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AXIOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMIC INDIVIDUALISM IN THE LVOV-WARSAW SCHOOL IN THE CONTEXT OF ANTI-IRRATIONALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Abstract

This article presents the main epistemological and axiological assumptions of the Lvov-Warsaw School (LWS) and argues that these assumptions led to agnosticism and the conviction about the irrationality of religious beliefs, so common among the LWS members. It is shown that these assumptions were deeply rooted in the tradition of modern epistemic individualism and evidentialism. The final part of the paper discusses two contemporary modifications of the epistemology characteristic of Twardowski and his disciples. The first one, formulated by Jacek Jadacki, is the conception of directival rationality; the second has been proposed by Ryszard Kleszcz and can be labeled relative rationality. Both these conceptions compromise on the LWS firm position concerning the irrationality of religious beliefs and make it possible to regard such beliefs as rational.

Keywords: epistemic individualism, evidentialism, rationality of beliefs, Lvov-Warsaw School

The main claim of this article is that epistemic individualism, typical of the Lvov-Warsaw School (henceforth the LWS), combined with modern evidentialism, has significant moral (or, more broadly, axiological), metaphysical, and worldview consequences. One of the most important axiological implications of epistemic individualism is independent ethics and the ethics of dignity, while the worldview implications of epistemic individualism and evidentialism include agnosticism, epistemic elitism, and the claim that religious beliefs are irrational. I will not define these relations in detail; it will simply be assumed that there are certain relations between (1) a set of assumptions such as (a) epistemic individualism (i.e., the view that rejects authority and tradition), (b) evidentialism

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demanding sufficient justification for every belief, and (c) empiricism as a view on the nature of human cognitive faculties and the source of knowledge, on the one hand, and (2) their axiological implications, on the other.

Let us recall that Kazimierz Twardowski, the founder of the LWS, declared his deism, (or non-denominational Christian theism) only privately and never as a professional philosopher and university professor (Kleszcz 2013: 216). He was very reluctant to proclaim any worldview or metaphysical theses within the walls of the university, except for some neutral issues concerning the ontology of mind or a formal theory of relations and properties. One can recall here Stefan Swieżawski's case, which well illustrates Twardowski's reluctant attitude toward any public worldview declarations and membership in religious organizations, institutions, or traditions (Kleszcz 2013: 189). On the other hand, open atheism was proclaimed by Tadeusz Kotarbiński and Władysław Witwicki (Brożek 2019, Łukasiewicz 2016a: 113). Also, Marian Przełęcki (Kotarbiński's disciple) preached atheism and he even postulated the existence of a moral obligation to be an atheist and to publicly promote atheism (Łukasiewicz 2012).

Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz and Tadeusz Czeżowski approached the matter in a more liberal way (Łukasiewicz 2016b); however, they were by no means defenders or advocates of a religious worldview based on religious authority or tradition. Both Ajdukiewicz and Czeżowski emphasized a very personal and individual character of one's worldview choices; significantly, they also opted for a scientific worldview — that is, one that is developed according to the scientific method, in which the fundamental component is broadly understood logic (Łukasiewicz 2017: 80-82).[1] That scientific base of individually chosen and individually developed worldview was to be a guarantee of beliefs' rationality. Moreover, rationality understood in the spirit of logical anti-irrationalism had also a moral dimension.[2] By and large, the anthropology of

[1] Czeżowski writes: "A society whose members represent high logical culture becomes unanimous and united not by external force but by logic which saves from passions and disintegration" (1969: 190, my translation).

[2] The very notion of logical anti-irrationalism was coined by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz in 1934. But it is worth noting that it was Izydora Dąmbska who analyzed in more detail the concept of irrationalism and distinguished its four types: logical irrationalism, covering beliefs which are logically or empirically impossible, or "fundamentally irresolvable" (Dąmbska 1937, quotation after Brożek et al. 2020: 283); epistemological irrationalism: "on its grounds, one can recognize sentences [beliefs] based on intersubjectively uncontrollable and uncommunicated cognitive acts" (Brożek et al. 2020: 283); metaphysical irrationalism, claiming that reality is not conceptually graspable; and, finally, psychological irrationalism. Dąmbska characterizes psychological irrationalism as follows: "Someone who is inclined to believe in internally contradictory or fundamentally irresolvable sen-

the LWS was essentially modern and close to the main ideas of Enlightenment with its main thesis that humans are rational beings naturally endowed with the ability and tendency to independently pursue the truth, following their own reason (Brożek et al. 2020: 280-281).[3]

