NEO-IDEOLOGIES

BY **SLAWOMIR MAZUREK**

The author of the paper makes an attempt to describe so-called neo-ideologies, i.e., structures of ideas most influential in the contemporary world that meet the definition of ideology accepted by the author, namely – one provided by Alain Becançon, with a minor addition. In the course of the analysis the author confronts three main neo-ideologies (neoliberalism, genderism and Catholic conservatism) with each other and with the totalitarian and strictly utopian ideologies of the 20th century, discovering both worrisome affinities and important differences. The main difference is that neo-ideologies, as concerned with different areas of reality, can coexist in the political and to some extent even in the theoretical sphere, while totalitarian utopianisms, at least in the long term, have proved to exclude each other. The author emphasizes that, no matter how often they appeal to the notions of liberty, individuality and human dignity, neo-ideologies are in fact an important factor eroding the idea of human rights in our world and, in consequence, undermining the foundations of liberal society.

Key words: ideology, neoideology, utopianism, human rights, conservatism, neoliberalism, genderism.

The twilight of utopian ideologies was proclaimed at least three times over the course of the twentieth century. The collapse of utopianism and the end of the century of ideology was first formulated and insightfully analyzed by Russian thinkers, who intersected a religious perspective with generally liberal political philosophy – Pavel Novgorodtsev (1866-1924), Semyon Frank (1877-1950), Sergei Hessen (1887-1950), Georges Florovsky (1893-1979).[1] In the middle of the century, this question was examined by a select group of Western thinkers, including Raymond Aron (1905-1983),[2]

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[1]   Pavel Novgorodtsev, *Ob obshchestvennom ideale*, (Moscow: Pressa, 1991), chapter: *Krushenie utopii zemnogo raia*; Semyon Lyudvigovich Frank, *Kruschenie kumirov*, (Paris: YMCA Press, 1924); S. Hessen, 'Krushenie utopizma', *Sovremennye Zapiski*, 19 (1924); Georges Florovskii, *Metafizicheskie predposylki utopizma*, in Georges Florovskii, *Iz proshlogo russkoi mysli*, (Moscow: Agraf, 1998), 270.

[2]   Raymond Aron, *Opium of the Intellectuals,* trans. Terence Kilmartin, (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1962), 305-324.

who distanced themselves from the leftist conformism prevalent among the European intellectual elite of the time. In the final years of the century, following the collapse of communism and the Soviet empire, confidence in the ultimate discreditation of utopian ideologies became an essential ingredient of political correctness and penetrated the popular consciousness.

At various times, the thesis regarding the end of ideology took on distinct forms. The concept itself was a historiosophical diagnosis, which in the process of dissemination underwent significant transformation. Russian thinkers had no doubt that utopianism, which in their conviction was a uniquely destructive, political, moral and religious *summum malum*, was disavowed by history and lost its former appeal. They highlighted, however, that on the one hand the danger of recidivism is ever present, and on the other, the end of one ideology brings with it new, previously unknown risks. Raymond Aron in the final chapter of *Opium of the Intellectuals* entitled 'The end of the ideological age?' examines that, something not uniformly experienced by the Russians, for as an empirical fact it was indisputable, therefore punctuating it with a question mark. He does not affirm the end of the age of ideology, but rather acknowledges its possibility and entreats that the opportunity not be wasted. After 1989, the collapse of ideology and the death of utopia achieved status as a fact and were treated as self-evident, not requiring further commentary or hiding a nuance that would force a change in stance. No attention was paid to the symbolic significance of the popularization of the slogan about the end of history simultaneously with the proclamation of the demise of utopianism. The discreditation of utopianism, a concept that in the subject literature is characterized by a belief in the eminent end of history, was quickly and unwittingly supplanted by the abrupt, though short-lived, return of historiosophical finalism, in a simplified and therefore extremely contagious form. The revitalization of one of the most important elements of this ideational construction, widely regarded as especially dangerous, was often subdued in theory and compromised in practice, causing no reflection or worsening of mood. Even if there was dissent from the general attitude, skeptics were few and feeble in making their presence known in ongoing debates.

In this article, I will try to, at least in part, explain the reasons behind this puzzling indestructibility of ideology and utopianism. I will attempt to capture the characteristics of the most influential neo-ideologies of the Western world – among which I include *neoliberalism*, *genderism,* and *Catholic conservatism* in the form expressed by Karol Wojtyla. In summation, I will say a few words about the fundamental elements beyond the declared aims and goals of these long-lasting neo-ideologies.

