mnożą się kasandryczne proocstwa geopolityków, także pesymistyczne wizje w sztuce? Czy zbliża się nieublaganie *Ostatnia wieczerza Zachodu*, jak spodziewa się pewien chiński satyryk? Jaką rolę w tym procesie odgrywa subrepcja – szczególnie obecna w zachodniej filozofii, prawie, ekonomii, obyczajach i wreszcie w sztuce? *Subrepcja* – czyli *użycie pewnych osobliwych założeń i rozumowań bez należytego ugruntowania* – polegałaby najpierw na wykradzeniu rozumowi racjonalności i jej usamodzielnieniu jako *racjonalności unieważniającej*. Byłby to najpoważniejszy akt subrepcji, na jaki zdobyła się kiedykolwiek myśl Zachodu. Oswojona subrepcja jest odpowiedzialna za postępującą misperpcję, która powoduje paraliż decyzyjności naszej zachodniej cywilizacji i jest główną przyczyną jej obecnej słabości.

**Słowa kluczowe:** awangarda, geopolityka, islamski okazjonalizm, racjonalność unieważniająca, subrepcja, zmierzch Zachodu.

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