The very concept of truth in the LWS was understood as a correspondence between beliefs (propositions) and reality,[4] and truth was regarded as eternal or timeless (but it is noteworthy that Jan Łukasiewicz opposed this view; see Łukasiewicz 2011). Each person, by using her own abilities and cognitive faculties, can pursue and attain thus understood truth.[5] If she comes to her beliefs in a different way — that is, not through her cognitive abilities involving discursive (inferential) thinking, perception, introspective cognition, and memory — she acts against her nature and, as Marian Przełęcki puts it, she injures her human dignity and "intellectual honor" based on reason (Przełęcki 2002: 85). In particular, acquiring beliefs on the basis of the authority or testimony of other people, institutions, or traditions, including religious traditions, is contrary to human rational nature and dignity. To put it briefly, in the metaphilosophical, anthropological, and axiological domain, the LWS held the view that faith in the sense of *credo* or *vera religio* (but not *pistis*) is contrary to reason (Woleński 2008: 33-34).[6]

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tences, and refer to irrational methods of cognition in justification of his convictions, is an irrationalist in the psychological sense" (Dąmbska 1937, quotation after Brożek et al. 2020: 284). Thus, logical rationalism or anti-irrationalism of the LWS is the view that rejects logical, epistemological, metaphysical, and psychological irrationalism in Dąmbska's sense.

[3] An important role in determining the status of worldview beliefs was played by the metaphilosophical thesis embraced by Twardowski and all his students that philosophy is to be regarded as science and that only beliefs justified by scientific methods are rational. Hence, even those members of the LWS who were firm Catholics (e.g., the eminent logician Jan Łukasiewicz) separated their religious and metaphysical beliefs from philosophy and treated them only as a private declaration of faith and not as a rational philosophical position (Jadacki, Surma 2013: 122). The same could be said about another brilliant logican from the LWS, Stanisław Leśniewski (cf. Jadacki 2020: 283). Alfred Tarski, a "professed atheist," converted to Catholicism for pragmatic reasons related to his academic career, following the advice of Jan Łukasiewicz and Stanisław Leśniewski, who were his teachers in Warsaw (Burdman Feferman, Feferman 2008: 38-39).

[4] With two important exceptions: Edward Poznański and Aleksander Wundheiler (Woleński 1989: 12).

[5] Kazimierz Twardowski strongly defended the idea of alethic absolutism; for more on this topic, see Jadacki 2009: 190-191.

[6] However, it should also be noted that this rationalist paradigm of the LWS had a potential to evolve and to change, which can be seen in the conceptions of Jadacki and Kleszcz discussed in the final part of this paper. The views of these philosophers referring to the main metaphilosophical assumptions of the LWS allow, under certain conditions, to consider religious beliefs as rational.

The above remarks were meant to offer a brief introduction to the topic; in what follows, I will elaborate on certain concepts lying at the heart of epistemic and axiological individualism, as well as evidentialism, by referring to their historical background bearing heavily upon the position of the LWS. The final part of the paper will address the question whether the LWS stance regarding the epistemic status of religious beliefs is interesting today, or perhaps it requires some mitigation or revision.

1. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE LWS EPISTEMOLOGY AND AXIOLOGY

It is justified to say that the LWS owes much to Franz Brentano's philosophy, especially to his metaphilosophy, epistemology, and descriptive psychology. As observed by Władysław Tatarkiewicz, the originality of Brentano's views in the nineteenth century consisted in the fact that when almost everyone had long contemptuously abandoned the metaphilosophical and metaphysical ideas of medieval scholasticism, Brentano revived these ideas by developing and expressing them in a new language of descriptive psychology (suffice it to mention the concept of intentionality of the human mind; Tatarkiewicz 1978: 162). It must be emphasized, however, that no matter how deeply Brentano was immersed in the scholastic tradition, he was an heir to modern philosophy, including modern epistemology. Brentano completely rejected the key claim of medieval epistemology about the importance of authority, tradition, and the testimony of others in acquiring well-justified rational beliefs.[7] To illustrate this medieval epistemological position concerning the role of authority and another's testimony, let us quote Thomas Aquinas' *Commentary on Boethius' De trinitate*:

> it is needful that he [man] be able to stand with as much certainty on what another knows but of which he himself is ignorant, as upon the truths which he himself knows. Hence it is that in human society faith is necessary in order that one man give credence to the words of another, and this is the foundation of justice. (Thomas Aquinas 1987: 25 [q. 3, art. 1, ad 3])

[7] It is worth remembering that Brentano abandoned priesthood because he could not accept the dogma of the Pope's infallibility in matters of faith, which was announced in 1870. Also, one should remember Brentano's important thesis concerning the relationship between philosophy and science: *vera philosophiae methodus nulla alia nisi scientiae naturalis est* (Brentano 1968: 136). An interesting comment on Brentano's thesis is provided by Kleszcz (2013: 24).