Let us begin with the simplest step, namely establishing what is meant by ideology and utopianism, as both terms are used in the most varied of contexts and often their use has led to misunderstanding. For this reason, we must commence by introducing a distinction between utopianism and utopia, and subsequently explain how we understand the relationship between utopianism and ideology.

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The term *utopianism* in this case is used in the sense in which it is generally present in works on the history of ideas, with a very similar definition proposed by the aforementioned Russian critics of utopianism, particularly by Hessen and Frank. Utopianism is the belief that through the correct reorganization of temporal reality it is possible to eliminate evil. In other words it is faith in salvation achieved through the restructuring of reality, especially social reality, without any involvement of transcendence. In this context, transcendence includes not just the God of traditional religions, often treated by utopianists as a *persona non grata*, but all 'non-material' factors eluding control and organization, including individual human freedom, which paradigmatically treats utopianism as fiction, or at best, a large nonexistent, devoid of real influence on the function of structure. Utopianism therefore assumes faith in a perfect system in which evil will be vanquished once and for all, a feat accomplished above and beyond the individual, as the utopianist believes that evil is always conceived in inter-individual or super-individual dimension. Moreover, in both dimensions, evil is rooted in pathological interpersonal relations and historical institutions, which from the utopianists' perspective guarantees pathological relations. Utopianism as understood in this way should not be confused with utopia as a comprehensive plan for organizing our collective community based on new rules, refined in detail and, as Karl Mannheim noted, presenting an alternative to the existing reality by proposing new solutions which cannot be 'contained' and the realization of which is dependent on fundamental change.[3] It is clear that not every utopia is an example of utopianism according to this definition, for example the proposition put forth by More who plainly stated that even in a well-organized society, criminals will continue to exist.[4] And vice versa, not every utopianism takes the form of utopia as we have defined it – as an example, in the past many Marxists believed that the abolition of private property would eliminate all forms of evil, however, they consequentially avoided contemplating specific organizational solutions that appeared after the victory of communism. As a project of imminent salvation, utopianism maintains an alternatively radical character, which is not a rule relating to utopia, though in the past, utopian projects such as the socialism of Fourier were recipes for imminent salvation.

Relations between so-understood utopianism and ideology can be described in a variety of ways, depending on how we choose to understand ideology. If, in the wake of Mannheim, ideology is described as a collection of shared beliefs legitimizing the existing order – mythology perpetuating power and the *status quo* – utopianism, which was just described as a radical alternative, will be perceived as the polar opposite of ideology, as we have seen in history a number of prime examples affirming that the two cannot

[3]   Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Writh and Edward Shils, (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1998), 176.
[4]   Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Paul Turner, (London: Penguin Books, 1965), 104-105.

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reach a state of symbiosis.[5] Radically different conclusions can be reached if instead of this functioning of ideology, we adopt and expand upon the structural concept of Alain Besançon. As late as the 1980s, as Besançon considered the status of Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union, he noticed a fascinating analogy between ideology and gnosis.[6] He described ideology as a comprehensive vision of the world, pretending to be scientific and rational, yet as it is empirically unverifiable, it differs from science and forms a closed category that allows for the reinterpretation of every fact in such a way so as to confirm the tenants of the ideology. The ideological basis of the world was a stark dualism of good and evil. Ideology, he argued, sees evil as a power that reigns over the world, which at the same time reveals the hidden first reason that once uncovered will allow for a guaranteed victory of good. In the context of ideology, pessimism coexists with the most extreme optimism and Prometheanism reveals itself to be the reverse of Manichaeism. Thanks to this construction, it gains a semblance of esoteric knowledge of salvation, and its adoption becomes for the adopter an intoxicating sensation, giving him a firm conviction in his cognitive and moral superiority, with which comes the sense of belonging to a select group.