The above quotation emphasizes the positive and even indispensable role of testimony and broadly understood faith in social life. Nowhere is it even slightly suggested that testimonial beliefs and faith might be incompatible with human nature or human intellectual dignity; our reliance on other people's testimony and authority are epistemically and morally praiseworthy. As is well known, this medieval epistemological paradigm was to be rejected by early modern philosophers, most famously by Descartes, and that rejection constituted a hallmark of the modern era.

Interestingly, the tension between the modern epistemic individualism and the older views on the role of authority and testimony can still be observed in the seventeenth-century writings of Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole from the Port Royal School:

> For there are two general paths that lead us to believe that something is true. The first is knowledge we have of it ourselves, from having recognized and examined the truth either by the senses or by reason. This can generally be called *reason*, because the senses themselves depend on a judgment by reason. . . . The other path is the authority of persons worthy of credence who assure us that a certain thing exists, although by ourselves we know nothing about it. This is called faith or belief, following the saying of St. Augustine: *Quod scimus, debemus rationi, quod credimus, autoritati* (What we know we owe to reason, what we believe, to authority). (Arnauld, Nicole 1996: 260)

In Descartes' writings, however, epistemic individualism is already a fully-fledged conception and leaves no room to authority. In *Discourse on the Method*, he writes:

> hence, I thought it virtually impossible that our judgments should be as unclouded and firm as they would have been if we had had the full use of our reason from the moment of our birth, and if we had always been guided by reason alone. (Descartes 1984: 117)

Moreover, beliefs held by others are worthless in our gaining of knowledge:

> and yet a majority vote is worthless as a proof of truths that are at all difficult to discover; for a single man is much more likely to hit upon them than a group of people. (Descartes 1984: 119)

The same approval of an individual search for knowledge is to be found in John Locke's seminal *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*:

> we should make greater progress in the discovery of rational and contemplative Knowledge, if we sought it in the Fountain, in the consideration of Things themselves; and made use rather of our own Thoughts, than other Men's to find it. For, I think, we may as rationally hope to see with other Men's Eyes, as to know by other Men's Understandings. So much as we our selves consider and comprehend of Truth and Reason, so much we possess of real and true Knowledge. The floating of other Men's Opinions in our brains makes us not one jot the more knowing, though they happen to be true. What in them was Science, is in us but Opiniatry, whilst we give up our Assent only to

> reverend Names, and do not, as they did, employ our own Reason to understand those Truths which gave them reputation. . . . In the Sciences, every one has so much, as he really knows and comprehends: What he believes only, and takes upon trust, are but shreds; which however well in the whole piece, make no considerable addition to his stock, who gathers them. (Locke 1956: 58)

Thus, both Descartes and Locke claim that only beliefs acquired by reason can be regarded as knowledge and can be accepted as well justified. Since such beliefs include only those which an individual epistemic agent can gain by her own epistemic efforts, that position is called *epistemic individualism*. It is clear that epistemic individualism is a view which was not quite shared by the medieval scholars and their early modern followers (i.e., the Port Royal School), who secured some room in the epistemic framework for authority-based beliefs.

However, such firm epistemic individualism is not the only approach to the nature of knowledge and belief's rationality that we can find among modern epistemologists. Apart from the Port Royal School, which maintained the medieval divide between reason and faith, we find some insights appreciating the role of testimony and faith in Hume's philosophy. In the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, he writes:

> there is no species of reasoning more common, more useful, and even necessary in human life, than that which is derived from the testimony of men, and the reports of eye-witnesses and spectators. (Hume 1999: 111)

The idea suggested by Hume is that if we strictly followed Descartes's and Locke's epistemic principles, we would have significantly *less* true beliefs than in a situation when we do not insist that all our beliefs be based on perception and reasoning alone. Needless to say, if one strictly adhered to Descartes's and Locke's approach, this would result in one's severe cognitive deprivation in everyday life.

It is worth mentioning that epistemic individualism had been strongly defended also by the ancient Greek philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. They all subscribed to the view that there is a distinction between two kinds of knowledge, *doxa* and *episteme*. The former concerns perishable things given in perception and includes also testimonial beliefs (opinions), whereas *episteme* concerns eternal forms and ideas; hence, it is necessary and self-evident. Knowledge about eternal forms of perishable things — defined by Plato as justified and true belief — can only be acquired by inference or a special kind of transsensorial perception called *noesis* (an intellectual intuition).

It must be emphasized that epistemic individualism has a normative dimension (Wolterstorff 1996: 218-226); that is to say, it involves the norms of

epistemic behavior. It addresses the question of how one *should* act in order to gain knowledge, and not merely the question of how one actually acquires beliefs. Traditionally understood epistemology is normative in character and does not allow for reducing the theory of cognition to descriptive psychology. The normative nature of epistemic individualism is related to the axiological assumption that knowledge is a positive value, a certain good for a person who has obligations and is *epistemically and morally* responsible for the quality of her beliefs.

It seems that there are further axiological intuitions behind the above assumption. They can be expressed as follows: humans live and work in society, and their behavior towards other people is grounded in their beliefs. Actions based on unjustified beliefs (e.g., superstitions and prejudice) can cause undeserved harm to others. They can also jeopardize the achievement of some important social goods, such as peace, justice, and prosperity. Finally, actions based on unjustified beliefs can be detrimental to the believer herself. Thus, it is our duty to care for the quality of our beliefs (*epistemic deontologism*).

Furthermore, the question whether our beliefs are/were sufficiently justified is important for a moral appraisal of our actions based on those beliefs. If the good resulting from our actions is a result of a coincidence and is not based on our consciously made decisions and well-founded beliefs, no credit can be given to us for doing it. Another assumption underlying normative epistemology concerns the value of truth. Truth is an undeniable good; therefore, knowledge is also good because it is a *true* and justified belief. If we do not seek to broaden our knowledge, we are guilty of negligence. The need to have proper justification for one's beliefs can also be understood as an expression of a moral intuition that the cognitive autonomy and dignity of an individual subject depend on the fact that she has proper justification for her beliefs, which she acquired by herself and is able to indicate that justification through reflection. This view is well known under the label of *epistemic internalism*, as opposed to epistemic externalism.

Another intuition may also come into play here. Beliefs acquired through perception, introspection, reasoning, or memory are more likely to be true (truth-conducive) than beliefs acquired otherwise, for example, through the testimony of other people. Therefore, we should regard only those beliefs as well-justified, or acceptable, to the justification of which we have privileged and guaranteed first-person access (required by the aforesaid internalism) — because in acquiring them we rely on our own perception, internal experience, or reasoning. Beliefs based on the authority of others do not meet this

requirement; they cannot be considered well-justified because of the risk to their veracity.[8]

At this point, one should mention Lockean *evidentialism*, which is a view closely related to epistemic individualism, internalism, and deontologism. To quote a famous statement by the nineteenth-century rigorous evidentialist, William K. Clifford, "Belief in anything on the basis of insufficient evidence is always bad, everywhere and for everyone" (Clifford 1947: 77). The second part of the evidentialist credo has it that each belief should be accepted only to the degree which is proportionate to the strength of the evidence available (the view expressed also by Ajdukiewicz; see Brożek et al. 2020: 267).

Having outlined the major tenets of modern individualist epistemology, which were influential for Brentano, Twardowski, and the LWS, it is good to mention Thomas Reid's philosophy, because the Scottish School was a notable exception in modern epistemology.[9] Reid states that it is fruitless to try to justify our beliefs that are based on the testimony of others by using our own reason alone. If we did so, our knowledge would be severely limited, almost negligible in its scope. Furthermore, Reid argues that our reliance on other people's testimony is justified *a priori*, because it follows from the "first principles" of human cognition.[10] Reid assumes that in our cognitive activity we are guided by two principles that are grounded in human nature itself: the principle of veracity and the principle of credulity. The former says that each of us has a natural tendency to speak the truth and use linguistic signs to express our real feelings and attitudes, while the latter states that people have a natural tendency to believe what others say (Reid 1997: 193). Hence, according to Reid, beliefs based on the testimony of others can be viewed as naturally reliable and cognitively basic (i.e., they may be treated as foundational beliefs). Since they are directly justified by the cognitive nature of humans (credulity principle), their justification cannot be reduced to inferences about the testifier's credibility (as in Hume).

In addition to the above-mentioned principles of truthfulness and trust that shape our cognition, Reid's position is also based on the assumption concerning the social dimension of human cognitive activities ("the social operations of mind") (Reid 1969: v, vi-vii). Our life and most of our actions

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[8] A more comprehensive analysis of epistemic individualism and normative character of epistemology has been offered by Elżbieta Łukasiewicz (2018, chapters IV and V).

[9] This does not mean that the Scottish School had no adherents and was an exotic phenomenon on the philosophical map of Europe; it was quite popular in England and France in the nineteenth century.