Besançon's concept of ideology seems to be a useful too, perfectly congruent with numerous ideological constructs, including those of great historical importance (Leninism, Nazism, Maoism) those less known (Russian Eurasianism), and even sometimes those of forgotten political extravagance (the Neopaganism of Jan Stachniuk,[7] 1905-1963). However, this model of ideology also has a shortcoming that needs to be removed if we want to, without fear of making a mistake, use it in our analysis. Besançon places emphasis on the pseudo-rational, supposedly scientific, while simultaneously 'interdisciplinary' and 'synthesizing' nature of ideology. Ideology 'argues' and pretends to be the *summa* of human knowledge, incorporating, reinterpreting, and correlating the achievements of the most diverse branches of science.[8] I believe that this is a premature generalization, obscuring the image and in a self-evident manner something contrary to the commonly available empirical materials. Ideology undoubtedly has a parasitic character, it is not born *ex nihilo*, through the strength of its own imperious power of self-creation, but it is built upon certain areas whose achievements it captures and partially exploits for the construction of structures of an ideological order, into which it is also interjected. However, even when it uses very diverse building materials – since nothing impedes derivation

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[5] Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 173-177.

[6] Alain Besançon, *Solzhenitsyn v Garvarde. Ideologicheskaia ubezhdennost' do i posle prikhoda k vlasti*, in Alain Besançon, *Russkoie proshloie i sovetskoe nastoiashcheie*, trans. A. Babich, (London: Overseas Publication Interchange, 1984).

[7] On Stachniuk's ideology see Jan Skoczyński: *Historiozoficzna gnoza Jana Stachniuka*, in Jan Skoczyński, ed., *Gnoza polityczna*, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1998).

[8] Besançon, *Solzhenitsyn v Garvarde. Ideologicheskaia ubezhdennost' do i posle prikhoda k vlasti*, 237-238.

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from many sources – one source is clearly privileged. In accordance with this notion, Marxist communism was derived from philosophy, Nazism from biology, and Eurasianism from geography and ethnography, along with a collection of auxiliary sciences. There is nothing simpler than to point to ideologies exploiting religion in the modern world. Ideology can feed on a variety of areas of culture, and its freedom in choice of material, which can be both varied in quality and relatively uniform, remains unlimited. In essence these are simple observations – for a long time we were all more or less clearly aware of them, while every journalist writing in recent years on the ideologization of religion involuntarily has made editions to the concept detailed by Besançon. The resulting conclusions are less clear. If ideology feeds itself on culture in the manner described, then along with the development of culture, diversification of its fields, the appearance of new increasingly subtle manifestations of human creativities, the likelihood of the emergence of new ideologies increases rather than decreases. Moreover, there already exists a risk of ideologies exploiting new, until now not ideologized spheres of culture and fields of knowledge. Since structural similarity is always harder to grasp than the material, it may take a long time before the nature of this construct is recognized by anyone other than uniquely insightful individuals.

Having accepted such a concept of ideology, it is hard to not consider utopianism to be a creation of an uncanny similarity to ideology. Both are structures that easily agree with each other, as ideology gives rise to utopianism and with easy can contain it within its framework. Utopianism, however, is hard to imagine without an ideological encasing. The empirical boundary between them is often blurred, while in an ideal model they are closely linked. Paradigmatic ideology has a utopian character and paradigmatic utopianism is underpinned by ideology. Therefore, as the reader has surely noticed, I have made no clear distinction in the introduction between the end of the century of utopianism and the end of the age of ideology, but in fact I was ready to use these terms interchangeably. From this moment, we will discuss – in part for clearly practical reason, to avoid cumbersome formulas – primarily ideology, however, this does not mean we will lose sight of its relationship with utopianism and utopianism itself. Knowing that ideology is at least potentially utopian will constantly accompany this discussion.

We can now return to the question about the end of the century of ideology, namely, as we've already described it, a question about the reasons behind its surprising lifespan. These reasons are numerous and quite diverse, making them impossible to describe in a single language. Some of them are linked to the great transformations occurring at the highest levels of consciousness that would appropriately be discussed in the category of 'phenomenology of spirit', while others have a historical character, making them easier to describe in less abstract terms. I do not believe that any of these levels should be ignored; their connections may seem syncretic, but there is no contradiction between them.

The collapse of ideology – due to its utopian potential – should be viewed as the last phase of the withering away of eschatology. Following the collapse of religious

eschatology, which is difficult to distinguish from its secularization since these are mutually conditional phenomena (the agony of religion allowed for the secularization of eschatology and vice versa), secularized eschatology too experienced disintegration, having first for a time filled the void left behind by religious eschatology.[9] Nietzsche's *death of God* is, depending on interpretation, a different description or stage of this process. Its consequential successor, which constitutes the key to understanding the phenomenon we are studying, is the rise of tension between reality and the sphere of values, empiricism and ideals. The full realization of values in empiricism is impossible, and any attempt at their realization reveals itself to be impermanent and can be undone at any time by empirical necessity (which, as Max Scheler rightly noted, is the essence of the universally present tragedy in our world). Eschatology in any form, both religious and secularized, relieves the tension between reality and the sphere of values, acting as a shock absorber between them. Even if factuality in the highest degree contradicted values, we know that after crossing the eschatological border, it would stop resisting them, and would be completely transformed by them. The loss of the eschatological perspective causes tension between the spheres of the ideal and the real, one that is difficult to bear, causing the momentary focus to center on finding a way to alleviate this tension. One of the options is the nihilistic rejection of values all together, however, there are questions about whether this is feasible. A different solution involves trimming the ideal so that it fits with the real, and the real so it fits with the ideal. In this way, we reduce both the sphere of values and the image of reality, causing the rift between them to disappear and allowing for the announcement of the end of history. The third solution is the reconstruction of eschatology, which initially may be surreptitious but over time will be emboldened and more evident. The difference between the second and the third way, which, it is worth noting, is smaller than we would be inclined to believe, and involves the inability to remove the final dissonance between the real and the ideal. It is impossible to rest on the simple claim that the end of history has occurred; especially in a period of transition, when everything is in motion, it is unacceptable in such a rudimentary form without footnotes pre-empting eventual claims. It turns out, therefore, that a thesis on the end of history, a somewhat unquestionable truth, must be *correctly understood,* that the end has not yet occurred but that it is *occurring*, that the end is *unfinished*. Although liberal democracy has *won*, it has not yet *prevailed* everywhere, though this is only a question of time. The vision of a completed end of time, relieving us from the resulting collapse of eschatological tension between reality and values, becomes subject to temporalization and allows for the adjournment of fulfillment, which is the essence of all eschatology.

Trying to historically explain the relative vitality of ideology and the prevalence of its typical structures in the period of its collapse, it is worthwhile to begin from the commonsense observation that nothing is lost without a trace and that vast rubble

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9   Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

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remains after ruined edifices, which is impossible to immediately clear up. The reign of the ideological structures lasted long enough and reached deep enough, where it would be befitting to consider the likelihood that we can, unconsciously due to acquired reflexes, against our will, utilize them, therein organizing our imagination accordingly. There are other reasons for their durability, unrelated to the existence of inertia. In the era of great change – no matter whether the change is of a political and economic system within the borders of one country or a change of the international system – when the existing order loses its contours and the new order begins to form though it is not yet known what shape it will take, ideology, understood in this case as a collection of notions constituting an elite of insiders, therefore allowing a certain group to believe in its mission and in this way present it to the outside world, becomes an invaluable aid in the fight for position. For the members of the group it fulfills a mobilizing role, and to the outside – a legitimizing one. Ideology as a structure very aptly fulfills the role of an ideological function. Another factor favoring the rebirth of ideology is the widely understood unequal development, not solely unequal development in the economic sphere but also disproportions or delays in culture, periphery in every form, which in the modern world is a common occurrence (not only has the whole non-Western world for ages been the periphery of the West, but even the West, after the vindication of Eastern Europe, has its own 'internal' periphery). For two reasons at least, delay creates favorable conditions for ideologization. Peripheries' attempts to modernize inevitably lead to a traditionalist response (it does not always have to prevail but it always appears) which often adopt an ideological form: there is nothing simpler than identifying the *existing* with the natural order of things, while considering the *new* to be a source of evil that should be eradicated, in this way recreating the outline of a dualist-utopian ideological structure. To complete the picture, it does not suffice to say that a modernist vision of reality is often a polar negative of the traditionalist vision and that the difference lies only in a radically opposite distribution of ratings. In the peripheral sphere yet another factor manifests itself in a way favorable to ideologization, the effects of which are reflected both in the modernist and traditionalist models of the world, as well as beyond them. Peripheries are fed by borrowings. Cultural artifacts are transplanted there from the outside in premade forms (this applies to – as Andrzej Walicki[10] convincingly proves in his early work – antimodernist traditionalism, which is by no means an original achievement of the periphery). Such efforts are subject to, particularly in relation to ideas, a simplification or even vulgarization. Concepts are simplified, stripped of nuance and the critical awareness of prototypes can be relatively easily utilized by ideology or transformed into it.