[10] Here lies an important difference between Reid's conception of testimony and Józef M. Bocheński's theory of epistemic authority.

(including all speech acts) have a social dimension; they are not individual and solitary activities. This social dimension of our cognitive activities and acts of communication constitutes our nature and determines the content of our beliefs. We are just who we are thanks to these social operations of the mind. This epistemological *collectivism* is a significant opposition to epistemological individualism. Therefore, not only can we consider beliefs based on the testimony of others as justified because we need them and for various reasons we cannot justify them ourselves, but it is also important that the acquisition of such beliefs is naturally grounded in our cognitive apparatus — just as the acquisition of perceptual beliefs is naturally grounded in the workings of our sensory organs.

Such epistemological premises allow Reid to define the status of true testimony-based beliefs differently than in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. According to Aquinas, let us recall, beliefs based on testimony were epistemically permitted as rational, but they were not knowledge but acts of faith. In Reid's philosophy, beliefs based solely on the testimony of others can be as fundamental as beliefs based on perception and, if true, they constitute *knowledge*. Importantly, such knowledge can be passed on through testimony to other people. Reid's supporters often argue that when we accept beliefs based on perception, we usually do not test whether our sense organs are functioning properly. And since we usually treat such "unproven" beliefs based on perception as well-founded (unless there are obvious grounds to doubt their credibility, such as poor light or vision deficits), so should we treat our beliefs based on the testimony provided by others. If there are no obvious signs of unreliability, our reliance on others' testimony is directly justified and irreducible to any inference (Reid 1997).[11]

Thus, according to Reid, true beliefs based solely on the testimony of others constitute knowledge, not merely acts of faith, and are justified and *rational* thanks to the act of testimony. Giving such status to testimonial beliefs is a very bold epistemic project, because the claims by various people are sometimes false or incompetent. However, this approach allows us to call *knowledge* (rather than faith) a lot of true beliefs acquired from others, which were not formed by our own inference or perception (Łukasiewicz 2010).[12]

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[11] This part of the paper owes much to Elżbieta Łukasiewicz's book (2018).

[12] It is worth adding that, in contemporary epistemology of testimony, Reid's position has numerous followers, starting with the groundbreaking publication by C. A. J. Coady (1992). Alvin Plantinga, one of the most outstanding contemporary analytical philosophers of religion, develops Reid's epistemology in an original way within the project of Reformed Epistemology (Baker 2007: 1-14). According to the assumptions of this project, not only testimonial beliefs but also some intersubjectively unverifiable beliefs can be considered

As far as I know, *nobody* in the LWS shared in full the Reidian position presented above, even the representatives of the Cracow Circle, such as Fr. Jan Salamucha (1997: 60-61).[13] Beliefs based on other people's testimony are treated as acts of faith at best, but they are by no means knowledge. According to another eminent representative of the Cracow Circle, Fr. Józef M. Bocheński, epistemic authority should be ascribed to someone only if *I am rationally convinced* that she knows better and tells the truth (Bocheński 1995: 113). Bocheński himself defined rationalism in an internalist and evidentialist way: "To know what you are talking about, that is, to be able to say what you mean and, secondly, when you say something, to be able to justify it" (Bocheński 1995: 45).[14]

2. EPISTEMOLOGY AND AXIOLOGY IN THE LWS

Returning now to the main branch of the LWS, by which I mean Kazimierz Twardowski and his closest disciples (to whom undoubtedly belonged Tadeusz Czeżowski and Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz), one should say that their views were deeply rooted in the tradition of modern rationalism combining epistemic and axiological individualism, internalism, deontologism, evidentialism, and empiricism. Surely, Czeżowski was an epistemic individualist. He was also an *axiological individualist* in the sense that he believed, as Socrates once did, that each individual can learn moral truths individually, that she can express these truths in an intersubjectively communicable language (define moral virtues or features) and that they are intersubjectively verifiable by comparison with the assessments or evaluations done by other humans living at different times and in different places. The moral judgments expressed in singular observational sentences are then generalized and lead to moral principles or moral laws, such as, for example, that to inflict suffering on innocent creatures for fun is morally wrong. The ethics built in this way would be empirical

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rational. Undoubtedly, Reformed Epistemology is an important alternative to the anti-irrationalism of the LWS and to modern and contemporary evidentialism in general.

[13] It should be noted that the Cracow Circle (Józef M. Bocheński, Jan Salamucha, Bolesław Sobociński, Jan Drewnowski) postulated the use of the scientific method in Catholic theology and in the Thomistic philosophy. These postulates referred to the idea of modern evidentialism, but at the same time the Cracow Circle did not recognize the modern postulate to reject the truths of revelation or truths based on religious authority. The members of the Circle sharply distinguished faith and reason, but they also defended the scholastic view that there is no conflict between reason and revelation (Pouivet 2011).

[14] See the reconstruction of Bocheński's concept of authority in (Brożek 2020: 181-197).

and scientific in character (Czeżowski 1949). The method of scientific ethics consists in deriving it from the data of experience — that is, moral and, more generally, axiological experience.

Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz presents a similar concept of ethics and axiology: axiological experience is analogous to sensory perception (Ajdukiewicz 1965: 346-347). Value judgments based on moral feelings, as he calls them, are intersubjectively verifiable and communicable. It is worth quoting Ajdukiewicz's words *in extenso*:

> The object of the feeling that I experience when looking at a certain landscape with delight is that landscape, because in this feeling its beauty is perceptibly given to me. The object of my feeling of moral repugnance towards someone's act is this very act, when in this feeling the act's meanness becomes perceptibly apparent to me. I can perceive the meanness present in this feeling as directly as I can perceive redness in the perception of a poppy flower. (Ajdukiewicz 1965: 346-347; my translation)

What is significant, however, is the fact that while the members of the LWS and their followers attribute cognitive value to axiological experience, which is to be the foundation of scientific ethics and, more broadly, axiology, they deny this cognitive status to religious experience. In other words, it is epistemically rational to believe that, for example, inflicting suffering on innocent creatures for fun is morally wrong, and it is something epistemically forbidden, irrational, and even immoral, as Przełęcki or Kotarbiński claimed, to believe that God exists, or to believe that He cares for every creature within His providence (Kotarbiński called such statements "phantasms").[15]

Thus, from the point of view of the epistemology and axiology of the LWS, religious beliefs and religious position are *epistemically* immoral and directed against human nature. Such a conclusion results from the assumptions underlying the modern epistemological project, which were almost entirely taken over by the LWS. The only epistemically acceptable option is agnosticism or atheism — as long as one regards all available evidence and theistic arguments as invalid or for various reasons defective, and, at the same time,

[15] It is worth noting that Przełęcki does not draw a distinction between agnosticism and atheism, since in both cases one does not accept the view that God exists. Thus, a believer is morally blameworthy for embracing irrational beliefs in the same way that others who embrace irrational beliefs are culpable; and yet Przełęcki does not claim that the believer deserves to be morally condemned. There are two reasons for this reservation. The first depends on the determinism of the human will; the second invokes the ethics of charity (provided we accept this ethics). Charitably, we should feel compassion rather than condemnation for people who are wrong — that is, persons who believe in God (Łukasiewicz 2012).

rejects rationality of testimonial beliefs based on authority and the epistemic importance of religious experience.[16]

3. SOME REVISIONS OF THE LWS EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROJECT

There have been attempts in the LWS to mitigate this strong and uncompromising conclusion, to mention only the postulated distinction between logical and pragmatic rationality (to be found in Klemens Szaniawski's or Marian Przełęcki's writings), or some non-binary divisions introduced to replace the binary division into rational and irrational beliefs (e.g., Twardowski's division of beliefs into rational (scientific), non-rational, and irrational; cf. Kleszcz 2013: 207), or modalized rationality of beliefs (beliefs might be considered strongly rational or weakly rational).[17] In my opinion, however, these are rather minor corrections to this essentially uncompromising position regarding the epistemic status of religious beliefs and, in fact, not only religious ones. What is more, there is no other way out: if one adopts the position of epistemic individualism, evidentialism, Enlightenment anthropology, faith in human reason, and if one limits reliable cognitive faculties to perception, inference, and axiological experience, then there is no other possibility but to consider religious beliefs as incompatible with logical rationalism.[18]

This *epistemically* anti-religious attitude does not appear to have been connected with any anti-religious prejudices, resentments, or disappointments (see footnote 15), but it was rather a natural and expected consequence of the above-discussed general premises adopted by modern epistemology. Additionally, this anti-religious attitude may have resulted from some fear of large-scale social madness and interpersonal hatred, entirely understandable in the war-torn decades of the twentieth century, as illustrated by Ajdukiewicz's statement:

> However, the voice of the rationalist is a sound social reaction, it is an act of self-defence by society against the dangers of being dominated by uncontrollable forces

[16] This is a position defended, for example, by Woleński, who regards all theistic arguments as logically invalid (Woleński 2004: 158; 2014: 154-158).