The reconstruction of a particular ideology is not a more difficult task than reconstructing a philosophical concept, however, it does pose some specific problems

[10]   Andrzej Walicki, *W kręgu retrospektywnej utopii. Struktura i przemiany rosyjskiego słowianofilstwa*, (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1964).

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which do not usually arise in philosophical reconstructions. Ideology, contrary to common belief, cannot be pulled from any text, it is not codified anywhere, though initially the exact opposite may seem true. After all, ideology is kept alive through constant repetition, allowing for its appearance in countless texts with varying status ranging from works and debates on *theoretical underpinnings* to programmatic declarations, manifestos and legal acts, leading to occasional appearances by provincial officials. However, it is difficult to indicate, even in cases where there is an overriding clarity on orthodoxy, since even this clarity is based on theoretical underpinnings, not to mention the cases in which such clarity does not exist – a privileged expression or even more privileged text. Ideology can be relatively easily reconstructed on the basis of 'new speak', should it be produced in an appropriately dense and expansive form. It consists, in reality, of some rudimentary opposition and ideas swathed in verbal fog, the shape of which is well known to anyone who has ever found themselves in the sphere of the influence of ideology and yet remains eternally elusive to researchers attempting to recreate it from a distance using purely philological methods. I bring this up in part because, due to the length of this study, describing *neo-ideologies*, I was forced to abandon philological methods and illustrative quotes. We all find ourselves within the reach of at least two of them; so the reader can effortlessly confront my findings with his or her own experiences. I believe that these findings never go beyond the minimum aforementioned fixed scaffolding of ideology.

To capture the particular traits of neo-ideology one must only refer back to the already outlined ideal model. All neo-ideologies matchup quite well to it, even if every time we are faced with a somewhat different configuration of elements and changed distribution of accents, though it is understandable that they do not match up as well as the paradigmatic utopian ideologies of the twentieth century. Despite the differences between different neo-ideologies, in all cases we are confronted with a more or less clear utopianism, with the creation of an image of an enemy and totalitarian tendencies. A specific feature of neo-ideologies is that the variance in quality and moderation in utopianism or totalitarianism (which will shortly be explained) allow for the two concepts to come into a relationship with each other that was previously impossible in the age of paradigmatic utopianism.

The neo-ideology in which utopian tendencies are strongest is undoubtedly neoliberalism. This has led some commentators to declare this concept fully comparable to Marxist communism, deserving a similar historical assessment and equally strict moral condemnation.[11] Let us agree that in this assessment there is a certain amount for exaggeration, which is, however, not totally incomprehensible. Neoliberalism, unlike other neo-ideologies, can be adopted easily and applied *ex abrupto*. It is a positive proposal with a clearly utopian character and a simple method for eradicating, if not all, then certainly all deserving, as determined by neo-liberals, evil. Marketization is by no means a certain

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[11]   John Gray, *False Dawn. The Delusions of Global Capitalism*, (London: Granta, 2009).

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method of management that guarantees greater productivity than others, however, it is a means of establishing social harmony and, to a large extent, it neutralizes the evil tendencies of individuals. The market bridges the tension between the poor and the rich (as their interests coincide since 'a rising tide lifts all boats') along with private and shared ownership (the collective interest is best served by private capital). At the same time, the concept of freedom undergoes a gradual distortion, on one hand caused by the simplification of freedom to freedom for economic initiative, while on the other freedom becomes identified as access to consumer goods, creating a belief in the impossibility of conflict between the logic of productivity and the logic of freedom, which empirically continues to make itself known. In turn, the evil tendencies of individuals, such as greed, which have been condemned by all moralists including Adam Smith, become good when they are used to mobilize market mechanisms, as they are necessary components for the effective functioning of the system which brings benefits to all.