[17] According to Woleński, religious beliefs are not even weakly rational. He distinguishes (strong) rationality applied to logic and weak rationality present in science and philosophy (Woleński 1992: 92).

[18] Of course, it should be remembered that the LWS members did not reject testimonial beliefs as cognitively worthless. They acknowledged their positive role in acquiring knowledge, pointing to the social nature of belief-formation processes, but they always denied them the very status of knowledge.

> among which may be both a saint proclaiming a revelation as well as a madman affirming the products of his sick imagination and finally a fraud who wants to convert others to his views for the sake of his egoistic and unworthy purposes. It is better to rely on the safe but modest nourishment of reason than, in fear of missing the voice of 'Truth,' to let oneself be fed with all sorts of uncontrollable nourishment which may more often be poisonous than healthy and beneficial. (Ajdukiewicz 1973: 49)[19]

However, in the context of the above-outlined fear, there may arise another fear concerned with discrimination and stigmatization of religious people as inferior, mentally or morally deficient, lacking logical culture and sufficient scientific knowledge. This fear is well-justified especially in the context of anti-religious fanaticism all too common in natural sciences, as exemplified today by the so-called "new atheists," such as Daniel Dennett or Richard Dawkins, who do not hesitate to express thorough contempt for religion and religious beliefs as irrational and dangerous for humans and their prosperity. Are Dennett and Dawkins anti-irrationalists in Ajdukiewicz's understanding of this term? In my view, they are not, as they draw atheistic and anti-theistic conclusions without *sufficient* evidence supporting them.

Still, it should be emphasized that, firstly, anti-irrationalism of the LWS as a metaphilosophical and epistemological position does not have to lead to conclusions such as atheism, anti-theism, or hostile atheism (hostile to religion and believers). Certainly, Ajdukiewicz himself did not draw such conclusions, and he did not have a hostile attitude towards religion. Secondly, rationality of beliefs (in the sense of Ajdukiewicz's logical rationalism) is not a criterion for their truth any more than irrationality of beliefs is a criterion for their falsehood. A belief may be rational but false, as well as it may be irrational and true. Thirdly, linguistic expressions such as *rational*, *rationality*, or *logical anti-irrationalism* are normative and have a *positive* epistemic status. Not

[19] It is a very intriguing manifesto of logical rationalism, which taken in itself deserves a careful analysis. But it is also worth keeping in mind the historical circumstances of this text. It was the time just after the second world war and the onset of the communist dictatorship in Poland. Ajdukiewicz's philosophy was strongly attacked by Polish Marxists (Schaff 1952). This historical context can explain his "minimalistic" worldview. This minimalism can also be regarded as a kind of rationalistic exclusivism since it is ready, after all, to miss a voice of "a saint proclaiming a revelation." The above manifesto of logical rationalism can also be conceived of as a defense of freedom to seek truth as the most noble aim of human life. But we should also remember that Ajdukiewicz had a strong sympathy to logical positivism, and this sympathy had begun long before some extreme social and political movements gained their dominant position in Poland and parts of Europe. However, despite this sympathy to positivism, Ajdukiewicz defended the autonomy of philosophy and he understood the important role philosophy can play in everyday life — namely, the role of providing a theoretical basis for answering the question of how to live (Łukasiewicz 2016b).

only do they describe beliefs, but they also evaluate them (positively). In contrast, expressions like *irrational*, *non-rational*, *contrary to logical anti-irrationalism* have a negative epistemic status. Such expressions describe beliefs and, at the same time, they negatively evaluate those beliefs (and, indirectly, the believers who hold such beliefs). Therefore, as said earlier, if religious beliefs are viewed as irrational in the sense of the LWS's anti-irrationalism, they have a negative epistemic status and must be considered epistemically worse. Thus, from the anti-irrationalism of the LWS there follows *epistemic elitism*, or *epistemic exclusivism*. Epistemic elitism results from the simple fact that rational beliefs have a higher epistemic status (they are epistemically better) than religious (irrational) beliefs. However, one need to note that the epistemic elitism (exclusivism) of the LWS was still much less restrictive and more open than the epistemic elitism of the Vienna Circle.[20]

It is worth noting that some contemporary continuators of the LWS tradition propose slightly more liberal criteria of anti-irrationalism, and they suggest a more inclusive view of rationality than the logical rationalism of the LWS. In particular, I would like to mention the proposals formulated, independently, by Jacek Jadacki and Ryszard Kleszcz, who are open to regard religious beliefs as rational (provided they meet certain criteria). In what follows, I will briefly characterize these two positions.

Jadacki's conception of the rationality of religious beliefs is based on his more general view of rationality. According to Jadacki, any rational belief should meet a set of specific "postulates," such as "harmony," "consequence," "foundation," and others. The harmony postulate states that a given belief must be consistent with the believer's other beliefs. The postulate of consequence states that there is a logical and psychological relation between one's

[20] The LWS was often compared with the Vienna Circle; by some it was even treated as a branch of logical positivism (Kołakowski 1966). One of the differences between the two great philosophical schools of the twentieth century was the attitude to metaphysics and ethics. The logical empiricists from the Vienna Circle were much more anti-metaphysical than the LWS members. In the Vienna Circle, *all* beliefs which were not subject to empirical verification, including of course religious beliefs, were considered cognitively worthless and senseless. In the LWS, only *some* beliefs, including religious beliefs, were regarded as cognitively worthless, though of course not meaningless, as long as they have clear semantic and syntactic linguistic expression. The exception was, of course, the Cracow Circle, but it existed for a very short time and did not set the philosophical tone for the entire School. The epistemic elitism of the LWS allowed for the construction of systems of independent ethics. But, on the other hand, one could wonder whether independent ethics is possible, and whether it is not necessarily saturated with the content derived from tradition, culture, and religion. Thus, such an independent ethics would be a myth or fiction, or some sort of "phantasm," as Kotarbiński used to say about religion (Łukasiewicz 2016a).

beliefs: since I hold belief A with certain strength, then I should hold belief B with the strength proportionate to the strength of A. The postulate of foundation says that one can accept a given belief as true only if it is based on another belief (or beliefs) regarded as true. Importantly, in the case of religious beliefs, such foundation may be provided by the norm stating that there exists an obligation, or duty, to issue judgment for all evil existing in the world. The belief that God exists (God who can judge all people and who has the power to enforce His judgment) would be founded on the moral norm stating that there is a duty to compensate for evil, suffering, and injustice existing in this world (Jadacki 2003: 200-202). Hence, beliefs founded on norms are called "directival beliefs" (*wiara dyrektywalna*; Jadacki 2003: 198).

The following statement by Jadacki, which refers to testimony-based beliefs and might appear *prima facie* sympathetic to Reid's views, should be taken with care and interpreted rather in the context of the above-mentioned postulates: "How is it that [believers] believe — how do we believe that God exists? They believe because they trust the testimony of those who 'saw' Him" (Jadacki 2010: 265). As I understand Jadacki's position, if a religious belief meets the aforementioned postulates of rationality (and some others which are not discussed here), then such a belief can be considered a *rational* religious belief based on testimony; but testimony alone is not sufficient evidence for the rationality of beliefs and cannot be regarded as their justification. Testimony may only be treated as a *source* of beliefs. Significantly, Jadacki refers directly to Locke's evidentialism and internalism (2003: 193-194).[21]

According to Kleszcz, rationality of religious beliefs (and other beliefs as well) is *relative* to a particular domain of discourse — to the domain of discourse of a given religion — and it can be gradable within a particular domain. From this perspective, religious beliefs can be regarded as rational also when they do not meet the criteria of rationality required in other types of discourse, in particular in science (Kleszcz 2021: 87). However, religious beliefs still have to meet two criteria to be considered rational: they have to be logically consistent and they must be coherent with contemporary science (Kleszcz 2020: 214-215).[22]

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[21] It is worth noting that in his *Essay* Locke does admit that we sometimes need to rely on the testimony of others and can be justified in it; but that testimony must be sufficiently credible, and we should rely on the argument itself, not on the authority of the testifier. Therefore, someone else's testimony may generate a *rational* and "probable" belief, but that belief, even if true, will not constitute knowledge (see Łukasiewicz E. 2018: 376).

[22] Kleszcz's views on the epistemic rationality of beliefs are discussed in more detail in (Łukasiewicz 2020).

In conclusion, one should say that the overall view on the immense value of rationality, which was held by all members of the LWS, has remained unchanged in the works of the followers and continuators of this School. However, the scope of the term "rationality" has been modified by some philosophers, among others by Jadacki in his conception of directival rationality, and by Kleszcz in his conception of relative rationality. As a result, in that more inclusive rationality framework it is possible to find some room for religious beliefs; they do not have to be discarded as inherently irrational. On the other hand, other continuators of the LWS, like Przełęcki and Woleński, are faithful to the view that does not allow to regard religious beliefs as rational in the epistemic sense. But irrespective of the different views on the rationality/irrationality of religious beliefs, what is still widely accepted in the tradition of the School is the view that axiological (including moral) beliefs are based on some special kind of individual intersubjectively verifiable axiological experience.

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