Catholic conservatism and genderism, unlike neo-liberalism, are not well-designed utopian projects, yet they retain a very important component of utopian ideology, namely a conviction about the ever-present threat of evil. The root of this evil is both historical and simultaneously discovered, or at least exposed by the ideology, having previously been unknown to mankind, or at best not regarded as a threat, despite being the cause of its suffering. In the aforementioned neo-ideologies, these evils are, respectively, *a culture of death* (popularized by Karol Wojtyla) and *the patriarchy*. In neoliberal ideology, it was expressed as statism, which attempted to deceive mankind onto the 'road to serfdom'. It would appear, however, that in terms of the ability to create an image of the enemy, neoliberalism always lagged behind, though, as it became the prevailing ideology, this imagery gradually faded altogether. In the cases of genderism and Catholic conservatism, I believe the exact opposite is true. Regardless of their positive proposals, neither project, not even in the opinion of their originators, lauded the miraculous properties of the market, leading their images of the enemy to be evocative in character. Moreover, their positive proposals are legitimized through reference to constant threat, and presented as a mechanism to halt this threat, prevailing over it only in the long term. It need not be added, that the *culture of death* and *the patriarchy* are incarnations of 'discovered' evil structures, previously unknown and only 'unmasked' by the respective ideology. No one had heard of *the patriarchy* and *culture of death* before feminism and Wojtyla, which gives rise to ideas about the degree to which they are only imaginary. Between these two *semi-utopianisms* and neoliberal utopianism, there exists a perceptible difference in tone. Their emotional tone is palpably different, which is understandable in the context of past ideological constructs. Neoliberal utopianism has preserved much, not only from the dynamic Darwinist progressiveness of Spencer, but also from the naïveté of Mandeville, while both semi-utopianisms situate themselves more closely with twentieth century utopian ideologies, searching for sources of evil in conspiracies and systems.

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If totalitarianism is understood as control over all aspects of life due to the conviction that the acceptance of an ideology aids in the correct resolution of all questions, then no neo-ideology has a totalitarian character. However, if totalitarianism is the desire to control aspects of life indirectly or interference areas that had previously been seen as clearly outside the realm of interference, with the latter position especially well-founded in this definition, then the question requires further examination. There does not exist a neoliberal hermeneutics of literature, esthetic or mathematic, however, for neoliberalism, there also does not exist a sphere of life that would be excluded from the rules of the market. Therefore, there is guaranteed guidance for resolving matters in all spheres of life, while the correct hermeneutics, esthetic or mathematic, is that which 'wins' in the conditions of 'market competition'. Feminism goes further, and its totalitarian tendencies reveal themselves in a more direct way. Gender hermeneutics allow for the reinterpretation of all culture and deep interference in natural language, not just vocabulary but also grammatical structures. In contrast to censorship, which involves controlling text, and old communist newspeak, which was a modification of language with a narrow reach, the feminist engineering of language is an attempt at altering the whole system, for instance by introducing new rules for the use of grammatical gender. As the dissemination of its impact grows, it soon becomes impossible to express something ideologically neutral – using the recommended structures becomes an act of support for the neo-ideology, while not using them is an act of protest. This is a considerable achievement in attempting to paralyze the freedom of discussion and subordinating culture to a doctrine, even if Orwellian newspeak had a more ambitious goal of making any critical dissent impossible. Catholic conservatism, exhibiting a respectable dose of *desinteressemant* on issues of vernacular grammar and language, would present itself against this backdrop as almost a model of tolerance, if not for the surprising tendency to ignore the dualism of law and morality, contrary to the deepest content of Christianity. This tendency becomes apparent wherever the Church has the freedom to act, and manifests itself through legal means of maximalist enforcement of the Christian ethics on procreation.

Neoliberalism and Catholic conservatism are both clearly universalist, while feminism consistently supports the position of the particular, discrediting universalism as a form of particular hypocrisy. It reaches for the 'jargon of the concrete human being', so aptly described and criticized by Kołakowski.[12] The argument presented by Kołakowski, who rightly noted that every particularism as universalism of a 'lower order' is subject to the same charges used against universalism (if a 'universally human' point of view does not exist, neither can a 'universally feminine' point of view exist). To complete this observation, in this context particularly, it must be added that discrimination, marginalization, exclusion etc. and therefore the contrasting emancipation, can only be

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[12]   Leszek Kołakowski, *Kant i zagrożenie cywilizacji*, in Leszek Kołakowski, *Czy diabeł może być zbawiony i 27 innych kazań*, (London: Aneks, 1984).

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conceived on the basis of universalism. Discrimination is the deprivation of rights I am entitled to due to my participation in a wider community. A person can therefore only be marginalized within the borders of a wider community, as one can only be excluded from a whole.

These three neo-ideologies are therefore to some extent similar; however, they are diverse in quality, asymmetrical and not able to be conceived in terms of simple opposites. Marxist communism and neoliberalism, however, can be contrasted, while remaining completely symmetrical variants of economism. Each of them focuses on a certain aspect of reality; however, these aspects do not overlap in full. The aspirations of neo-ideologies relate to certain constructs of order and agendas, leading frictions and conflicts to develop between them, though there is no mention of the absolute antagonisms that were characteristic of the utopian ideologies that dominated the twentieth century. The latter were able to enter into tactical alliances; however, a synthesis of their theories was impossible, as was any long lasting, authentic coexistence within the framework of one political system or cultural community. The case of neo-ideologies is different. We are faced with an irregular configuration of lasting tensions, contradictions, occasional shared interests, potential or existing symbiosis, all serving both sides to various degrees. Between Catholic conservatism and feminism exists a perpetual conflict, founded in the latter's belief that the former is responsible for bolstering the structures of male domination. Neoliberalism, however, has proved capable of entering into alliances on various levels, from theory to politics, with the two other neo-ideologies. One of the most widespread cultural models of the individual that authentically influences personal choice and social processes is the phrase *businesswoman*, a neoliberal-feminist synthesis. From the point of view of those most closely identifying themselves with neoliberalism, the social and cultural changes brought about by genderism are by no means unfavorable. The professional activation of women lowers the cost of operations, as it increases the supply of labor. Moreover, in families where both parents work, neither has to be paid enough to support a whole family (though of course, if there were no other choice, one could simply pay more). The American thinker Irving Kristol (1920-2009) and in Poland Miroslaw Dzielski (1941-1989), who died prematurely but to this day maintains some of the staunchest of adherents, developed examples of the symbiosis between neoliberalism and Catholicism on the theoretical level at the end of the last century. In the 1990s, during the peak of neoliberalism and Catholic conservatism influence, we witnessed in Poland cooperation between the two currents in government coalitions, made possible by the fact that each side expressed interest in a different sphere of reality. Neoliberals reserved the economy for themselves, leaving culture to their allies.

The three neo-ideologies have therefore become a constant part of reality. They will, for a time, continue to exist, seeking impact, dividing up spheres of influence, and in turns will experience crisis and a shift to the offensive (the impact of Catholic conservatism, for example, will always depend on the personality and preferences of the

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person holding papal office). Moreover, it is important to note, that in certain areas such as the fate of culture, all three play a similar role. All three support the existing, above ideological, and likely political process of eroding human rights in the Western world; neoliberalism – through the economic reduction of freedom, feminism – through the use of the hackneyed jargon of the concrete human being, and Catholic conservatism – by blurring the distinction between law and morality. Each of these efforts aims to curtail the autonomy of the individual, allowing them to remain mutually consistent. Therefore we cannot count on their efforts to be neutralized, 'zeroed out'. The identification of freedom with economic freedom, for example, clearly aligns them with blurring the distinction between law and morality – freedom of conscience is not economic freedom, and therefore there is no reason to exclude them from legislative control. *The jargon of the concrete human being,* despite in theory being contrary to universalism, is more conducive to the violation of human rights by the universalist movement, than is opposed to it, since whoever violates these rights their justification can be only universalist.

In response the inevitable question that emerges after everything that has been said, a question about what the intellectual can do in these circumstances, to counteract these destructive processes, I will respond that they can do slightly, though not much more than the average person – the intellectual can recognize ideology and act as an example by not participating in its linguistic games. The intellectual should not immediately expect that such efforts, especially theoretical critiques of ideology, will bring about quick results. Any argument against ideology can be reinterpreted by its followers in ideological categories and used as an example of attitudes criticized by the ideology. The strength of ideology is not determined by rational arguments but by a combination of heterogeneous factors – material interests, coercion, genuine fascination with a proposed vision of the world, stoked hope. However, ideology, which we have already said thrives and impacts through repetition, is also worn by this repetition. Marian Zdziechowski liked to repeat that the power of ideas develops based on the strength of their internal dialectic until they plunge into absurdity. Ideology – let me add – is from the onset lost in the absurd, although at first not everyone can see it, but its reproduction through subsequent repetitions ad nauseam leads its absurdity to become apparent to all.

Translated by Aleksandra McLees